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Library and Information Science Education in South Asia

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Library and Information Science (LIS) education in South Asia, with special emphasis on India, has evolved significantly since its inception in the early twentieth century. Beginning with early training initiatives in Baroda and later formalised through university-level programmes, LIS education has expanded to include multiple levels from certificate courses to doctoral studies. This study examines the development, course structures, infrastructure, faculty strength, and teaching methodologies of selected Indian universities. Using a fact-finding research design based on questionnaires, interviews, and literature review, the study highlights variations in curricula, intake capacity, and institutional facilities. It also identifies key challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, shortage of qualified faculty, and the need for curriculum reform in response to rapid technological advancements. The study emphasises the importance of integrating information technology, knowledge management, and user-oriented services into LIS education to produce skilled professionals capable of meeting evolving information needs in a globalised environment.

Keywords: library and information science education, curriculum development, information technology, higher education, LIS infrastructure

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1. Introduction

The foundation of library and Information Science Education was laid in 1911 when WA Borden, an American-trained librarian, started a short training program at Baroda under the Patronage of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad to create manpower for organising newly established libraries in the princely state of Baroda. The more systematic training programme was initiated by Asa Don Dickenson at Punjab University, Lahore (now in Pakistan). The Madras Library Association conducted summer schools of three months' duration for college librarians in 1928-30. Later on, the University of Madras started a full-time Diploma Course for the first time in India in 1931. Andhra University and Bengal Library Association started a training programme for librarians in 1935. The Imperial Library (now National Library), Kolkata, conducted a training course leading to a diploma in librarianship in 1935, which was continued till 1945. The first independent Department of Library Science was started in 1945 at the University of Delhi.

Organisation of library materials is becoming complicated due to the rapid growth of information, knowledge and course structure. This has resulted in a change of syllabus for the courses. These factors have caused a wide gap in the use of information, knowledge, and IT in the syllabus. Maintenance of libraries requires manpower to ensure the effective functioning of the library. With a fundamental shift in the goal of library and information science education, the course structure should cater for the needs of these changes, setting and the skills required for effective functioning of information, knowledge and IT environment. Hence, the responsibility of library and information science education is very significant to prepare human resources for maintaining libraries in these changing environments. At this instance, library and information science education studies can initiate cooperation for the course structure to meet the needs of users at the right time. The purpose study intends to identify the general pattern of library & information science education in South Asia with emphasis to India Universities by analyzing and evaluating the status of the department, existing course pattern, curricular structure, infrastructure, teacher- student ratio, teaching methods, faculty, project & problem in the field of library & information science education particularly in the Indian Universities.

2. Scope

Library & information professionals have to be educated and trained with a view to reviewing the expectations of the information users. It is essential to equip the faculties of the library & information Centre with modern teaching aids. The curriculum that is framed has to reflect these aspects in this context. With growth and an emerging environment, the library is not limited to itself. In this context, the library & information science educational schools where professionals are being trained are to take the view of the scope for application of information technology, marketing, knowledge management & organising, relevance and adequacy of the present educational programmes. Library & information science schools should assume a new dimension due to the adoption of different kinds of information needs and users. A new information organisation has emerged in order to recognise the entire gamut of information services, users, and the form of information needed. Pressing to train and educate the library & information manpower towards a suitable professional competence. The manpower today will meet the challenges and onslaught of information technology, knowledge management, and marketing, etc, on library and information science education. In this context, skill and competency manpower is required to satisfy the high-level, complex and ever-growing multifarious information needs. Thus, the varying range in the levels of department and institution offering LIS education programmes must consider thoughtfully a combination of traditional and modern subjects in adequate proportion, so as to enable and produce quality and trained manpower.

At present, there are about 85 universities in India that impart different levels of courses in library & information sciences, ranging from certificate courses to PhD. Keeping in mind the above considerations, the proposed study intends to identify the library scene, courses, admission requirements, duration, enrollment, main features of the curricula and teaching faculty of the select 20 Indian Universities. For each university, this is followed by a general observation on the state of library and information science education.

3. Objectives of the Study

- To trace the development of library & information science education;

- Study the pattern of library & information science education by analysing and evaluating the factual data;
- To identify the course structure of the selected LIS Schools;
- To find out the level of courses, the infrastructure facilities available at the LIS schools;
- To compare the intake & admission requirement;
- To identify the available manpower for conducting the program, including faculty and supporting staff.

The study covers *(i) library and Information Science Education in Indian Universities (State and Central Universities); (ii) Cooperative efforts towards the establishment and implementation of suitable curricular and course structure; (iii) problems and prospects of the LIS Education in India.* Therefore, the present work is intended for comprehensive and analytical studies on library and Information Science Education in Indian Universities.

4. Limitations

While conducting the study, some of the limitations are:

- The study will not cover distance education.
- The study will not cover in detail Certificate courses & courses at the undergraduate level, usually conducted by agencies such as library associations, libraries, teachers' training institutes, polytechnics and even universities are excluded;
- The study will not cover departments established below 20 years ago.

5. Methodology

Research design and Methodology are the first steps to identify the nature and problem taken up for the study. From this point of view, the present study falls in the category of fact-finding. In order to have a clear perspective of the problem under study, the methodology for the proposed study will be based on an extensive survey of literature, both micro and macro documents/literature, along with a questionnaire and interview-based method to collect relevant data to analyse the current perspective of library and information science education in Indian universities. The present study is based on primary data collected through the method of an open-ended questionnaire from LIS departments. Sampling adopted for the purpose is so-called Judgement (Purposive or Deliberate) Random Sampling. A pre-tested questionnaire is used as a tool for the survey. Data is processed and analysed through MS-Excel software, and information is made accordingly.

6. Literature Review

Emphasizing the importance of a survey of related literature, C.V. Goods and others have clearly pointed out that "Survey of related literature helps us to know whether evidence *already available can solve problems adequately without duplication."*

The scene of library and Information Science is witnessing a vast change with the changing environment caused by automation, digitisation, communication technologies, networks, globalisation, etc. The awareness of society has considerably increased, making it a more interactive form. With these new trends, there is a need to inculcate a newer way of technical and information technology education to provide more transparency among the various activities. The world today has shrunk into a global village, bringing the gap between countries, people, technologies and information. To cite an example, the investigator came across an article by Abdoulaye (2004), "*State of Library and Information Science Education in Malaysia*". At the outset, this challenged the way topics have been formulated. Although the title of the article suggests it is only done in Malaysia. The investigators also come across the article "*The Future of library Science Education*" by Gorman (1999). In the article, it stated that although libraries should, in some way or another, find means to work cooperatively to provide access. The investigator come across the article by (Naghshineh, 2003) *"A Comparative case Study of Graduate Course in Library and Information Studies in UK, USA, India and Iran: Lesson from Iranian LIS Profession"* the author study is carried out for curricular, revamping and the diversity of course offered at the Universities, Independent Institution, and the article also discussed the diversity of degree offered, case and flexibility of higher education. Update course programmes emphasise research; course and curricular development,

which gives encouragement to the investigator to analyse the courses offered in the North–East Region and India. The investigator also came across the article by Saiful, which gives emphasis on the factors that are changing the demand for the profession, such as the growth of literature, the complexity of the subject, changes in the forms of documents, etc. In this article, the author places emphasis on the training methods that must be adopted to such changes. The focus of the discussion is on the History, current structure, curriculum, teaching technique and article which interest is the importance of Accreditation. The investigator came across the article by Mishra (1997), "*Rethinking Library and Information Science in India*". Here, the author discusses the importance of manpower, i.e., a librarian, as a medium of transmission in the communication process. The author presents the brief history of library and information science education in India, along with observations on the Curriculum Development Committee Report (1992). Outline a detailed syllabus for B L I Sc and M L I Sc levels to prepare professionals for the 21st century. The article by Mangla, "Library and Information Science Education: Trends and Issues", presents an overview of library and information science courses conducted at the post-graduate level in India by 80 Universities and two Documentation centres. Due to the vast expansion of Library and Information Science Education across the country, many problems related to the level of education, selection of students, course content, accreditation, research, administrative status, employment opportunities and library and information science literature have arisen. In the same pattern, the investigator came across an article by Singh (1996), "Restructuring of M L I Sc Course: Issues and Implications***".*** The article gives more emphasis on the need for restructuring the MLI Sc course to develop quality manpower to satisfy the demand of an energy information society in India. Give more focus on the new model should be developing core competence for information communication, information use and user, end user training, information resource management, information technology and research evaluation. These tasks require a national-level effort for quality control via accreditation. Pleads for establishing a national-level accreditation body on the pattern of the Indian Council of Technical Education (AICTE) or the Medical Council of India (MCI). In an article by Haridasan (2003), ***"LIS Education: Accreditation and its prospects"***.

Gives more focus on the library and information science education scenario can be gauged by the trends that have crept up in the profession. After the post-Independence phenomena, library science education saw great development in terms of curriculum development, course design, thought content, formation of the board of examiners and the board of studies. This tremendous change reflects the existing infrastructure, services and information networks within the country. All these demands qualified manpower to manage effectively and with more proficiency. The world today has shrunk into a global village, bridging the gap between countries, people, technologies and information. With these new trends, there is a need for including newer ways of information acquisition, processing, storage, retrieval and transmission. Present trends also reflect the interdisciplinary character of the subject, being supported by library and information scientists. Implication of these new trends demands a change in the present curriculum to accommodate programmes that will equip students for the new requirements of the information market. Library and Information Science Education reach a juncture where its objectives need to be redefined. The basic aim of Library and Information Science Education should include acquiringknowledge of library activities, teaching how to manage libraries using the latest technologies, raising awareness of responsibilities, serving better, utilising various services, teaching professional ethics, besides communication skills, negotiating well, being alert and smart and being computer literate.

7. University Faculty Attachment and Inception of the LIS Department

Background information of the sample under consideration is shown in Table 1.1. Twenty (20) universities are considered for the purpose of the study. The questionnaire was distributed to twenty (20) universities. Out of the 20 distributed questionnaires, only seventeen (17) responded, thereby a response rate is 85%. Of the responded seventeen (17) departments, the year of establishment is obtained as establishment range from 1935-1945 the responded no. is two (11.76%), establishment range from 1946-56 the responded no. is one (5.88%), establishment range from 1957-67 the responded no. is six (35.29%),

establishment range from 1968-78 the responded no. is four (23.53%) and the establishment range from 1979-89 the responded no. is four (23.53%). Thus, it reveals that the maximum number of establishments is from 1957 to 67. The number of departments attached to Arts is eight (47.06%), the number of departments attached to Social Science is five (29.41%), the number of departments attached to Education is two (11.76%), the number of departments attached to Management is one (5.88%) and number of departments attached to science is one (5.88%). It reveals that the majority of the departments are attached to the Arts.

Table 1.1: Physical Facilities of the Department

Sl. No	Name of the University	Year of Inception	Faculty Attached
1	Andhra University	1935	Social Science
2	University of Calcutta	1945	Education, Journalism and Library Science
3	University of Delhi	1946	Arts
4	Panjab University	1960	Arts
5	University of Kerala	1961	Arts
6	Karnataka University	1962	Social Sciences
7	Jadavpur University	1964	Arts
8	University of Burdwan	1965	Arts, Commerce, Law
9	Gauhati University	1966	Arts
10	Kurukshetra University	1969	Arts and Languages
11	Punjabi University	1969	Education and Information Science
12	University of Jammu	1971	Social Sciences
13	Banglore University	1973	Science
14	Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University	1979	Social Sciences
15	Jiwaji University	1984	Arts
16	North Eastern Hill University	1985	Economics, Management, Information Science
17	Manipur University	1986	Social Sciences

Table 1.2: Class/ Lecture Room Available

Class Room	1-2	2-3	3-4	More
No of Responded	6 (35.29%)	9 (52.94%)	1 (5.88%)	1 (5.88%)

Table 1.2.1: Class/ Lecture Room Available

Class Room	1-2	2-3	3-4	More
No of Responded	6 (35.29%)	9 (52.94%)	1 (5.88%)	1 (5.88%)

Table 1.2.2: Facilities at the Department

Facilities	Yes	No
Computer Laboratory	17 (100%)	-
Seminar/ Conference Hall	10 (58.82%)	7 (41.17%)
Library	15 (88.25%)	2 (11.76%)

Table 1.2.3: Software Used at the Department

S.No	Name of Software	No of Respondent
1.	CDS/ISIS	15 (23.44%)
2.	SOUL	12 (18.75%)
3.	Open Software	18 (28.12%)
4.	Others	19 (29.68%)

Table 1.2.4: Teaching Aids available at the Department

Equipment/Accessories	No of Respondent
Overhead Projectors	15 (88.23%)
Slide Projectors	10 (58.82%)
LCD Projectors	15 (88.23%)
UGC- infonet e-journals	17 (100%)

For table-1.2.which provide data about the number of class rooms available, of the responded seventeen departments, the class room available as ranged from 1-2 classroom, the responded number is six (35.29%), the class room available as ranged from 2-3 classroom, the responded number is nine (52.94%), the class room available as ranged from 3-4 classroom, the responded number is one (5.88%) and the class room available as ranged from 5-more classrooms, the responded number is one (5.88%). Thus, it reveals that the maximum number of classrooms available is in the range of 2-3 classrooms. Table-1.2.1. shows the facilities available at the department. Of the seventeen departments that responded, the computer laboratory available is seventeen (100%), the seminar/conference hall available is ten (58.82%), and the library available in the department is fifteen (88.25%). Table-1.2.3. reveals the software used at the department. Of the seventeen departments that responded, fifteen (23.44%) departments are using CDS/ISIS, twelve (18.75%) departments are using SOUL, eighteen (28.12%) are using open-source software, and nineteen (29.68%) are using other software. Table 1.2. 4 shows the Teaching Aid available at the department, which clearly indicates that UGC-infonet e-journals (100%) are available in all the responded departments, overhead projectors and LCD projectors are available in fifteen (88.23%) departments, and slide projectors are available in ten (58.82%) departments.

Faculties of the Department

Table 1.3: Faculties of the Department

Faculty	Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor	Guest Lecture
No of Respondent	28	24	33	7

With the rapid development in information technology, knowledge management, and marketing, human resources are lacking at the universities.

Levels of Courses

Table 1.4: Levels of Courses

Course	PhD	M.Phil	MLISc		BLISc	Others
			One Year	Two Year		
No of Respondent	17 (100%)	8 (47.05%)	6 (35.29%)	11 (64.70%)	8 (47.05%)	1 (5.88%)

Table 1.4.1: Intake Capacity

S. No	Name of the University	Intake Capacity			
		BLISc	MLISc	M.Phil	Ph.D
1	Andhra University	-	40	Varies	Varies
2	University of Calcutta	55	24	15	Varies
3	University of Delhi	54	40	12	Varies
4	Panjab University	-	45	-	Varies
5	University of Kerala	-	20	Varies	Varies
6	Karnataka University	-	22	-	Varies
7	Jadavpur University	60	16	10	Varies
8	University of Burdwan	63	15	15	Varies
9	Gauhati University	-	50	-	Varies
10	Kurukshetra University	35	35	10	Varies
11	Punjabi University	33	21	-	Varies
12	University of Jammu	30	15	-	Varies
13	Banglore University	-	20	-	Varies
14	Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University	-	22	15	Varies
15	Jiwaji University	40	40	-	Varies
16	North Eastern Hill University	-	30	-	Varies
17	Manipur University	-	20	-	Varies

Table 1.4.2: Eligibility Criteria

Courses	Ph.D	M.Phil	MLISc		BLISc
			One Year	Two Year	
Eligibility Criteria	MLISc + As per UGC Research Regulation	MLISc + As per UGC Research Regulation	BLISc with 50%	Bachelor's degree with 50%	Any Graduate with 50%
No of Respondent	17	8	6	11	8

The study, when evaluated, reveals the data on levels of courses, intake capacity, and eligibility criteria. Table-1.4. shows the levels of courses offered at the department. Out of the seventeen departments that responded, PhD (100%) courses are conducted at all seventeen departments. The MPhil course is conducted at eight departments (47.05%). The MLISc (one Year) course is conducted at six (35.29%) departments. The MLISc (Two Year) course is conducted at eleven (64.70%) departments, the BLISc course is conducted at eight (47.05%) departments, and the other (five-year integrated) course is conducted at one (5.88%). Table-1.4.1. shows the intake capacity of various courses. It reveals that the intake capacity for PhD varies with the availability of seats. For MPhil, the intake capacity is 77, and the intake capacity for the two departments varies according to the availability of seats. For MLISc, the total intake capacity for the seventeen departments is four hundred seventy-five (475), and the total intake capacity of BLISc at the eight departments is three hundred seventy (370). From Table 1.4.2. The data reveals the eligibility criteria for the courses. For PhD and M.Phil, the eligibility criteria are MLISc plus. As per UGC Research Regulation, the eligibility criteria for MLISc one year are BLISc with 50%, for MLISc two years is a Bachelor's degree with 50% and the eligibility criteria for BLISc are Any Graduate with 50%.

8. Suggestions/ Recommendations

i. A National Council for Accreditation of Library Schools (NACALIS) to be established under the provisions of the Library and Information Science Education Act, which can be enacted by the Parliament of India.

ii. The Government of India should play a major role in promoting LIS education in India by creating more job opportunities for LIS professionals and removing disparity in pay scales among LIS professionals. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) should immediately start the work of the National Commission of Libraries (NCL) as recommended by the NKC.
iii. A National Policy of LIS education is the need of the hour.
iv. A programme of "Apprenticeship" should be started in our profession.
v. University authorities have to take the initiative in filling up teaching posts of LIS departments.
vi. There should be a control mechanism for unplanned proliferation of LIS schools. No LIS school, formal, or non-formal mode be allowed to start their course without adequate facilities.
vii. Continuing Education Programme of faculty members must be a high priority.
viii. A recommendation for setting up a National Institute for LIS (NILIS) should be made to the Government of India with immediate effect.
ix. Each and every department of LIS schools must have adequate infrastructural facilities. A separate building for Library and Information Science is needed.
x. University Grants Commission (UGC) should help in providing guidelines regularly for developing LIS schools in India.
xi. Library departments should have adequate teaching aids, which will help in creating interest among students.

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