

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE EDUCATION IN INDIA: A LOOK BACK TO THE PAST 100 YEARS

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Information, the fourth essential commodity of the day, necessitates the need of well-functioned library and information centers with outstanding information handling expertise in today's world. As society of the day is specially named information society, we know each and every walk of life is information driven. Information handling expertise includes librarians, documentation officers, information scientists, information consultants etc. As the importance of information handling increases day by day, necessity of inculcating professional competency and skills in information handlers is also becoming inevitable. Here arises the need of Library and Information Science Education.

India, a country with a remarkable educational system promotes Library and Information Science Education also with utmost importance and it dates back to more than 100 years. Looking into the history of LIS education in India, it is possible to draw a graph of slow and steady progress. Exactly speaking, the origin of LIS education in India is in 1911 and its credit goes to the great man with great vision, Maharaja Sayajirao III, Gaekwad of Baroda. His immense wish to bring about libraries of his domain more fruitful, he invited W A Borden from America, a disciple of Melvil Dewey, the father of Library and Information Science. Borden initiated *a short-term training Programme* in library science at Baroda in 1911. Another disciple of Melvil Dewey, A D Dickinson, the then librarian of Panjab University, Lahore started a three-month apprentice-training program for librarians after four years in 1915. It is marked that the pre- independence period resulted *only few diploma courses* in library science, which were run in five universities such as Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Andhra and Banaras.

1.0 Post-independent Period

Post-independent period was really blessed with emergence of lots of educational institutions in school, college and university levels as well as lots of socio-cultural establishments which necessitated need for library and information centers and in final need for professionally equipped expertise to manage these centers effectively. The dimensions of schools of librarianship changed drastically along with the newly emerging needs. Lots of Library Science Schools have been originated. Dr S R Ranganathan, the father of Library Science in India initiated a *certificate course* under the leadership of Madras Library Association. Later it was run by University of Madras and in 1937 it became *Postgraduate (PG) Diploma in Library Science*. It was become the first diploma course in Library Science in India. The contribution of University of Delhi is higher in promoting LIS education, as it possessed the first full - fledged department of LIS education in India before independence in 1946. It started admitting students to PG Diploma in 1947. In 1951, the diploma was changed into *Master in Library Science (M.Lib.Sc)*. Six new Library Science departments were established during the period 1956-59 in different regions in India such as Nagpur University, Pune University, Osmania University, Aligarh Muslim University, M S University of Baroda and Vikram University.

It has been observed that there was a wide growth in the number of LIS courses and departments all over India from the year 1960 onwards. Several institutions played vital role in establishing various LIS programs in their institutions during this period. University of Delhi started Master in Library Science in 1951. It was being revised as *Master in Library and Information Science (MLIS)* in 1972. The name of the department was also changed to Department of Library & Information Science. In 1972 the course on 'Computer Applications in Libraries' was introduced for the first time in the MLIS programme. The department initiated *M.Phil programme* in 1978. The first Ph.D. was awarded to D B Krishna Rao in 1957, under the guidance of Dr. Ranganathan. At that time, it was the only university in the whole of the British Commonwealth conducting *Ph.D. program* in LIS. The growth of Library and Information Science discipline was facilitated by the emergence of courses in university departments, library associations, other institutions etc.

1960s were remarkable in the history of development of LIS education in India. DRTC (Documentation Research and Training Center) was set up in Bangalore under the aegis of Indian Statistical Institute by the great effort of Dr S R Ranganathan, the father of Library Science in India in 1962. The aim was establishing a special program on

documentation. *Associateship in Library science*, a new course was started by INSDOC (Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre) in 1964. The most important thing happened in LIS education is the *setting up of Review Committee* for LIS Education in the country in 1961. This committee put forward some recommendations including allocation of separate faculty for teaching, compulsory six months apprenticeship in connection with LIS courses, 1:10 Teacher-student ratio for BLIS and that for MLIS as 1:5 etc. Another important landmark in the history is the formation of IATLIS (Indian Association of Teachers of Library and Information Science)

Invasion of Computers brought about drastic changes in library and information centers and thus its management became the part of syllabi of LIS studies during 1980s. Another important progress in the field of LIS education during 1980s is the introduction of *two-year integrated MLIS course*. North Eastern Hill University and Madras University implemented two-year integrated MLIS programs in 1986 and 1988 respectively. Another remarkable development in LIS education during the period was introduction of *correspondence courses*. Punjab University(Diploma Course), Andhra Pradesh Open University(Degree Course), M L Sukhaida University(Certificate Course), University of Madras(PG Course), Indira Gandhi National Open University(BLIS, MLIS, PhD and PGDLAN) and Kashmir University(Certificate Course) are few of them which conduct correspondence courses in which IGNOU is a leading one and provides study materials with good quality.

2.0 Modernization

The clearly visible shift from the industrial age to information age came along with the developments in Computer Technology, Information Technology and Communication Technology. Contemporary libraries are running hurry to cope up with this dynamic shift. Technological competency and provision of prompt services are inevitable factors in present day libraries. Thus, LIS education was subjected to add all modern aspects in its syllabi in order to make the LIS workers highly competing one. Addition of various software, establishment of department wise computer centers, curriculum reforms, emergence of various library networks such as MALIBNET, CALIBNET, DELNET and INFLIBNET, introduction of telecommunication technology in the syllabus are the milestones of the present day LIS Education. The Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) recommended to change degree courses to two-year integrated MLIS and suggested to add new areas according to the new developments. It was also suggested to provide optional so that professionals can choose their interested careers from them. University of Madras and DRTC changed the name of their degree programmes as Master of Science in Information Science. An international venture was also marked in the history of LIS Education by initiating International School of Information Management (ISIM) to offer MTech and PhD degrees in information systems and management.

3.0 Present Statistics of LIS Programmes in India

According to the present statistics, there are more than 118 universities and institutions running various programmes in LIS. It is shown below:

Name of the Program	Number of Institutions providing the Programs
BLIS	105
MLIS	78
Two-year integrated MLIS	21
M.Phil	16
PhD	46
D.Litt Degree	2
Associateship courses in Information Science	2

4.0 Information and Communication Technologies in Libraries

Library and Information centers face new challenges to cope up with the technological developments occurring contemporarily in information transfer and retrieval. Library professionals struggle a lot to be familiarized with the technological retrieval and dissemination of information. Nowadays all housekeeping operations associated with library are technologically driven. LIS professionals should run a long drive to maintain library system smoothly and promptly with the help of Information and Communication technologies. Libraries are being automated and software is being installed in almost all types of libraries. Lack of awareness of proper use of computers both hardware and software creates great problems in libraries. Here arises the need of imparting proper LIS education. The curriculum of LIS Education has been enriched with E-concepts and application of IT and networking systems. Collection development in libraries is another crisis in this ICT era. Enormous growth of online information sources creates dilemma in selecting the best ones among them. Retrieval of information without spoiling the precious time of users

is another crisis. Providing right information to the right user at the right time using ICT facilities urges to the need of competing LIS professionals and it can be attained only through proper educational system in LIS discipline.

5.0 Problems in LIS Education

LIS Education in India travelled a long way with remarkable excellence. But there are some more areas in which modification and correction are necessary.

1. **Standardization:** There are no clearly defined standards or norms regarding LIS Education. A national Level accreditation Body also lacks in connection with LIS Education. As there is no supervision or restriction in the establishment of LIS courses in universities and colleges, so many LIS programmes have been taken birth without having proper measures regarding the facilities, faculties, number of students, teacher-student ratio, availability of teaching and learning materials etc. Regular standardization of LIS syllabi is also expected, but not done. Even though UGC has assigned syllabus revision committee for the purpose, all the colleges and universities are not strictly following the syllabi set by this committee. Library associations are also trying to put forward recommendations on standardization of LIS Schools in India through their seminars and conferences.
2. **Emergence of LIS Schools:** Emergence of LIS Schools uncontrollably creates huge problem. It adversely affects the quality of LIS professional. It also results in unemployment.
3. **Insufficient Library Facilities:** Lack of proper library building, collection of materials, technological facilities causes great problem. LIS students should get practical exposure on daily basis along with their studies in state-of-the-art libraries. This also lacks in most of the schools.
4. **Faculty:** Inadequate number of faculty, lack of proper subject knowledge, lack of adequate teaching experience etc. are the disadvantages of LIS Education in India.
5. **IT Laboratories:** In order to cope up with the new technological era, Information Technology Laboratories are compulsory in LIS courses. Theoretical classes without giving practical exposure are not at all effective.
6. **Revision of Syllabus:** In time revision of curriculum according to the newly emerging areas related to the subject is not carried out in many institutions.
7. **Admission Criteria:** There is no standardized pattern followed by LIS schools while admitting students as well as teachers. The teacher student ratio according to the Curriculum Development Committee Report recommends 1:10 for BLIS and 1:15 for MLIS. This ratio is well fit to inculcate better professional competency in students as well as better contribution by teachers. But the reality is quite far from the present situation.
8. **Selection Criteria of Students:** Lack of proper selection criteria leads to lack of target-oriented students. Selection procedure should be broadened in such a way that there should be provision of interview and test along with checking the merit of students

6.0 Conclusion

Need of LIS Education in this fast changing technological atmosphere increases day by day. If the existing LIS Schools in India is willing to uplift their standards, qualitative LIS professionals will be taken birth and thus qualitative library systems will be a reality in India. Qualitative faculty, adequate strength of faculty, adequate library and laboratory facilities, updating of technology in libraries, practical exposure to students in well-functioned libraries are some of the factors for improvement. An overall renovation internally and externally is expected to achieve a better result.

7.0 References

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