

Library and Information Science Profession: Trends & Issues



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Library and Information Science is a noble profession. It is important to know the characteristics of LIS profession, how the LIS profession has developed over the years and what are the issues it is facing.

Learning Outcomes:

After completing this module, you will be able to:

- Understand LIS as profession;
- Developments of LIS education in India;
- Committees and Commissions set up by Government of India;
- Various issues faced by LIS profession

LIS as a Profession

The primary purpose of LIS profession is to provide access to information to the right user at the right time at a right place in the right manner.

Librarianship is considered as a profession, as it possesses the following basic characteristics:

- A body of knowledge imparted in LIS schools;
- Intensive training and continued practice to gain mastery over the skills for knowledge organisation and retrieval;
- Oriented towards service to the society;
- Associations to bind the professionals;
- Standard terminology and practices; and
- Code of ethics.

Transformation of LIS Profession

- There is a profound change in the theory and practice of LIS profession over the years.
- The concept of librarianship has been changing according to the demands of the society and the bewildering growth of information and communication technology.
- Now, the “custodian librarian” has grown into a “knowledge manager” and a “digital librarian”.

Historical Background...



- Library and information science education in India is now century old. India has witnessed a steady growth in LIS education. The information and communication technology has impacted LIS education all round the world. The LIS discipline is growing in a way to serve the society in a better way.
- The history of LIS education in India can be divided into two eras, i.e., pre-independence and post-independence era.
- The foundation of library education in India may be considered to datesback in 1911 when W.A. Borden, a disciple of Melvil Dewey, was invited by Sayaji Rao Gaekwad II to develop the state library system.
- In 1915, another disciple of Dewey, Asa Don Dickinson was appointed as the librarian of Punjab University, Lahore and started three months course.
- After these two great efforts, professional associations started providing courses on library science education. The first such course was started by Andhra Desa Library Association in 1920, then by Madras Library Association (MALA) in 1929, by Bengal Library Association in 1937.

Historical Background



- Before independence, there were only five universities providing diploma courses in library science. These were: Andhra University (1935), Madras University (1937), Banaras Hindu University (1941), University of Bombay (1943) and University of Calcutta (1945). Out of these five universities, two diploma courses were started due to the great efforts of Dr. S.R. Ranganathan.
- After independence, new schools, colleges, universities and research institutions were opened to cater the educational needs of the country, and the need for qualified library personnel was felt. As a result, number of library science schools were increased. Aligarh Muslim University was the first to start B.Lib. course in the country.
- Dr. Ranganathan also moved from Banaras Hindu University to University of Delhi. University of Delhi started first diploma course in 1947 and then started Masters in Library Science in 1951. The first Ph.D. in LIS was awarded to D B Krishna Rao in 1957 under Dr. S. R. Ranganathan. M.Phil. was started in 1972 in University of Delhi.

Courses Offered in LIS in General

- Certificate Courses
- Diploma Courses
- Post-Graduate Diploma courses
- Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS)
- 3 Years B.A./B.Sc. (Hons.) in LIS
- B.A. (Subsidiary): Library and Information as a Paper
- Library Science as a subject in Class XI and XII
- Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) (One year)
- 2 Years Integrated MLIS
- Master's Degree (MSc) in Information Science or Library and Information Science
- Five Year Integrated Course: An integrated course in library and information science is provided by three universities after senior secondary in India.
- M.Phil (Master of Philosophy)
- Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy)
- D.Litt.
- Earlier there was
- Associateship in Information Science from INSDOC/NISCAIR and DRTC, etc.

Committees and Commissions by Govt. of India

- **Advisory Committee for Libraries (1957):** Also called as K. P. Sinha Committee, the committee gave its report in 1958. The main recommendations of the committee are:
 - to set up an expert committee for the re-organization of the syllabus, teaching methods and examination in prevailing diploma courses;
 - to provide financial assistance to universities by UGC for establishing full-fledged library and information science teaching departments, and
 - the teachers in library and information science should have same terms and conditions as in other departments.
- **National Policy on Library and Information System (1986):** In 1985, Government of India set up Committee (CONPOLIS) with Prof. D.P. Chattopadhyaya as its Chairman in 1985. It submitted its report in 1986. It was further assessed by Empowered Committee in 1988. Its recommendations were examined by Working Group which gave its report in 1993. Its recommendations are for Public Library system in India.
- **National Knowledge Commission (2005)** was constituted on 13th June 2005 with a time-frame of three years from 2nd October 2005 to 2nd October 2008. The report was named as “Libraries as Gateways to Knowledge.”
- **National Mission on Libraries (2012)**, a high level committee was set up by Ministry of Culture, Government of India in 2012 in pursuance of National Knowledge Commission’s recommendations. The National Mission on Libraries was launched on February 3, 2014, by the then President of India, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee. The NML has set up four working groups which have formulated the scheme for upgrading the libraries. The main component of NML is the creation of NVLI (National Virtual Library of India).

Committees and Commissions by UGC

- **Library Committee (1957)** was chaired by Dr. S R Ranganathan to look into the functioning of academic libraries. The committee recommended that the university departments should offer professional courses leading to bachelor's degree, master's degree and Ph.D. degree and convert all diploma courses into degree courses.
- **Review Committee on Library Science Education (1965)** was again chaired by Dr. S R Ranganathan. This committee was set up for the improvement of standard of LIS education. The committee recommended the syllabus of bachelor and master level courses. It gave recommendation about faculty-student ratio and formation of independent library science departments.
- **Curriculum Development Committees (1990 & 2001):** UGC set up two curriculum development committees. The first was in 1990 chaired by Prof. P N Kaula. Second was in 2001 headed by Dr. C R Karisiddappa. Both committees framed the syllabus to bring standardization in LIS education in India. The second curriculum committee laid emphasis on two-year integrated master's degree course and its implementation.

Problems of LIS Education

- No uniform nomenclature of LIS Schools
- Affiliation to Faculty of LIS Schools
- Different Career Profiles
- No Accreditation Body
- Mushrooming growth of LIS Education
- Inadequate Faculty Strength and non-uniformity in the Scales
- Lack of Infrastructure Facilities
- Curriculum Revision
- Selection Criteria and Intake of the Students, etc.

Recent Emerging Trends in LIS Education

- Less emphasis on Teaching of Traditional Techniques.
- CBCS Curricula.
- Emergence of MOOCs.
- Online Refresher Course in Library and Information Science under ARPIT.
- Increase in number of conferences and seminars organized on various LIS themes.
- Increased use of ICT and Disruptive technologies, etc.

Suggestions

- Full-fledge LIS departments should be there.
- National level Accreditation body should be formed to bring uniformity in the nomenclature and curricula.
- Proper faculty should be appointed.
- Proper infrastructure, libraries and IT labs should be maintained.
- In-service trainings should be provided both to teachers and professionals.
- Continuous revision of curriculum should be done keeping in mind the changes in the society.
- Emphasis on practical education should be given.
- The mismatch between education and the job requirements should be overcome, etc.

Conclusion

- LIS profession has undergone metamorphosis due to technological changes.
- To go along the changes, LIS education needs to be revamped.
- All LIS departments and professional associations across the country should come together to bring the uniform standardization in the LIS education according to the present needs.

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