

JOURNEY OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE EDUCATION IN WEST BENGAL: A RETROSPECTIVE

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Abstract: Development of Knowledge resource and Career orientation both considered as the key areas of Library and Information Science Education in India. With an age of almost hundred years, LIS education served required information towards society by librarians and other associated professionals. In West Bengal the progress of LIS education is implemented with the help of various universities and Institutions. Several parameters of LIS education such as course content, level of courses, educational qualification etc. set by various universities act as catalyst to promote LIS education in West Bengal. The study is based on secondary data. Modernisation of LIS education in association with up gradation of technological applications help the subject to meet the demands of information in the field of applied education.

Keywords: LIS education, Universities, technological application, Knowledge resource.

1.0 Introduction

Library and Information Science (LIS) education in India has completed its one hundred years now. Today the LIS established both as a known career oriented subject and a respectful profession especially in West Bengal. To know the development we must go through with issues like the present status, curricular structure and infrastructural facility provided regarding LIS education in West Bengal. To meet the growing demand of the society LIS education has been applied in teaching and research field of librarianship with multidisciplinary focus on the issues of information source, access and quality.

2.0 Need of the Study

Library and Information Science education in a notable profession and course study now days. It is undergoing a fundamental change in its basic framework to meet the demands of the society in India especially in West Bengal. To keep in mind the objective of the study it is necessary to evaluate the associated programmes, structure of the courses, teaching methods, research scope, admission and other various aspects of LIS education in West Bengal.

3.0 Review of Literature

(Chatterjee and Goswami, 2012) made an attempt to state that the position of LIS education in West Bengal. Development of course content and overall effectiveness of library and its requirement for the society especially within various Universities of West Bengal was define clearly. Physical and intellectual infrastructure was strongly suggested before implementation of LIS application. (Mishra and Patra, 2011) analysed the importance of library education to build Indian knowledge resources with a special reference to Orissa district. The study compared the LIS education with education system of the various state universities in Orissa and suggested LIS education activities including traditional methods such as IT infrastructure implementation, upgrade quality of teaching staff by conducting training, seminars, tutorials, interactive and informative websites etc. (Biswas and Dutta, 2017) investigated LIS education under different Library Associations in India and their contributions in facilitating LIS education on the basis of selected parameters. The study also indicated the use of modern technology and the necessity of digital library to share ideas and thoughts of librarian and library professionals. (Nayak and Bhattacharjee, 2016) examined the resources used to educate LIS students on the basis of comparison of syllabus adopted by various institutions and universities in India. A case study of post graduate degree course in Indian Universities clearly indicated the dissimilarity of syllabus content and user knowledge. The opportunity of employment and the reason behind its inadequacy was evaluated in the study. (Kumar and Sharma, 2010) elaborated the growth and development of LIS education in Indian premier Universities. Modernization of LIS education with the help of software support and Government initiatives turned library professionals into smart information providers to understand need of

the users. Implementation of the recommendations of National Knowledge Commission to promote LIS education was one of the key areas of the study.

4.0 Research Methodology

The study is an attempt based on available secondary information collected from the respective university websites, their syllabus and requests to teachers and librarians, books and journals etc.

5.0 LIS education in India at a Glance

In the pre independent India, Sayyaji Rao, Maharaja of Baroda State took initiative to implement Library and Information Science education movement in this country. In 1911 he invited an American librarian, W.A Borden to develop library system in his state and began professional training for the librarians in the state. Again in 1915, another course on LIS was introduced in Punjab University under the supervision of Dr. Dickinson and that recognized as Asia's first and world's second School of Library and Information Science. The first certificate course in LIS was started in the year 1929 by Madras Library Association and later in 1939 it was undertaken by University of Madras and in 1937 said course was converted in Post Graduate Diploma course.

In pre independent era there were about six important school found in Library and Information Science such as Madras Library Association (1929), University of Madras (1931), Bengal Library Association (1935), University of Andhra (1935), Banaras Hindu University (1941) and University of Delhi (1947). On the other hand in the post independence period many Universities, Colleges, Institutions, Library Associations and Libraries came forward to set up LIS schools in India.

6.0 Progress of LIS education in West Bengal

West Bengal has a long history of almost hundred years of Library and Information Science. The said subject is comparatively younger to subjects like History, Philosophy, Physics, Chemistry etc. LIS education in West Bengal initiated its journey with the establishment of Bengal Library Association (BLA) in 1924. During All India Public Library conference held at Belgaon under the president ship of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, adopted a resolution regarding formation of Library Association in every part of the country. BLA adopted major steps to introduce training programme regarding librarianship in West Bengal. The first Library Science training camp for working library staff was started by BLA in association with Hooghly District Library Association at Bansberia (near Kolkata) in June 1934. Twelve participants were attended in this two week course. (Panigrahi, 2010)

A Diploma course in librarianship conducted by Imperial Library, Kolkata was started its journey in 1935. In pre independent India, a historical landmark was observed in this part of the country with the help of month long summer training course in librarianship at Ashutosh College, Kolkata. In this context Rabindranath Tagore send his best wishes with a statement "I wish the efforts of the Bengal Library Association all success. The Association will meet a great demand in the country by training qualified librarians". (Dutta, 1988)

6.1 University of Calcutta: On 17th August, 1944, the syndicate of the University passed the resolution of library committee stated that 'The University will conduct a Diploma course in Librarianship in every year'. In this context the first Diploma course was started in January, 1945. Graduation considered as the only eligibility criteria regarding admission to the said course and the intake capacity was limited to 15 students. As the University has no separate department of Library Science, a library committee was appointed in every year to run the training course. Overall arrangement of this training programme was controlled by the administration of library department of the University. In 1959 the training department was separated from library department and was renamed as 'Department of Library Science'. In 1969-70, the Diploma training was renamed as Post Graduate Degree of Bachelor of Library Science. In 1998 the Department of Library Science was renamed as Department of Library and Information Science and the curriculum of Library Science was also changed and renamed as Library and Information Science. But since beginning the course was conducted in evening, the same is being continued. In 1973 the Department of Library Science stated to offer Master Degree in Library Science and classes were started in 1974. The first batch of this course was passed out in 1976. Under the progress of academic development the University introduced self financing evening classes of M.Phil programme in 2003. In 2010 the university introduced five years integrated course of Library and Information Science but due to some administrative issues it is obsolete recently. In 2017 this university introduced three years Hons. Graduate in Library and Information Science.

6.2 Jadavpur University: Jadavpur University was established in 1952 and after twelve years of incorporation Department of Library Science was established under the faculty of Arts in Post Graduate level.

In 1984 Library Science was renamed as Library and Information Science. The curriculum was segregated in two semesters since 2003. According to growing needs of digitalization, this university offered two year Digital Library Management course and later it was renamed as MLIS (Master of Library and Information Science) in Digital Library from 2007. Ph.D degree in Library and Information Science is also offered by this university.

6.3 University of Burdwan: Since its inception from 1960, the one year diploma course in Librarianship is offered in 1965. The department was renamed as Department of Library Science in 1970 and again the name was changed as Department of Library and Information Science in 1980 subsequently the name of the course was changed as BLIS instead of BIIBSC. One year Post Graduate course, Ph.D are conducted by this university. Since 2007-08, M.Phil programme was started.

6.4 Vidyasagar University: Since 1985 this university introduced several Post Graduate courses including Library and Information Science. BLIS and MLIS was introduced in 1987 and Ph.D programme in 1992 respectively.

6.5 RabindraBharati University: Department of Library and Information Science was began its journey at Jorasanko campus of RabindraBharati University under the Faculty of Arts. The course curriculum such as BLIS and MLIS was started in 1986 and 2007 respectively.

6.6 North Bengal University: In 1990-91 university offered first BLIS and on the other hand MLIS programme was offered in 2005-06. Semester system was initiated under one year BLIS course from 2009.

6.7. University of Kalyani: In 1991, Department of Library and Information Science was established and MLIS department was started in 1999-2000. Since 2008-09 semester system regarding BLIS and MLIS course was started its journey. Apart from that M.Phil programme was started in 2008 under distance mode at this university.

6.8. Gourbanga Univeristy: The department of LIS was established in 2015. This newly formed department offered two courses under university administration such as five year Integrated (BLIS+MLIS) course and two year MLIS course.

6.9. NetajiSubhas Open University: This state university is the only open university that offered both BLIS and MLIS programme under distance mode. As the admission is open for all students the number of students admitted is increased in every session.

7.0 Recent Scenario of the Department of Library and Information Science in West Bengal:

Now a day there are seven university offered regular course and one Open University offered course in distance mode within West Bengal. University of Calcutta considered as the pioneer to provide LIS education in West Bengal but at the same time contributions of other universities are equally important towards the growth of LIS education in this state. In this context table- 1 shows the course course offered with specific duration of various universities in West Bengal.

Table-1 Courses Offered by Different Universities.

Sl. No.	University	Year of Establishment	Course offered with duration at present
1	University of Calcutta	1945	BLIS (1- year)
			MLIS (2- year)
			Integrated (BLIS+MLIS) (5- year)
			M.Phil (2- year)
2	Jadavpur University	1964	BLIS (1- year)
			MLIS (2- year)
			Part- time MLIS (2- year)
			M.Phil (2- year)
3	University of Burdwan	1965	BLIS (1- year)
			MLIS (2- year)
			M.Phil (2- year)

4	Vidyasagar University	1985	BLIS (1- year)
			MLIS (2- year)
5	RabindraBharati University	1985	BLIS (1- year)
			MLIS (2- year)
6	North Bengal University	1990	BLIS (1- year)
			MLIS (2- year)
7	Kalyani University	1990	BLIS (1- year)
			MLIS (2- year)
			M.Phil (1- year)
8	University of GourBanga	2008	Integrated (BLIS+MLIS) (5- year)
			MLIS (2- year)
9	NetajiSubhas Open University	1997	BLIS (1- year)
			MLIS (2- year)

Source: University website.

7.1 Levels of Course: Bengal Library Association (BLA) and other universities offered various courses in LIS such as certificate course, diploma course, Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS), Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS), Master degree in digital library, M.Phil and Ph.dprogramme etc. But unfortunately none of the university take initiatives to start D.Litpgogramme in this subject. Table-2 shows the duration of aforesaid courses under different universities in West Bengal.

Table:2 Levels of Courses

Course Name	Duration	Executive Institutions
Certificate in LIS (CLIS)	6-8 months	Bengal Library Association
BLIS	1 year	Universities
MLIS	1 year	Universities
MLIS	2 years	University of Calcutta
Integrated MLIS	5 years	Univerisity of Calcutta
MLIS in Digital Library	2 years	Jadavpur University
PGDLAN	1 year	Jadavpur University
M.Phil	2 years	Universities
Ph.D	2-5 Years	Universities
D.Lit	2-5 years	Universities

Source: University website.

7.2 Minimum Admission Criteria: Academic departments of several institutions set the minimum education qualification at the time of admission to various courses in LIS. Three year hons. Degree in any subject is the minimum qualification required to take admission in BLIS. Merit list will be prepared on the basis of results of written test in any university. Similarly BLIS degree is the main qualification required before taking admission in MLIS. But the higher courses like M.Phil and Ph.Dprogramme and their admission criteria prepared as per rules and regulations provided by University Grants Commission (UGC).

Number of Students/ Number of seats University wise Intake Capacity as per admission of structure in various course is shown in table-3. Almost last seventy two years BLA conducted two separate courses (one summer course and one weak end course) in West Bengal and both courses have intake capacity of 65 each or 130 in total.

Table- 3 Minimum qualification for admission and number of seats for various LIS course

Sl. No.	Name of the University	Course offered with duration at present	Number of seats	Minimum qualification
1	University of Calcutta	BLIS (1 year)	55	Hons. Graduation and admission test
		MLIS (2 year)	24	BLIS
		Integrated (BLIS+MLIS) (5 year)	40	H.S and admission test
		M.Phil (2 year)	22	MLIS, written and viva test
		B.A/B.Sc (Hons.) in Library and Information Science (3 year)	20	H.S and admission test
		Integrated (BLIS+MLIS) (2 year)	20	H.S and admission test
2	Jadavpur University	BLIS (1 year)	60	Hons. Graduation and admission test
		MLIS (2 year)	16	BLIS and admission test
		MLIS in DL (2 year)	15	BLIS and admission test
		M.Phil (2 year)	10	MLIS, written and viva test
3	University of Burdwan	BLIS (1 year)		Hons. Graduation and admission test
		MLIS (2 year)	27	BLIS and admission test
		M.Phil (2 year)	10	MLIS, written and viva test
4	Vidyasagar University	BLIS (1 year)		Hons. Graduation and admission test
		MLIS (2 year)		BLIS and admission test
5	RabindraBharati University	BLIS (1 year)	58	Hons. Graduation and admission test
		MLIS (2 year)	18	BLIS and admission test
6	North Bengal University	BLIS (1 year)		Hons. Graduation and admission test
		MLIS (2 year)		BLIS and admission test
7	Kalyani University	BLIS (1 year)		Hons. Graduation and admission test
		MLIS (2 year)	26	BLIS and admission test
8	University of GourBanga	Integrated (BLIS+MLIS) (5 year)		H.S and admission test
		MLIS (2 year)	20	BLIS and admission test
9	NetajiSubhas Open University	BLIS (1 year) (DL)	Open	Graduation
		MLIS (1 year) (DL)	Open	BLIS

Source: University website.

7.3. Course Content: Every university revised their course content during last few years as per recent demands, But the basic infrastructure followed CDC-UGC course content. CDC module is only basis of one year BLIS and MLIS courses taught in various universities in West Bengal. CDC module focused on the application of LIS education. Almost 80-90 percent course content followed the CDC module but some minor changes will be observed due to local variations.

7.4. Course Infrastructure: Being a professional course several scientific tools and techniques required to practice the applications of LIS. Now a day application of information technology with the use of Computer in addition with traditional tools and technique development students of LIS. Traditional tools used by universities such as classification scheme and cataloguing code, subject reading list and the list of use of information technology is shows in table-4

Table 4: Traditional and ICT tools used in University Libraries

Sl. No.	University	Classification tools			Cataloguing tools			ICT Infrastructure/ Computer		
		DDC	UD C	CC	AACR II	CC C	SH	LCD	OH P	Internet
1	University of Calcutta	22 nd	ME D	7 th	2005	√	See n	35	03	Yes
2	Jadavpur University	20 th	√	7 th	√	√	√	35+5 lap	04	"
3	University of Burdwan	19 th	√	6 th & 7 th	√	√	√	20	02	"
4	Vidyasagar University	19 th	√	7 th	√	√	√	16	02	"
5	RabindraBharati University	19 th	√	7 th	√	√	√	20	01	"
6	North Bengal University	19 th	√	7 th	√	√	√	15+1 lap	02	"
7	University of Kalyani	19 th	√	7 th	√	√	√	25	02	"
8	University of GourBanga	20 th	√	7 th	√	√	√	-	-	"
9	NetajiSubhas Open University	Distance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	"

Source: University website.

8.0 Conclusion:

History of library education and its development at West Bengal in India and the users of LIS played an important role on the issue of modernization. On the context of India, history of library education and its development made a significant progress. Intake capacity should be increased in Post Graduation courses conducted by universities of West Bengal. The honours course offered by the University of Calcutta set a milestone of LIS education . To meet the demand of information several steps such as advantage of digital library, development of open access system etc. should be taken and financial assistance both from Government and private ownership expected to complete the task. We hope that due to increasing demand of LIS, the honours course will be introduced at the undergraduate levels in different colleges and at the same time development of LIS education in West Bengal will create a special place in the history of library science

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