An examination of the history of Library and Information Science in India

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ABSTRACT

This document outlines the historical evolution of Library and Information Science (LIS) education in India, highlighting its growth and development over time. The inception of LIS education can be traced back to the initiative of the former Maharaja of Baroda, who engaged an American librarian to establish public libraries within the state. Following India's independence, library associations played a pivotal role in advancing LIS education across the nation. The discipline gained formal recognition with the establishment of various university-level courses. This journey has been characterized by significant growth and maturation. The recommendations put forth by the National Knowledge Commission present a valuable opportunity for necessary reforms and transformations within the educational framework that should be actively pursued.

KEYWORDS: Library history, Information science, Education in India, LIS education, Knowledge, Librarians.

INTRODUCTION

The year 2011 marked the centenary of Library and Information Science (LIS) education in India, prompting a period of reflection on the current state of LIS and identifying areas requiring enhancement. A historical overview offers valuable insights into the evolution and progress of this field, which is essential for such an analysis. This article aims to provide an overview of the historical milestones in LIS education in India since its establishment. The dawn of the 20th century heralded the inception of LIS education in India. Significant recognition is given to Sayyaji Rao Gaekwad, the Maharaja of the former princely State of Baroda, for spearheading the LIS education movement in the nation. The first educators in this domain were American librarians William Alanson Borden and Asa Don Dickenson. Additionally, John MacFarlane, an Englishman and the inaugural librarian of the Imperial Library (now known as the National Library in Kolkata), played a crucial role in training librarians in India. Notably, MacFarlane's training program, which is documented as the first instance of LIS education in the country, occurred between 1901 and 1906 at the Imperial Library, where training sessions were conducted for its personnel. This initiative was subsequently expanded to include librarians in Calcutta and other regions. It is also believed that some form of training in library operations existed for university library staff before this period.

THE BARODA SCHOOL

The inaugural formal training course focused on library operations commenced in 1911, marking a significant development in the country. This initiative took place in the former Baroda, where classes were organized to provide professional training for librarians. W.A. Borden was invited by the state to enhance its library system, which included the establishment of library education as a key component. The training program not only facilitated library development but also benefited from it, as trainees utilized the knowledge and skills gained during their training in practical library settings. Conversely, the library served as a practical environment for trainees to apply and refine their learning. The class consisted of ten of the library's top employees, who participated in a year of theoretical instruction followed by an additional year of practical training. Additionally, Borden initiated a short-term summer training program lasting five months for librarians from towns and villages, both within and outside the state. This summer course covered various topics, including book selection, ordering, accessioning, classification, lending, preparation of quarterly and annual reports, billing, children's libraries, traveling libraries, and contemporary perspectives on librarianship.

PUNJAB UNIVERSITY

A significant milestone in the evolution of the Library and Information Science (LIS) education in India occurred in 1915 when it was introduced at the university level at Punjab University in Lahore, which was part of undivided India at the time. Asa Don Dickinson, serving as the university librarian, initiated the program. The curriculum included fundamental topics such as decimal classification, cataloging rules, subject headings, dictionary catalogues, and open shelving. The course was designed to last three months. Additionally, Dickinson authored the first library science book, titled "Punjab Library Premier," to enhance comprehension of the course material. Notably, this institution was the second of its kind in the world and the first in Asia, following the establishment of LIS education in the United States.

LABHU RAM, UNDER DICKINSON'S GUIDANCE, LATER UPDATED THE CURRICULUM

The revised course encompassed the following topics:

 (i) foreign languages;

 (ii) linguistic survey of India;

 (iii) fundamental selection;

 (iv) copyright law in England and India;

 (v) sources of provincial history in India;

 (vi) oriental bibliography;

 (vii) significant milestones in English literature;

 (viii) library architecture, including design and equipment;

 (ix) a literary survey from Tennyson to Bernard Shaw;

 (x) Anglo-Indian literatures; and

 (xi) open access and technical libraries. The course remained active until 1947, undergoing various modifications and updates over time. It had a duration of six months, with graduation as the minimum requirement for admission. This represented a significant step in the evolution of Library and Information Science as a recognized discipline.

LIS EDUCATION BY LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS

The development of Library and Information Science (LIS) education began in the northern and western regions of the country before gradually expanding to the south. In 1920, LIS professionals recognized the importance of education and took action through the Library Association. They organized lectures covering a range of subjects, including the history, literature, and culture of Andhra Pradesh, in addition to the library movement. The curriculum was later revised to encompass a broader array of library science topics.

In 1929, the Madras Library Association (MALA) established a School of Library Science to train librarians for schools and colleges in the Madras region. By 1941, this had evolved into a postgraduate diploma program. To enroll, candidates need to have completed their intermediate or matriculation and possess four years of experience working in a library (Andhra University, Department of Library and Information Science, 1987, p.7). Then, in 1965, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) became the second institution to offer Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) courses, though these were temporarily suspended from 1968 to 1969. Shortly thereafter, in 1943, Bombay University introduced a part-time evening Diploma in Librarianship program, initiated by Dr. P.M. Joshi, the university librarian at the time. This program was a postgraduate diploma lasting two terms, but matriculated students could participate as well, requiring them to complete four terms instead.

In 1945, the University of Calcutta launched a one-year diploma program, thanks to the efforts of Kumara Munindra Deb Rai. This program ran until 1968, after which it was upgraded to a Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) in 1969. Professor S.R. Ranganathan played a key role in establishing library and information science (LIS) education in India, beginning with his initiatives at Madras University and Banaras Hindu University. In 1947, he joined the University of Delhi, where he initiated the first postgraduate diploma course. The inaugural class received their diplomas in 1948 and continued their education, earning their BLIS in 1949. That same year, a two-year Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) program replaced the BLIS program, and the PhD program was also introduced at the university. The University of Delhi became the first institution in the British Commonwealth to offer a doctoral program in library science. In 1956, Nagpur University and M.S. University, Baroda began their library science courses, followed by Vikram University in Ujjain the next year. The first PhD in library science was awarded in 1957 to D.B. Krishna Rao from the University of Delhi, with Professor S.R. Ranganathan as his advisor. By the end of 1960, five additional universities-Hyderabad, Osmania, Punjab, Poona, and Rajasthan—had established library science programs.

During the 1960s, approximately twelve library schools offered education in library science across various levels, excluding the M.Phil degree. The early sixties marked a significant growth period for library science, largely due to funding allocated for libraries in the Government of India's third five-year plan. Additionally, the University Grants Commission (UGC) provided essential support for libraries and library education, leading to the establishment of new library schools. The early 1990s signified a modernization phase in library science, with libraries beginning to adopt information technology. The Indian government promoted this shift through various incentives, while the UGC contributed generous funding for the creation of computer labs. As a result, library schools updated their curricula to include courses on computer applications in libraries and information science, while also providing

practical experience through hands-on training in computer labs. This era also saw efforts towards consolidation in library education.

PERIOD OF GROWTH IN LIS EDUCATION

The 1960s were a pivotal period for library and information science (LIS) education in India. In 1962, Ranganathan established the Documentation Research and Training Centre (DRTC) in Bangalore, affiliated with the Indian Statistical Institute, to offer specialized training in documentation. Around the same time, the Indian National Scientific Documentation Training Centre (INSODOC), now known as the National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR), was founded in 1957 under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in Delhi. INSODOC began offering an Associateship in Documentation in 1964, following its earlier short-term training programs for librarians, which continue to focus on ongoing education for LIS professionals. Both of these institutions play a crucial role in providing specialized training in documentation and information services. They have consistently updated their curricula to align with evolving industry needs, contributing significantly to the advancement of the profession in the country.

A significant milestone in the advancement of Library and Information Science (LIS) education in the country was the establishment of the Review Committee for LIS education in 1961, chaired by Ranganathan. In 1965, the committee issued recommendations that significantly influenced LIS education. Key suggestions included the creation of dedicated faculty for teaching, eliminating part-time librarians as instructors, defining distinct objectives for Bachelor's and Master's degree programs, requiring a six-month apprenticeship in accredited libraries, and establishing a student-teacher ratio of 1:10 for the Bachelor's program and 1:5 for the Master's program. They also suggested a curriculum similar to that implemented at the University of Delhi. Furthermore, the formation of the Indian Association of Teachers of Library and Information Science (IATLIS) in 1969 marked another critical development at the decade's close, contributing to the discipline's growth. IATLIS organized its inaugural seminar in 1970, focusing on teaching methods in library science.

Between 1970 and 1980, the landscape of Library and Information Science (LIS) education in the country evolved steadily. Several new courses were introduced, including a two-year Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) program by the University of Calcutta in 1974. With the growing significance of information, there was a recognized need to revise course content. Karnataka University in Dharwad held a seminar to address necessary updates to the Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) syllabus, focusing on documentation and information handling skills for students entering the workforce. A significant step in curriculum advancement occurred in 1978 when the University of Delhi held a national seminar to discuss curriculum reforms for MLIS programs. Proposed new courses included System Analysis, Statistical Methods, and Information Storage and Retrieval, while existing courses were updated to incorporate topics such as International Information Systems and databases. Additionally, the University of Delhi introduced an M.Phil program, marking a first for the Commonwealth region. This decade also witnessed the awarding of a second PhD to Dr. Pandey S.K. Sharma, nearly twenty years after Dr. D.B. Krishna Rao received the first PhD in the field.

In the 1980s, microcomputers began to be used in library activities and services, leading to a shift in library education. As a result, library schools began to include computer-related topics in their course offerings. The University of Delhi was among the first to offer a paper on computer applications that also covered Pascal programming. Another significant development during this time was the launch of a two-year Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) program at the North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) in 1986 and the Madras University in 1988. This program was on par with other Master's degrees and allowed for a more comprehensive curriculum spread over two years. In the late 1980s, in addition to traditional classroom-based courses, several universities began offering distance learning programs at various levels. For example, M.L. Sukhadia University and Kashmir University began offering certificate-level correspondence courses. Punjab University introduced a diploma course, while the University of Madras started postgraduate courses. Andhra Pradesh Open University began offering a degree course in 1984. Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, introduced Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) in 1989, becoming a leader in library and information science education. It offers BLIS, MLIS, PhD, and PGDLAN (one-year postgraduate diploma) programs, with its course materials being highly regarded.

PERIOD OF MODERNISATION IN LIS EDUCATION

The beginning of automation tasks and the creation of software programs in libraries began in the 1990s. This initial push was a major boost from UNESCO, which offered libraries the free software CDS/ISIS and also offered training expertise. It sent international experts to train local individuals. At the same time, software specifically tailored to the country's needs and eventually proprietary software was introduced. Libraries began to include software in their library science programs. At first, practical workshops were held at the university's computer centers.

In 1992, various departments began to establish their own computer centers. Additionally, there were significant changes to the curriculum, with the decision being made by the Curriculum Development Committee Report11, led by Prof. P.N. Kaula, who is widely recognized as the most esteemed librarian educator. This report suggested the content for Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS), Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS), and proposed a two-year Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) degree, which eventually led to a shift towards a more integrated educational approach. The 1990s also saw the creation of library and information networks (INFLIBNET, DELNET, CALIBNET, etc.) in India to address the growing scarcity of resources. Concurrently, the integration of telecommunication technology into the curriculum was a gradual process. The new millennium began with the CDC report12 in 2001, which highlighted the importance of preparing for the digital revolution. This report underscored the necessity for an integrated two-year Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) degree, introducing new subjects to the curriculum and offering a variety of optional courses to provide professionals with choices. The University of Madras altered the designation of their degree to Master of Science in Information Science, omitting the term 'Library' from the name.

Taking it a step further, the International School of Information Management (ISIM) was established to offer Masters and PhD degrees in Information Systems and Management. It is a truly international company with faculty from India and other countries. DRTC has also revamped its curriculum and even changed the name of its degree to Master of Science (MS) in Information Sciences. The latest development is the introduction of e-learning, with

IGNOU taking the lead in introducing MLIS in e-mode in 2008. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC)13 set up by the Government of India has suggested several measures for the overall development of LIS education in the country. These are:

i. Instructors, who will teach in areas together with ICT packages in libraries and other present-day strategies, have to have a specialization in these regions. A machine ought to be installed to allow stringent evaluation of the performance of the lecturers. A suitable gadget of rewards, including promotions, must be instituted.

ii. E-getting materials for upgrading the capabilities of the prevailing body of workers ought to be supplied.

iii. suitable bodily facilities consisting of school rooms, must be made to be had to each LIS department.

iv. All departments of LIS must install laptop centers and well-prepared departmental libraries with suitable teaching tools.

v. There must be a 1:10 trainer-pupil ratio.

vi. It was felt that the branch ought to have now not greater than 50 students in one magnificence for the BLIS course, 20 college students for the MLIS path, and PhD college students according to the college norms.

vii. The minimal staffing pattern for the BLIS route and the MLIS has been recommended.

viii. A system should be set up to foster near cooperation between the teaching/research college and training librarians in any respect academic and studies establishments.

ix. Organising a properly-geared-up institute for advanced training and studies in library and facts technology and offerings might be the important impetus to this task.

x. national assignment on Libraries have to be installed right away, for three years. The undertaking must in the end be transformed into a permanent fee.

xi. Revamp LIS training, training, and study facilities. The proposed: undertaking/fee on Libraries has to verify as quickly as possible the manpower necessities of the country inside the place of LIS management, and take necessary steps to satisfy the country's requirement via LIS education and education.

xii. To keep the LIS zone abreast of the latest tendencies, vital encouragement should be delivery to analyze after evaluating the studies status in this discipline. This is a golden opportunity for LIS education to Improve. It has been realized at the highest level that libraries and library science education need revamping. Librarians should come together and act to take the profession on a high pedestal.

DISCUSSION

With training programs in library routines and procedures for both staff and outsiders, library and information science education has advanced significantly. The following step was awarding certificates to each participant. The program's initial term of three months was ultimately extended to six months. The true moment of truth for expansion occurred when colleges began to offer certificate programs in librarian training. A university education gives one a higher education mark of authority. Later on, the programs were raised to diploma and then postgraduate diploma levels. When it was solely open to graduates, admissions became more rigorous. As a result, library science education was given postgraduate status, paving the way for the field's development.

The postgraduate diploma was upgraded to a BLIS and then an MLIS, marking the next phase in the evolution of LIS education. This advancement played a significant role in the discipline's academic recognition. All of it was made possible by the perseverance and vision of a group of devoted professionals, including M.O. Thomos, S.

Dasgupta, Asadulla Khan, and S.R. Ranganathan. Another significant development in Indian LIS education was the launch of the PhD program and the first PhD to be awarded.

Ranganathan's contribution to mainstream literature at the international level helped bring the Indian flag to the global level. The contents are added to the programs at different levels. There were some Indians in the library literature. Parallel developments in the library scene have served as a reservoir for graduates of the information and communication sciences schools. However the situation did not last long for two reasons: (i) the exponential growth of library schools without considering the situation of supply and demand in the country and (ii) the opening of library schools without the minimum basic physical and intellectual infrastructure. This situation lasted for a long time, resulting in quantitative growth and little qualitative growth. The syndrome has affected all levels, from university to doctorate.

CONCLUSION

There are still some individual cases in the form of well-known institutions and individuals in information science and library education. We should learn from them by taking them as case studies. Cooperative and coordinated efforts by teachers, librarians, and active associations are necessary. The problems are more or less known, there must be a strong desire to work toward general improvement. Libraries occupy a a special place in the development of a society, as evidenced by the fact that leaders showed a great interest in this matter and were responsible for the origin of information science and library education in the country Foreign experts were invited to give a solid foundation and an international touch. Information Science and Library Education in India is fortunate to have its torchbearer, none other then the father of library science, the great Professor S.R. Of all her qualities, her status as a teacher has been a boon to librarianship in India. He has contributed at all levels, whether creating departments, and courses, defining the content or planning a research base for the discipline. Madras University Department of Library Science, Banaras Hindu University, DRTC are all his children and still have a name among many others. We need to take stock of the situation: what we have achieved, where we are, where we have not managed to go, and how to improve. History is a great teacher. We learn from our tradition; which has led to a name for the country in the education of information science and communication throughout the world. One of the obvious reasons is Ranganathan. However, library professionals must reflect on what we have learned and continue on this path. The canons of competition and currency are some of its important lessons. The library must evolve according to the needs of the times. It is time for librarians and educators to come together to bridge all the gaps and take information science and library education to greater heights.

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