CHALLENGES OF LIS EDUCATION IN INDIAN UNIVERSITIES: A STUDY OF LIS SCHOOLS

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Abstract:

Purpose: *the purpose of the study is to explore the Challenges of LIS Education in Indian Universities*

Design/Methodology/approach: *Twenty (20) Indian universities are considered for the study. A questionnaire and interview methods are used for the collection of primary data. Sampling adopted for the purpose is so-called Judgmental Random Sampling; a Pre-tested questionnaire is used as a tool for the survey.*

Findings: *Most LIS schools/departments are not equipped with IT facilities. Consistency in the course structure and their school attachment needs to develop skilled Human Resources by providing ICT-based course structure and Accreditation standards.*

Practical Implications: *Expose to IT educational environment and skills to enhance and enrich career development graduate LIS professionals. International outlook, networking and intercultural communication skills are essential for practitioners, policymakers, leaders, decision-makers, researchers and educators in the LIS field.*

Originality/Value: *the study is part of the Doctoral research conducted at Manipur University, DLIS, Canchipur, India*

Article Type*: Case Study*

Key Words: *Trends, ICT, curricula, LIS, School.*

1. Introduction

Conventional teaching and learning methodologies in Library and Information Science (LIS) education in India are no longer effective in fostering career opportunities in a stiff, competitive employment environment. The employment members demand specialized and skilled personalities in many areas. Many LIS educators feel that the present LIS Education System is not equipped to impart the necessary teaching/learning to build a multi-skilled personality.

Hence, under such circumstances, creating an environment that is unique and promises to revolutionize LIS education in India is necessary. Hence, the responsibilities of LIS schools are very significant in producing skilled human resources to maintain libraries in the ICT-driven environment.

2. Literature Review

Emphasizing the importance of a survey of related literature, C.V. Goods and others have pointed out, "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, digitization, communication technologies, networks, globalization, etc. The awareness of society has considerably increased, making it a more interactive form. With these new trends, there is a need to inculcate newer technical and information technology education to provide more transparency among the various activities. Today's world 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 that have been formulated. However, the title of the article survey is done only in Malaysia. The investigators also come across the article **"The Future of library Science Education"** by (Gorman, 1999)**.** The article stated that although libraries should, in some way or another, find means to work corporately to provide access. The investigator came across the article (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's study is carried out for curricular revamping and the diversity of courses offered at universities and independent institutions. The article also discusses the diversity of degrees offered, the case, and the flexibility of higher education. Update course programmes emphasize research; course and curricular development encourage the investigator to analyse the courses offered in the Northeast Region and India. Investigators also come across the article by Saiful, which emphasizes the factors that demand the profession to change: the growth of literature, the complexity of the subject, change in the forms of documents, etc. In this article, the author emphasises the training methods that must be adopted for such changes. The Discussion focuses on the history, current structure, curriculum, teaching technique, and article, which is of interest to me, the importance of accreditation. Investigators come across the article (Mishra, 1997), **"Rethinking of Library and Information Science in India".** Here, the author discusses the importance of manpower, i.e. librarians, as a medium of transmission in the communication process. The author presents a brief history of library and information science education in India, along with observations from 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 of (Mangla) "Library and Information Science Education: Trends and Issue" presents the overview of library and information science courses conducted at the Post-Graduate level in India by 80 Universities and two Documentation Centers. Due to the vast expansion of Library and Information Science, Education across the country has raised 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. In the same pattern, the investigator came across an article (Singh, 1996), **"Restructuring of M L I Sc Course: Issues and Implication".** The article emphasises the need to restructure the M L I Sc course to develop quality manpower to satisfy the demand for an energy information society in India. Giving more focus to the new model should be developing core competencies 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 and plead for establishing a national-level accreditation body on the pattern of the Indian Council of Technical Education (AICTE) or Medical Council of India (MCI). An article by (Haridasan, 2003), **"LIS Education: Accreditation and its Prospects"**, gives more focus on the library and information science education scenario that 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 curriculum development, course design thought content, and forming a board of examiners and studies. This tremendous change reflects the country's existing infrastructure, services and information networks. 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, newer ways of information acquisition, processing, storage, retrieval and transmission are needed. Present trends also reflect the interdisciplinary character of the subject, which is supported by library and information scientists. The implementation of these new trends demands a change in the present curriculum to accommodate programmes that will be equipped to meet the new requirements of the information market. Library and Information Science Education reached a juncture where its objectives need to be redefined. The basic aim of Library and Information Science Education should include acquiring library activities, teaching how to manage libraries using the latest technologies to make aware of responsibilities, serve better, utilise various services, teaching professional ethics besides communication skills, negotiating well alert and smart and computer literate should be accompanied.

3. **Objective of the Study**

The present study aimed to identify the challenges faced by LIS Education in Indian Universities. The objective of the study is to identify a) the trends of LIS Education, b) study the affiliation of LIS Education, c) to identify the course structure, and d) to find out the infrastructure facility and manpower.

4. **Hypothesis of the Study**

To authenticate, the present study aimed to test the following hypothesis

i. Lack of cooperative efforts toward the establishment and implementation of suitable curricula and affiliation to meet the highly competitive environment;
ii. The existing infrastructure does not meet modern educational requirements;
iii. Human resources are lacking in the universities.

5. **Methodology**

To solve the problems and to test the above hypothesis, certain research designs and methodologies were adopted. The present study is based on primary data collected through open-ended questionnaires from LIS departments. Sampling adopted for the purpose is so-called Judgement Random Sampling. The pre-tested questionnaire is used as a tool for the survey. Random sampling is adopted by taking the LIS Department in India, which functions under state and central universities.

6. **Trends of LIS Education in India**

The last two decades have witnessed tremendous change in the higher education system in India, particularly in its size and growth. The foundation of LIS education in India dates back to 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-month apprentice training programme for working librarians. Before independence, only five universities (Andhra, Banaras, Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras) offered library science diplomas. Dr. S.R. Ranagathan started a certificate course at the Madras Library Association in 1929, which was taken over by the University of Madras, and in 1937, the course was converted into a Postgraduate (PG) Diploma in Library Science. This was the first diploma programme in Library science in India. The University of Delhi was the first university to establish a full-fledged Department of Library Science just before independence in 1946 and started

admitting students for PG Diploma in 1947. In 1951, the diploma was changed to Master in Library Science (M.Lib.Sc). Between 1956 and 1959, six new LIS departments were established (Singh S., 2003).

Technology has become an integral part of LIS education in India. During the last decade of the 20th Century, most LIS schools in India have started offering computer application courses. There is a growth of Distance Education Programmes in LIS, which various universities in India are conducting. From the report published by the Associate of Indian Universities (AIU) in 1997 that five universities offer Certificates in Library and Information Science (CLISc), 5 Universities offer Diploma in Library and Information Science (DLISc), 15 Universities offer Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLISc) and 7 Master's in Library and Information Science (MLISc) through distance mode of education (Dasgupta, 2009). The changes that LIS schools underwent in the 1990s are reflected in the Kaliper report published in the year 2000, which indicates six major curriculum trends in the USA:

(i) LIS curricula are addressing broad-based information environment and problems;

(ii) LIS curricula contain a unique core of courses that are user-centred;

(iii) LIS schools and programs are increasing investments and infusion of information technology into curricula;
(iv) LIS programs are experimenting with the structure of specialization of their programs;
(v) LIS schools are offering instruction in different formats; and

(vi) LIS schools are expanding their programs by offering degrees at multiple levels (Bronstein, 2007).

7. Findings

Twenty (20) Indian universities are taken into consideration for the study. The questionnaire was distributed to all the universities. Out of the 20 distributed questionnaires, only three libraries did not respond; the response rate is 85%. The number of departments attached to Arts is Eight (47.06%); Social Science is five (29.41%); Education is two (11.76%); management is one (5.88%) and Science is one (5.88%). It reveals that most of the department is attached to Arts, followed by Social Science.

The study reveals data on the classroom, facilities, software used, and teaching aids used by the departments. Of the responded 17 LIS schools, 35.39% have a classroom in the range 1-2, 52.94 % have a classroom in the range 2-3, 5.88 % have a classroom in the range 3-4, and 5.88 % have a classroom of the range five or more. 100% of the respondent's LIS Schools have computer laboratories, 58.25% have seminar/conference halls, and 88.25% have departmental libraries. About the software used at the department, 23.44% are using CDS/ISIS, 18.75% are using SOUL, 28.12%c are using Open source software, and 29.68% are using other software. About the Tools used in the department, 100% are using DDC, 82.35% are using CC, 70.59% are using UDC, and 5.88% are using another classification scheme. For catalogue code, 100% use AACR-II in all the responded LIS Schools, 82.35% use CCC, 23.53% use AACR-I and 17.65% use other catalogue codes.

Regarding the LIS schools' curriculum, credited courses are conducted at the departments (47.06%), and the number of non-credited courses conducted at the departments is (52.94%). Specialization papers taught at the departments are thirteen (76.47%), and the number of departments having non-specialization papers is four (23.53%). Data reveals that the teaching method adopted at the departments, practical work (16.84%), project work (14.73%), lecture (12.63%), seminar (11.57%), fieldwork (10.52%), assignment (9.47%), tutorial (8.42%), Discussion (7.36%), demonstration (5.56%) and textbook (3.15%). The data

reveals that the assignment method of evaluation is adopted (94.11%), class test (88.23%), seminar presentation (82.35%), attendance (35.29%) and others (17.64%).

The challenges of the present study thus prove right the hypothesis:

i. The curriculum of LIS education is not adequately touched by media communication, marketing, & Knowledge management;

ii. The existing infrastructure does not meet the need to assess the modern educational requirement;

iii. Information technology, knowledge management & marketing, and human resources are lacking at the LIS schools;

iv. There has been a lack of cooperative efforts toward establishing and implementing suitable curricular and course structures.

The critical study of Library and Information Science Education in India, as well as the generalization of the findings/observations and suggestions, have also disclosed the following: i. Infrastructures & manpower facilities of the existing LIS schools in India are significantly less; ii—lack of cooperation in establishing and implementing suitable LIS curricula; iii. There is no accreditation agency for LIS education in India; iv. Implementing the National Commission on Libraries will improve the scenario of LIS education in India.

8. Suggestion and Conclusion

The observation of the present study called for improving

(i) The course structure/curricula of LIS schools;
(ii) Initiative in filling up teaching posts of LIS departments;
(iii) Infrastructures & facilities should improve with the provision for future expansion;
(iv) Coordination among LIS schools in the line of i-school;
(v) Establishing of National Council for Accreditation of Library Schools (NACALIS);

(vi) National Knowledge Commission (NKC), which was established by the Govt. of India in 2005, should immediately start the work of the National Commission on Libraries (NCL) as recommended by the NKC.

(vii) The scenario of the LIS education will drastically improve if there is coordination among the LIS Schools.

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