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Curriculum of Graduate Courses in Library and Information Science Schools of Northern India: An Analysis

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study is to investigate the course structure in the curriculum of Library and Information Science (LIS) schools in Northern part of India at graduate level.

Design/methodology/approach: Questionnaire was designed to get the data from the institutions. When response rate was low, curriculum prevailing in the institutions was either downloaded from their respective websites or a hardcopy was collected from the departments personally. Thirteen institutions are included in this study.

Findings: Data collected from the selected LIS departments when analyzed, reveals that there is disparity existing in the curriculum adopted by these schools. Same papers taught in these schools have different nomenclatures.

Research limitations/implications: The research restricted to a limited number of institutions presents the pattern of Library and Information Science education in Northern India only.

Originality/value: The research, leads to the fact that instead of heterogeneity, homogeneity in curriculum is the demand of the day in order to impart qualitative education in the field of LIS.

Keywords: Library Science; Information Science; Curriculum; LIS Schools; Library Professionals; Information Professionals; Northern India; India

Paper type: Research paper

Introduction

Library and Information Science education in India is 20th century phenomenon. Purpose of such education is to produce the competent and capable professionals who are able to manage the libraries and library like institutions effectively and efficiently on scientific lines. LIS education is linked with the growth of libraries. The origin and growth of the libraries depends on the educational and cultural conditions of the society at any time. With the growth of libraries, LIS schools have the obligation to generate human resources for managing different types of libraries who in turn are required for handling different professional activities in libraries and information centers in such a way that right information to the right user at the right time can be provided.

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Historical background of LIS education in India

India is an ancient civilization with a rich lineage of cultural heritage. The seeds of Library Science education programme were sown in India during 1911, owing to the initiatives taken by Sayaji Roa Gackwad II, the ruler of the erstwhile Baroda state who had realized the importance of libraries as the most crucial factors for all round development of the society and for education of the masses. In 1910, he invited W.A. Borden from USA for establishing a network of libraries in the state of Baroda. He started library training programmes at Baroda in 1911. Another landmark year in the history of LIS education in India is 1915 when it was started in Punjab University at Lahore under the directions of the Asa Don Dickenson. The Vice Chancellor of Punjab University, Lahore (now in Pakistan) invited Asa Don Dickinson to organize the Punjab University Library, introduce library training and teach modern library methods to those librarians who were employed in the university library and its affiliated colleges in Punjab (**Aman & Sharma, 2005**). Dickenson started a three months library course in 1915, which was later extended to six months duration. On completion of the course, students were awarded a certificate in Library Science (**Kunnur, 1986**). This school has the pride to be the first school of Library Science in (undivided) India, patronized under university system. A few new universities and public libraries were opened during the first three decades of the 20th century in India, but only two attempts were made to organize library programmes at the state level, in Baroda and Punjab. Therefore, there was an urgent need to have library training programs to meet the growing needs of libraries in the country. S.R. Ranganathan, University librarian at the University of Madras (1924-46), was very interested that Indian librarians be trained in India rather than in England. He ventured into what was unexplored territory in India-the field of education for Librarianship (**Aman & Sharma, 2005**). The Madras Library Association started a three-month training programme in 1929. In 1931, the classes were shifted to the University of Madras, which used to conduct a certificate course of three months duration. In 1937 this certificate course was converted by the university into a post graduate Diploma in Library Science of one year duration and minimum qualification for admission was laid down as graduate in any discipline. After this, for a decade or so the University of Madras remained the sole university to provide Library Science education and training, although the Imperial Library, Calcutta (1935); Bengal Library Association (1937) and the Andhra Desha Library Association used to organize stray courses for training library personnel. However, the course conducted by the University of Madras was, in fact, the first full time library education programme in India to train librarians (**Kaula, 1977**). Banaras Hindu University has the credit to become the second Indian university to start

a Post graduate Diploma in the year 1941. It was followed by University of Bombay which started a part-time Diploma course from the year 1944, restricting the admission for working personnel. Calcutta University started Diploma course in 1946 (**Kumar & Sharma, 2008**). The progress of library education was very slow, especially during British rule. In 1947, there were only five universities which offered diploma programmes in Library Science (**Aman & Sharma, 2005**). After independence, education was given top priority and it certainly helped the establishment of many library schools. Sir Maurice Gwyer, the then Vice-chancellor, University of Delhi invited Dr. S.R Ranganathan to organize a department of Library Science. The department was established in 1947 to conduct Post-Graduate Diploma Course. University of Delhi was the first university to start a Doctoral Programme in Library Science in the entire British Commonwealth in 1949. By the end of 1950's there were 13 Library Science Schools in India (**Kumar & Sharma, 2008**). 1960's saw some very important events taking place affecting LIS education in the country. With the advent of documentation in 1950's and 1960's when the emphasis on library services shifted from macro-literature to micro-literature, libraries got engaged in documentation work. Ranganathan conceptualized Documentation Research and Training Centre (DRTC), Bangalore, under the auspices of Indian Statistical Institute in 1962 for imparting a specialized training programme in documentation. DRTC was conducting a course leading to "*Associateship in Documentation and Information Science (ADIS)*" but now it is labeled as Master of Science in Library and Information Science since 2008. Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre (INSDOC), now named as NISCAIR, started a course in Associateship in Documentation in 1964 and this course is now labeled as "*Associateship in Information Science (AIS)*". Library Science courses were also started in five more universities-Hyderabad, Osmania, Punjab, Poona and Rajasthan in 1960's (**Patel & Kumar, 2001**). The decade, 1970-80, saw a gradual development in the Library Science educational scenario in the country. Some more courses were added. There was a need felt to update the syllabi in view of the increasing importance of information. New courses like System Analysis and Statistical Methods; and Information Storage and Retrieval were proposed for MLIS programme. University of Delhi added another milestone to its credit when it introduced M. Phil programme for the first time in the entire Commonwealth region. Change in the nomenclature of departments from Library Science to Library and Information Science was one of the important features of this decade. Many more LIS schools were established in different universities of the country and the number got increased to 42 (**Khoo, Majid & Lin, 2009**). During 1980's, in addition to formal teaching courses, some universities introduced correspondence

courses at various levels. While as M.L. Sukhadia University and University of Kashmir introduced correspondence course at certificate level; Punjabi University started a diploma course and University of Madras initiated postgraduate courses. Andhra Pradesh Open University started a degree course in 1984. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi, introduced BLIS in 1989. It has played a pioneering role in LIS education, and conducts BLIS, MLIS, PhD and PGDLAN (one-year postgraduate diploma) like courses through correspondence mode (Kumar & Sharma, 2010). 1990's is labeled as the "period of modernization" and "period of consolidation" in the annals of LIS in India (Kumar & Sharma, 2008). In 2004, there were 146 Library schools (85 university level library schools; 27 offering LIS courses through correspondence or distance education and 32 colleges & institutions conducting different LIS programmes; and 2 organizations, viz., NISCAIR and DRTC offering two year Associateship in Information Science) (Singh, 2004).

Library and Information Science education in India is offered at various levels such as certificate, diploma, one year bachelor's programme (BLISc), one year Masters programme (MLISc), two year integrated MLISc Programme, Associateship in Information Science (AIS), M. Phil. and Ph.D.

Curriculum in Library and Information Science in India

At the university level, after independence, the University Grants Commission (UGC) controls mainly the general course structure of various curriculums. A review of the literature shows that since its inception, UGC has played a prominent role in the growth of library and information science (LIS) education in India. It has taken appropriate measures to formulate curriculum for the LIS departments. The first review committee known as *Ranganathan Committee on Library Science Education* published its report in 1965 entitled as "Library Science in Indian Universities". In 1980's, a marked change in LIS education programme was required due to introduction of Information Technology in to the library field. As a result the next attempt for the revision was initiated by the UGC in the early 1990's. The UGC constituted Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) on library and information science under the chairmanship of Prof. P.N. Kular. The report of this committee was published in 1992 under the title "Report of the curriculum development committee on library and information science." The publication of this curriculum helped the university departments to update their syllabi as per the requirements of the profession. Soon after this, many changes occurred in Information and Communication Technology sector, which had a direct impact on the libraries. This made the UGC to undertake a study on this scenario. A committee was constituted under the

chairmanship of Prof. C.R Karrisidappa. The committee discussed all the aspects of the curriculum and fully proposed modular syllabi for Indian universities. This report was published in 2001 under the title “UGC model curriculum Library and information Science.” Library and information Science departments in India have responded to this Model curriculum differently.

Problem

The aim of the study is to investigate the course structure in the curriculum of Library and Information Science (LIS) schools in Northern part of India at graduate level.

Objective(s)

The objectives of the study are:

- To investigate the level of adoption of UGC Model Curriculum 2001 by the LIS Schools of Northern India at BLIS level
- To know the heterogeneity and homogeneity in the curriculum of LIS Schools

Methodology

Questionnaire was designed to get the data from the institutions. When response rate was low, curriculum prevailing in the institutions was either downloaded from their respective websites or a hardcopy was collected from the departments personally. Thirteen institutions are included in this study.

Scope

The research restricted to a limited number of institutions presents the pattern of Library and Information Science education in Northern India only.

An insight of the courses offered by LIS departments under the scope of present study is presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1 depicts that all the surveyed university departments conduct courses at different levels. There are 5 institutions (38.46%) that conduct 2-year integrated MLISc programme. Eight departments (61.53%) impart education in truncated BLISc and MLISc programme. M. Phil. course is imparted by three and Ph.D. programmes by twelve departments. In addition to these courses, two universities also conduct specialized programmes. While IGNOU conducts Postgraduate Diploma in Library Automation and Networking (PGDLAN), Banaras Hindu University (BHU) offers Postgraduate Diploma in Manuscriptology (PGDM). Although one year programme is still imparted by majority of departments but a

growing trend among the departments is to introduce 2-year integrated MLISc Course instead of one year BLISc and MLISc courses.

Table 1: Courses offered

S.No	Name of Institution	BLISc (One year)	MLIS (One year)	MLISc (Two Years)	M.Phil	Ph.D	Other
1	University of Kashmir	-	-	√	√	√	-
2	Jammu University	√	√	-	-	√	-
3	Guru Nank Dev University	√	√	-	-	√	-
4	Punjab University	-	-	√	-	√	-
5	Punjabi University	√	√	-	-	√	-
6	Kurukshetra University	√	√	-	√	√	-
7	Delhi University	√	√	-	√	√	-
8	Aligarh Muslim University	√	√	-	-	√	-
9	Lucknow University	√	√	-	-	√	-
10	Banaras Hindu University	-	-	√	-	√	√**
11	IGNOU	√	√	-	-	√	√*
12	NISCAIR	-	-	√	-	-	-
13	BBAU Central University	-	-	√	-	√	-
	Total	8	8	5	3	12	2

*PGDLAN ** PGDM

Findings

Curriculum Adopted in BLISc Course

Out of surveyed thirteen departments, there are eight departments conducting BLISc course. Papers in the curriculum adopted by these eight LIS departments in BLISc course are shown in **Table 2**. Papers adopted vary in their nomenclature. On the basis of nomenclature, it is revealed that 36 papers are taught in these eight departments. Minimum number of papers taught at BLISc level is eight and maximum is eleven. These 36 papers when merged on the basis of the proximity of content, leads to following observations:

- “Library, Information & Society” and “Foundation of Library & Information Science” papers from different departments share the common contents, so they were treated as one single paper. As such all the departments are found to teach this paper. While four departments offer it under the title, “*Library, Information and Society*”. And the remaining under “*Foundation of Library and Information Science*”.
- All departments teach traditional core theoretical papers viz., “*Library Classification*” and “*Library Cataloguing*”. However, six departments (75%) had amalgamated these two papers into one and relabeled them as “*Knowledge organization and Information Retrieval*” or

“Organization of Documents”. Two departments (25%) have retained the traditional names of “Library Classification” and “Library Cataloguing” and teach these as separate papers.

Table 2: Papers at BLISc Level

S.No.	Paper	JU	PiU	GNDU	KU	DU	AMU	LU	ignou	Total
1	Library, information & Society	√	-	-	√	√	-	-	√	4
2	Library Classification (T)	-	-	-	-	√	-	-	√	2
3	Library Classification (P)	√	√	√	-	√	√	-	√	6
4	Management of library and information centers	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	8
5	Library Cataloguing (T)	-	-	√	-	√	-	-	√	3
6	Library Cataloguing (P)	√	√	√	-	√	√	-	√	6
7	Information Technology: Basics (T)	-	-	-	-	-	-	√	√	2
8	Information Technology: Basics (P)	-	-	-	-	-	-	√	-	1
9	Information Sources and Services(T &P)	-	√	√	-	√	√	√	-	5
10	Project work : literature & field survey	-	-	-	-	√	-	-	-	1
11	Internship programme	-	-	-	-	√	-	-	-	1
12	Organization of Documents	√	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
13	Library & users	-	√	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
14	Knowledge organization and inf. retrieval (T)	-	-	-	-	-	-	√	-	1
15	Knowledge organization(P)	-	-	-	-	-	-	√	-	1
16	Information users, systems and services	-	-	-	-	-	-	√	-	1
17	Inf. Technology: Basics (T&P)	-	√	√	√	-	-	-	-	3
18	Foundation of Library and Inf Science	-	√	√	-	-	√	√	-	4
19	Knowledge Organization and Inf. Processing	-	√	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
20	Knowledge Org. and Inf. Processing & Retrieval	-	-	-	√	-	-	-	-	1
21	Information Sources (T & P)	-	-	-	√	-	-	-	-	1
22	Library Classification & Cataloguing Practice –A	-	-	-	√	-	-	-	-	1
23	Library Classification & Cataloguing Practice –B	-	-	-	√	-	-	-	-	1
24	Users and Information Services (T & P)	-	-	-	√	-	-	-	-	1
25	Knowledge organization (T)	-	-	-	-	-	√	-	-	1
26	Elements of Information Technology	-	-	-	-	-	√	-	-	1
27	Information Processing & Retrieval	-	-	-	-	-	√	-	-	1
28	Oriental librarianship	-	-	-	-	-	√	-	-	1
29	Knowledge organization-Classification	-	-	√	-	-	-	-	-	1
30	Basics of IT in libraries (T)	-	-	-	-	√	-	-	-	1
31	Basics of IT in Libraries (P)	-	-	-	-	√	-	-	-	1
32	Computer Application in Libraries.	√	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
33	Documentation Work & Information Services	√	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
34	Reference and Information Sources	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	√	1
35	Information Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	√	1
36	Reference Service and Information Source	√	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Total	8	8	8	8	11	9	8	9	

JU = Jammu University

PiU = Punjabi University

DU = Delhi University

GNDU = Guru Nank Dev University

KU = University of Kashmir

AMU = Aligarh Muslim University

LU = Lucknow University

IGNOU = Indira Gandhi National Open University

- All departments teach traditional core practical papers viz., “*Library Classification (Practice)*” and “*Library Cataloguing (Practice)*”. However, six departments (75%) teach these two papers as two individual papers. Two departments (25%), Kurukshetra University and University of Lucknow have merged these two papers, while University of Lucknow has merged these two into one paper with title “*Knowledge Organization (Practice)*”. Kurukshetra University has also merged these into two separate papers with nomenclature as:
 - i) Library Classification & Cataloguing Practice –A
 - ii) Library Classification & Cataloguing Practice –B.

- All eight departments (100%) teach “*Library Management*” paper. However, six departments have adopted the nomenclature of “*Management of Library and Information Centers*” as enumerated in UGC Model Curriculum and two departments had retained the earlier nomenclature of “*Library Management*”.

- “*Information Technology*” is being taught in all eight LIS departments (100%) either as a single paper or as two individual papers; one for practice and another for theory. Six departments (75%) teach it as a single paper with both theoretical and practical components and two departments (25%) teach it as two individual papers, one dealing with theory and another with practice. These two departments are
 - i) University of Lucknow
 - ii) University of Delhi
 Nomenclature of this paper also varies. Five departments (62.50%) have labeled it as “*Information Technology-Basics*”; two departments (25%) with minor differences labeled it as “*Computer Application in Libraries*” and one department has labeled it as “*Elements of Information Technology*”.

- Paper regarding “*Information Sources and Services*” is taught in all the eight departments (100%). However, in majority of departments, it is taught as a single paper and in others it has been bifurcated into following two papers:
 - i) Reference and Information Sources
 - ii) Reference and Information Services
 Five departments (62.5%) teach it as an individual paper and three departments (37.5%) as separate papers (**Table 2**). Nomenclature of this paper also varies. Majority of departments that teach it as an individual paper have adopted the title “*Information Sources and Services*” while as departments that teach it as separate papers are using following titles:

- a) Reference and Information Sources (IGNOU)
 - b) Information Sources (KU)
 - c) Information Services (IGNOU)
 - d) Documentation Work and Information Services (JU)
 - e) Users and Information Services (KU)
 - f) Reference Services and Information Sources (JU)
- From Table 2 it is evident that few departments have introduced some special papers like:
- (a) Project work: Literature & Field Survey (University of Delhi)
 - (b) Internship Programme (University of Delhi)
 - (c) Oriental Librarianship (AMU)
 - (d) Information users, Systems and Services (Lucknow University).

Discussion

It is evident that LIS schools in northern India offering BLISc course have adopted a heterogeneous curriculum comprising both traditional as well as new and emerging subjects. There is difference not only in nomenclature of papers taught but also difference in the number of papers taught in these schools. Traditional papers like *"Bibliography"*, *"Documentation"* etc have been either deleted from the list or accommodated with other papers and in their place some new papers have been introduced. The core subjects like *"Classification"* and *"Cataloguing"* papers are clubbed together in most of the LIS schools in order to give space for the emerging fields like *"Information and Communication Technology"*. Similarly, papers like *"Reference and Information Sources"* and *"Reference and Information Services"* have been merged together in most of the universities.

Most departments have relabeled the nomenclature of the papers. Nomenclature of the papers adopted in UGC Model Curriculum of Library and Information Science (2001) is used by majority of the LIS Schools. From the analyzed data, it is revealed that main papers taught at BLISc level in LIS departments under the scope of the study include:

1. Library, Information and Society
2. Knowledge Organization and Information Retrieval
 - 2.1 Classification (Theory)
 - 2.2 Cataloguing (Theory)
3. Knowledge Organization
 - 3.1 Classification (Practice)
 - 3.2 Cataloguing (Practice)
4. Management of Library and Information Centers
5. Information Sources and Services (Theory & Practice)

6. Information Technology (Theory & Practice)
7. Three departments have adopted one of the following special papers
 - (i) Project Work
 - (ii) Internship Programmes
 - (iii) Oriental Librarianship

Conclusion

In order to produce competent professionals, it is suggested that LIS schools should regularly update their curriculum. LIS syllabus has to be revised from time to time incorporating new areas of knowledge emerging at national and international levels and eliminating irrelevant and obsolete areas. A proper balance has to be made between theory and practice. Courses like *'Knowledge Management'*, *'Information Literacy'*, *'Communication Management'*, *'Web 2.0 /3.0'*, *'Multimedia'*, *'Records Management'*, *'Users Study'*, etc. are to be included in the syllabi of LIS education. Due importance should be given on the emerging and new competencies related to the basic philosophy of the profession, management sector of LIS, technical facet of librarianship, service sector facet and ICT component in LIS. It is suggested that keeping in view the present trends like globalization, privatization and liberalization, contents of the LIS need to incorporate the concepts evolved and adopted worldwide. If this is done, the pass-outs from these departments will find a market for themselves beyond the frontiers of the country.

Further, it is suggested that there must be homogeneity in the papers adopted by the LIS Schools. In this connection, organizations like University Grants Commission (UGC); associations like Indian Library Association (ILA); Indian Association for Teachers in Library and Information Science (IATLIS); and Indian Association for Special Libraries and Information Centers (IASLIC) etc can play a very important role. By conducting seminars, conferences, workshops etc at regional and national levels on the theme of LIS education, these organizations can provide a common platform to the LIS professionals, LIS educators, LIS researchers and other stakeholders in LIS profession to share their experience, expertise, competencies and their vision of LIS education etc. The outcome of these events definitely will help in improving the standard of LIS curriculum in the country.

Internship is a very good way of getting firsthand experience and a reliable way of finding out about the intended career. In order to produce competent and capable professionals, internship concept needs to be given a serious thought. LIS departments should identify reputed and renowned organizations and establish rapport with them to undertake internship for LIS professionals.

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