

Developing of Library & Information Science Education in India with Special Reference to West Bengal

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Abstract:

It has been found that 'quality assurance' plays a vital role in the field of education as well as library and information science education. There is an urgent need for having a national level accreditation body to maintain uniformity regarding the course curriculum, syllabus, course content, admission policy, examination procedure, infrastructural facilities, intake capacity as well as the duration of course all over the country. With many other issues this paper is an effort how to improve the quality assurance process in LIS education in India with special emphasis to West Bengal.

Key Words: Library & Information Science education- India; Gazette Notification-UGC; Library education Committee; Library Statistics; Quality assurance; Librarianship

Introduction :

India is a witness to have research in Library and Information Science (LIS) in international standard during the second decade of the last century. In India individual research started during 1930s with Dr. S.R. Ranganathan who was actively involved in various areas of librarianship viz. classification, cataloguing, documentation library administration etc. The formal Library and Information Science education in India was started in the year 1911 by William Borden, a disciple of Melvil Dewey at Baroda State. By 2017 the Library and Information Science education in India become 106 years old. During this time various new Departments have been established in different universities and institutions in various parts of India. Introduction of LIS courses at the university level started in the year 1915 with a certificate course in Punjab University. Andhra University started a diploma course in library science in 1935. In 1938, a postgraduate diploma course in librarianship was started by Madras University. In 1949 the University of Delhi started the postgraduate diploma course. The first batch was awarded BLIS degree in 1949. In the same year, a two-year programme for MLIS was introduced replacing the BLIS programme, simultaneously they started first Ph. D programme in Library and Information Science.

Course wise objectives of LIS education :

The UGC Model Curriculum Report [1], 2001 lists six levels of courses in Library and Information science education in India, starting from Certificate/Diploma, Bachelor, Masters, Mphil and PhD.

These programmes are offered on regular basis as well as through correspondence courses or distance education. Details about the types of courses are as follows.

(a) Certificate/Diploma Course

Certificate courses are mainly conducted by library associations; however, some departments in universities and affiliated colleges are also conducting this course. The duration of the course varies from few months to one academic year.

Objectives:

- To expose students about the concept of library, its types, objectives and functions
- To acquaint elementary technical operations associated with a small library
- To motivate /encourage towards a career in librarianship.

Scope:

- To do routine jobs like as filing assistants, circulation assistants etc.

(b) Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS)

This is a one-year degree course conducted by universities after students graduate with a basic degree. Bachelor's degree prepares students for professional positions in college and university libraries or as a school librarian.

Objectives:

- To familiarize students the concept of librarianship and information science.
- To appraise different management tools and techniques to be applied in libraries and information centres.
- To expose students different components of information technology and its application in LIC"s.
- To make aware of various sources of information.

Scope:

- To do Routine/ Operational technical work
- To function in different sections of Library & documentation Centres

(c) Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS)

It is a post-graduate course offered after BLIS.

Objectives:

- To acquaint and expose the students about the trends and developments in information society.
- To familiarize different modes and patterns of information seeking behavior of the users to developed expertise in the analysis, organization and consolidation of information.
- To provide advance ICT knowledge and its application in LICs. To understand the importance of quantitative techniques including statistical methods.

Scope:

- Routine/Operational technical work, administrative at lower level
- To function as sections in charge

(d) M.Phil in Library & Information Science

This is a research programme offered by university departments after one's completion of MLIS. The University of Delhi started this programme in 1978, followed by many other universities such as Andhra, Tirupati, Annamalai, Vikram (Ujjain), and Gulbarga. The basic

requirement for admission is similar in all the universities but the duration of the course may vary.

Objectives:

- To make an advancement of knowledge and contribution to new ideas in the library and information science.
- To apply different methods of research design to find solutions to the problems, formulate research proposals.
- To demonstrate an innovative and scientific research in library and information science.

(e) Ph.D. Programme

This is an advanced level research programme being offered after the completion of MLIS or M.Phil degree in library science. The general qualification for admission is MLIS. However, LIS teachers and librarians in lecturer's scale are exempted from this requirement.

Objectives:

- The objective of the Ph.D programme is to allow a researcher to work independently in a specialized area of knowledge.
- To make contributions to innovative an original ideas to suggest modifications in the existing practices in the areas of library and information science

Scope:

- Planning, designing, developing and managing library & Information System
- To hold positions as heads of division.

LIS education in India-present statistics

Library and information science education in India is presently aged by 106 years and offered twelve different levels program like Certificate, Diploma, Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, M.Phil., Ph D., DLit. Presently in India, Library and Information Science (LIS) education is imparted through more than 181 universities and institutions. Among them—

- 131 Universities/Institutions are offering Bachelors degree
- 136 are offering Master's Degree,
- 21 are offering M.Phil degree
- 93 are offering Ph.D degree
- 39 (out of 136) are offering 2 Years Integrated MLISc Degree [2]

Observation:

1. 12 types of course offered in Library and Information Science, among them 9 types are in Masters level.
2. According to UGC latest notification, only two Bachelors and two Masters Degree are recognized. However, very interestingly we have found that 9 types of MLISc program [3] are also running in various universities in India. These are-
 - 1 year MLISc (non semester),
 - 1 year MLISc (two semester),
 - 2 years MLISc (non semester),
 - 2 years MLISc (four semester),
 - 2 years MLISc – DL (four semester)

- 2 years MS (LIS) (four semester)
 - 2 years integrated MLISc (four semester)
 - 2 years MSc in Library and Information Science
3. Unplanned proliferations of library schools
 4. Variations in syllabi and no norms or standards are maintained in regard to course contents.
 5. Lack of consensus regarding duration of the LIS courses at various levels.
 6. Lack of uniformity in student-teacher ratio.

LIS education in West Bengal

With the spread of Western education, Libraries started growing in different parts of undivided India. In the 19th century, various types of libraries emerged in different parts of undivided Bengal. The Calcutta Public Library was established in 1836, followed by establishment of the one hundred more public libraries in different districts of undivided Bengal by the end of the 19th century. At the beginning of the 20th century necessity was felt to co-ordinate the activities of those libraries and to organize the library movements in the province. It is in this context, the All India Public Library Conference, held at Belgaon in the year 1924 under the president ship of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, adopted a resolution urging the formation of library associations in each province of India. The resolution was moved by Sushil kumar Ghosh, a delegate from Bengal. A meeting was held in Calcutta, in Albert Hall on the 20th December, 1925. The meeting was presided over by J. A. Chapman, Librarian, Imperial Library. In this meeting All Bengal Library Association was formed with Poet Rabindranath Tagore as President. Sushil Kumar Ghosh became its first secretary. With the establishment of All Bengal Library Association, a province-wise library movement started gaining grounds [4].

In 1933 the All Bengal Library Association was renamed as Bangiya Granthagar Parishad in Bengali and Bengal Library Association in English and the All Bengal Library Conference was renamed as Bengal Library Conference. Certificate in Library Science course, conducted by this Association was started in the year 1937. The course is recognized by the Government. So, West Bengal has introducing LIS education first time through the establishment of Bengal Library Association. At present nine universities conducting Library and Information Science (LIS) course in West Bengal

University-wise LIS course in West Bengal

Following data has been collected from concern university web sites.

Sl. No.	Name of the University	Year of LIS course started	Course offered	Duration	Present intake
1.	University of Calcutta	1945	BLIS MLIS MLIS(Integrated) MPhil	1 year 2 years 5 years 2 years	55 24 40 15
2.	Jadavpur University	1964	BLIS MLIS MLIS(DL)	1 year 1 year 2 years	60 16 15
3.	Burdwan University	1965	BLIS MLIS MLIS(Integrated) MPhil	1 year 1 year 2 years 2 years	63 15 25 25

4.	Vidyasagar University	1985	BLIS MLIS	1 year 1 year	35 15
5.	Rabindra Bharati University	1985	BLIS MLIS	1 year 1 year	40 10
6.	North Bengal University	1990	BLIS MLIS	1 year 1 year	56 40
7.	Kalyani University	1991	BLIS MLIS MPhil(D)	1 year 1 year 1 year	30 15 55
8.	Gour Banga University	2016	2 yrs. Integrated MLIS with lateral Exit in one year with BLIS	2	20
9.	Netaji Open University	NA	BLIS(D) MLIS(D)	1 year 1 year	700 300

Role of UGC in Library and Information Science education

The University Grants Commission (UGC) of India is a statutory body set up by the government of India in 1956, for the coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of higher education especially in University level. It acts as a coordinating body between the Central and State Governments and the institutions of higher learning. It also acts as an advisory body to these Governments and organization on various issues relating to higher education.

Like other subjects, UGC concerted efforts for the improvement of the quality of LIS education in Indian universities. With this objective various Committees constituted by the University Grants Commission (UGC) since its inception in 1956. They are as follows-

1. Ranganathan Committee on Development of University and College Libraries, 1959.
2. Ranganathan Committee on Library Science in Indian Universities, 1965.
3. Kaula Committee on Curriculum Development in Library and Information Science, 1993.
4. Karisiddappa Committee on Curriculum Development in Library and Information Science, 2001.

The recommendations made by these committees at different points of time provide valuable guidelines in respect of standardization of curriculum, enrolment, and infrastructure, quality of teachers, teaching and evaluation methodology, research programs.

Apart from the set up various committees UGC has played major role to develop various other things which had directly related to Library and Information Science education. These are-

- (1) Set up of INFLIBNET
- (2) Development of SOUL and UGC Infonet
- (3) Set up NAAC to establish quality in higher education in India.
- (4) Initiated PLANNER

As per UGC Regulation DO NO. F.1-10/2004 Pt. (CPP-II) dated 11 November 2009 regarding specification of degrees (Gazette Notification 23rd May, 2009) [5] it has been found that UGC has enlisted two Bachelors Degree and two Masters Degree.

It again published Gazette Notification 5th July, 2014 Part III Sec 4 No. F 5-1/2013 (CPP-II) page 2989 [6]. Here they specify the degree its level, duration and entry level qualification as follows-

LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE					
	Specified Degrees		Level	Minimum Duration (Years)	Entry Qualification
	Abbreviated	Expanded			
38	B.Lib. Sc	Bachelor of Library Sciences	BACHELOR'S	1	BACHELOR'S
39	B.Lib.I. Sc	Bachelor of Library & Information Sciences	BACHELOR'S	1	BACHELOR'S
40	M.Lib. Sc	Master of Library Sciences	MASTER'S	1	B.Lib. Sc
41	M.Lib.I. Sc	Master of Library & Information Sciences	MASTER'S	1	B.Lib.I. Sc
	M.L.I. Sc	be restructured as M.Lib.I. Sc			

UGC has quite specifically mentioned that the course duration and entry level qualification of BLIS and MLIS degree(s). So, very simple we cannot go against these rules.

Suggestion:

There are so many problems that libraries and librarianship face. It is only some suggestion that helps to solve those problems.

- 1) Since LIS is a professional course, therefore importance should be given to all the professional activities in every sphere. If someone is involved in projects or internship they should also be given valid credit points.
- 2) In case of library assistants, school librarians or any other person who is involved in proper library activities, they should all be given credit points.
- 3) It is very necessary to visit different libraries (public, academic, special libraries) during the duration of the course. This should be implemented at once to give a real experience.
- 4) Time is an essential factor in any professional course which is applicable in LIS also, unlike other general courses (Bengali, English, Geography, etc.) the semester system should be abolished.
- 5) A student quality cannot be measured by the factor regarding only marks. Another important aspect is the working experience of that particular student or candidate.
- 6) This type of professional course cannot be executed or run without proper infrastructure or tools, though some distance mode courses are undergoing without proper infrastructure.
- 7) It is very necessary to give importance to the degrees of our own profession rather than concentrating on to the degrees of other subjects. In this case, importance may not be given to the double master degree holders.
- 8) If there is an any specialization (like masters in other subjects) then their importance should be judged by the concerned specialized institutes only.

Conclusion:

We should give more emphasis on working experience in any type of proper library activities apart from other master degrees. It should be keep in mind this type of professional course cannot be run without proper infrastructure or tools like distance mode. It should be needed a national level accreditation body to maintain uniformity regarding the course curriculum, syllabus, course content, admission policy, examination procedure, infrastructural

facilities, intake capacity as well as the duration of course all over the country. We should follow the norms and guidelines of UGC for defining the duration of the said course. Simultaneously, UGC should take initiatives to minimize various anomalies of their notifications time to time.

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