

Library and Information Science Education in India: A Detailed study.

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Abstract: India has celebrated the completion of a century of Library and Information Science (LIS) education, during this long period, India has witnessed a steady growth in LIS education but still several issues remain unsolved calling for immediate attention of LIS professionals to meet the rapidly changing demands of the contemporary information society. This paper attempts to trace the history of LIS education in India and its subsequent developments along with the emerging trends in this field.

Key Words: Library and Information Science Education, India. History of LIS education, India. Present Scenario of LIS education, India. Emerging trends in LIS education, India.

Introduction

India has celebrated the completion of a century of Library and Information Science (LIS) education, during this long period, India has witnessed a steady growth in LIS education but still several issues remain unsolved calling for immediate attention of LIS professionals to meet the rapidly changing demands of the contemporary information society.

At this juncture, it is inevitable to trace the history of LIS education in India in order to appreciate its development and also take a glimpse at the present scenario.

Foundation Stones of LIS education in India

The foundation of LIS education in India dates back in 1911 when W.A.Borden (1853-1931), an American disciple of Melvil Dewey, for the first time started a short term training programme in library science at Baroda under the patronage of Maharaja Sayajirao III, Gaekwad of Baroda (1862-1939). Four years later in 1915, another American student of Dewey, Asa Don Dickinson (1876-1960), the then librarian of Punjab University, Lahore (now in Pakistan) started a three-months apprentice training programme for working librarians (Satija, 1993 p.37). Further, John MacFarlane, an Englishman, who happened to be the first librarian of the Imperial Library (now National Library, Kolkata) also shares the credit for training librarians in our country. In fact, MacFarlane's training programme is the first case of LIS education in India reported in literature. It took place between 1901 and 1906 in the Imperial Library when training programmes were organised for its staff. Later it was extended to librarians working in Calcutta as well as in other states. (Krishan Kumar & Sharma, Jaideep. 2010)

Establishment Phase (1915 – 1947)

The LIS education, which took off from the northern and western parts of the country moved towards the south subsequently. LIS professionals realising the need or education acted through Library Associations. The first such attempt was a school set up by Andhra Desa Library Association in 1920. Lectures were organized on various topics related to the history, literature, and culture of Andhra Pradesh besides the library movement. The course was modified later to include more topics of library science (Patel, Jashu & Krishan Kumar. 2001).

Later in 1929, Madras Library Association (MALA) started a school of Library Science offering certificate course of three months duration. Dr. S.R. Ranganathan acted as Honorary Director of this school. Bengal Library Association also started a certificate course in year 1935. Andhra University introduced Diploma course in library science for the first time by any university in India in year 1935. University of Madras started the post graduate diploma course in Library Science in 1938. Subsequently, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) started a postgraduate diploma course in 1941. University of Bombay started that same in 1943 and University of Calcutta in 1945 followed by University of Delhi in 1947.

Thus we find that a few well known university covering northern, southern, eastern and western part of India started librarianship training programme during the pre independence period. Some of these courses were short in duration ranging from three months to one year. Most of these courses offered diploma in library science.

Many universities of pre-independence era which started certificate course were converted into post-graduate course. (Dasgupta, Arjun. 2009).

Expansion Phase (1947-1990).

The LIS education ushered in a new phase 1947 when University of Delhi offered facilities of research in LIS, first time by any university not only in India but also in the entire commonwealth. The first Ph.D. was awarded to D B Krishna Rao in 1957, under the guidance of Dr. S.R. Ranganathan.

It was the period from year 1956 to 1959 when six new LIS departments were established (Mangla, 1998, p.287) at Aligarh Muslim University, M.S. University of Baroda, Nagpur University, Osmania University, Pune University and Vikram University.

The next decade is of foremost importance in terms of expansion of LIS education in India, as there were about "72% library schools established during this period" (Kumar & Sharma, 2009). It was during 1960s that along with the universities opening LIS courses, two well-known documentation centers in India viz. Documentation Research and Training Centre (DRTC) and Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre (INSDOC) started offering Associateship in Information Science in 1962 and 1964 respectively. The former institute was established in Bangalore and the other one in New Delhi.

These two institutions are still continuing these courses successfully and bringing out future information professionals who are mainly getting jobs in scientific and research institutions in India. (Dasgupta, Arjun. 2009).

The University of Delhi again contributed to the LIS education in India by starting the M. Phil course in 1977, first by any university in India. This decade also witnessed the break of the halt of around 20 years to award the second PhD degree awarded to Dr. Panday S.K. Sharma. Further, during this decade only, the 'information' component was added to the discipline of 'Library Science' and it was changed to 'Library & Information Science'.

Microcomputers appeared on the scene in library activities and services during the 1980s. Accordingly, library schools began incorporating computers in the syllabi. University of Delhi was one of the first to introduce an optional paper on computer application that included Pascal programming language also. Another development during this period was the introduction of two-years integrated MLIS in the North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) in 1986 and Madras University in 1988. It was felt that two-year MLIS would put it on the same pedestal as the other Master's degrees and also the curriculum would be better spread if integrated over a two years period (Krishan Kumar & Sharma, Jaideep. 2010).

In addition to formal teaching courses, some universities have introduced correspondence courses at various levels of education. An

important development in non-formal teaching is starting of a degree course by Andhra Pradesh Open University (Hyderabad) in 1985. Mohan Lal Sukhadia University (Udaipur) and Kashmir University (Srinagar) provide correspondence education at certificate level, Punjabi University (Patiala) at diploma level and Madras University (Chennai) both at certificate and degree levels. IGNOU equipped with multi-media instructional system also planned it from 1987. This provides facilities to professionals working at lower level to improve their qualifications and update their limited knowledge and skills and also to those who could not get admission to formal courses earlier (Dutta, Bidyarthi and Das, Anup Kumar: 2001). In the later part of 1980s there were 66 university departments offering Bachelors Degree (BLIS), 38 offering Master's Degree (MLIS), 4 Master of Philosophy (M. Phil.) degree and 19 schools were offering Doctoral Programmes (Ph. D.) in LIS. In India there exist three parallel systems of Distance Education for LIS. One that exists in conventional university sponsored distance learning programme on the campus, second, conventional university sponsored distance learning programme with different study centres and third, the Distance Learning University itself. By 1997, 79 universities were offering Bachelor's Degree (BLIS), 67 Master's degree (MLIS), 4 Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) and 39 universities were offering Ph.D. degree. (Dasgupta, Arjun. 2009).

Modern Phase (1990 onwards)

The last decade of 20th century saw paradigm changes in LIS education influenced by Information and Communication Technology (ICT). UNESCO further boosted the pace of this modernization by offering its free software CDS/ISIS. Subsequently, many more such library automation softwares developed by public and private agencies were launched. Due to ICT, the libraries ushered in a new phase where libraries become capable of catering information to its users overcoming the barriers of geography. It impacted every library operation, resource, service, staff and users. It was the time when computer application became an integral part of LIS education in India. All the schools of LIS education in India gradually started to prepare their students to work in the electronic environment. The Library Networking was another achievement around this period. Several The Library Networks such as INFLIBNET, DELNET and CALIBNET were established.

Distance Education Programme in LIS education also saw some growth during this decade, which are being conducted by various universities of India. As per report published by the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) in 1997 states that 5 universities offered Certificate in Library and Information Science (CLISc), 5 Diploma in Library and Information Science

(DLISc), 15 Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLISc) and 7 Master's in Library and Information Science (MLISc) through distance mode of education.

LIS entered the new century with the CDC report¹² in 2001, emphasized to face the onslaught of ICT. The report stressed on the need to have integrated two-year MLIS, gave new topics to be included in the curricula along with many optionals to allow the professionals to choose from alternative careers. University of Madras changed the name of their degree to Master of Science in Information Science dropping the term 'Library' altogether. A step further, International School of Information Management (ISIM) was established to offer M. Tech. and Ph.D. degrees in information systems and management. It is a truly international venture with faculty from India and other countries. DRTC also revamped its curriculum, even changing the name of their degree to Master of Science (MS) in Information Science. The latest development is the introduction of e-education in which the IGNOU took the lead by introducing MLIS in the e-mode in 2008. (Krishan Kumar & Sharma, Jaideep. 2010).

The Present Scenario

At present, LIS education has grown and developed into a full-fledged discipline. Data collected from published and unpublished sources reveals that over the period of time, number of such universities offering LIS education has grown. Details about the number and level of courses offered by these universities are as follows (Singh and Babbar: 2014):

- 181 universities are offering library science courses.
- 131 are offering bachelor's degree course.
- 136 are offering master's degree course
- 41 (out of 136) are offering two-year integrated master's level course
- 21 are presently offering MPhil degree, (19 departments started and closed)
- 93 universities (including 10 distance education universities) are offering PhD degree.

LIS education today does not only include specific library based subjects like classification, cataloguing, reference service etc., but also some related areas like computer application, statistics, information science, management studies and operation research. Various departments are now offering parallel courses like Master in Information Management (MIM), P G Diploma in Digital Libraries, courses in Health Sciences Librarianship etc. M. Phil. Courses in LIS are introduced in different universities either in formal or in distance mode. Some of these are self-financing courses

where several working librarians are also participating (Dasgupta: 2009).

Emerging trends:

- The impact of ICT on libraries is enormous. Today, any faculty, student or librarian cannot do without good ICT skills. Therefore, the faculty, students and librarians are frequently getting enrolled to one or another ICT course to gain more and more knowledge and skills of ICT.
- Here, it is imperative to take an overview of the status of research in the field on LIS. It can be easily highlighted that the pace of research in LIS is at its highest levels as detailed in the table below:

Decade-wise distribution of PhDs

Decade	No. of PhDs
1950-59	2
1960-69	2
1970-79	16
1980-89	103
1990-99	395
2000-09	804
2010-12	432

(Source: Singh and Babbar: 2014)

- India's unique experiences in different aspects of LIS education place it at par with developed nations in imparting LIS education to the aspirants within and outside the country. Students from Kenya, Ethiopia, Thailand and from SAARC countries: and from many African and South-East Asian regions are coming to India under the fellowship of Indian Council for Cultural Relation (ICCR) for pursuing studies in LIS (from bachelors to PhD programmes) and leading the LIS education mantle in their respective countries (Asundi and Karisiddappa: 2007).
- Libraries and information centers are no more a debit account institutions as they have started the marketing of information products and services.
- LIS faculties are recognizing need for more and more practice training with a slant to use of IT.
- Several standards such as NISO, ISO standards are being developed for libraries to follow.
- Some universities have started offering courses in specialized areas of libraries operations such as Library Automation, Archives Management etc.
- The trend of offering two year integrated MLIS is gaining momentum.

- Very low recognition to library professionals as compared to professionals of other disciplines.

Conclusion

LIS education in India has gone through gradual growth since its inception. It has not only progressed well but has attracted the world focus particularly that of the developing world. The profile of LIS education given in the paper shows the landmark achievements in its stride for recognition. Today, it has reached a stage where it is being considered as a course to be reckoned with

technologically affluent programmes, and being considered on the agenda of apex bodies offering technical education. It is influenced by within and goes with concurrent progress made by India in the field of IT. In traditional subjects of LIS too, India stands different with scholarly contribution by Dr Ranganathan (Asundi and Karisiddappa: 2007). However, the need of modern times is to raise the standards of LIS education, matching with the needs of modern Libraries burdened with the solemn responsibility to serve the information society in a better way.

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