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Different types of job opportunities are available in library and information science

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Abstract

This paper examines the historical development and current landscape of Library and Information Science (LIS) education in India, highlighting its evolution from early training programs to a comprehensive multi-disciplinary field. The study traces the origins of library education in India back to 1911 and outlines significant milestones, including the establishment of postgraduate programs and the proliferation of LIS departments across universities. It categorizes the various levels of education available, from certificate courses to doctoral programs, emphasizing the growing demand for qualified library professionals to meet the needs of diverse sectors, including academic, public, research, special, and corporate libraries. The paper also identifies emerging job opportunities and roles for LIS graduates, reflecting the profession's transformation in the digital age, where library professionals serve as vital information providers and educators. Furthermore, it underscores the necessity for continuous professional development and the integration of advanced information technologies in library services, secondary strategic partnerships between educational institutions and industry to enhance employability, and adapt to evolving information landscapes. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the significance of LIS education in fostering knowledge management and information literacy in contemporary society.

Keywords: Library and information science (LIS), library professionals, LIS education, job opportunities, digital age

Introduction

A significant growth in education and higher education worldwide. Each nation of repute has established an educational system and infrastructure to educate its populace, and India is no exception. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, there has been a rapid expansion in higher education institutions, especially following India's independence in 1947. The newly independent India initiated its development programs to achieve new educational, cultural, and economic goals at the national level. These advancements at academic institutions have led to the establishment of more libraries, which have had to embrace new responsibilities to address society's evolving needs and demands. Libraries are acknowledged to play a crucial role in education, scientific research, and the socio-economic development of a nation. This highlights the requirement for professionally qualified personnel to effectively and efficiently manage and operate libraries and information centers. More trained library professionals became essential to support the increasing number of libraries. Consequently, library science departments began to emerge, and library science evolved into a distinct field of specialization, complete with normative principles, theories, techniques, and practices that were considered adequate to address the expanding dimensions of library services.

Historical Development

The modern phase in the development of librarianship education began in the mid-19th century, when librarians worldwide recognized the need for organized education and training to manage growing library collections. In India, the origins of library science education can be traced back to 1911, when a brief training program in library science was established in the Baroda State, thanks to Maharaj Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda. His admiration for the outstanding work of Western public libraries led him to hire American librarian Mr. W. A. Borden as the Director of the State Library Department. Mr. Borden, a former student of Mr. Melvil Dewey—the founder of the first library school at Columbia College in New York in 1887—took on this role. In 1915, another of Dewey's students, Mr. A. Dickenson, serving as the librarian of Punjab University in Lahore, began a three-month hands-on training program for working librarians. Before India's independence, only five universities—Andhra University, Banaras Hindu University, Calcutta University, and Madras University—offered diploma programs in library science.

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In 1920, Professor S. R. Ranganathan greatly enhanced the framework and recognition of library education by launching the first structured program in partnership with the Madras Library Association and Madras University. This library school was later acquired by Madras University in 1931, and by 1937, the program evolved into a Postgraduate Diploma in Library Science, marking it as the first of its kind in India. The University of Delhi took the lead in establishing a comprehensive Department of Library Science shortly before independence in 1946, beginning to accept students into its PG Diploma program in 1947. In 1951, this diploma was upgraded to a Master's in Library Science (M. Lib. Sc). Following that, between 1956 and 1959, six more LIS departments were established at Aligarh Muslim University, M. S. University of Baroda, Nagpur University, Osmania University, Pune University, and Vikram University.

The growth of LIS departments has continued since the 1960s. Over the years, LIS education has developed into a comprehensive multidisciplinary field. Numerous institutions—including university departments, colleges, library associations, and specialized organizations—offer LIS programs at undergraduate, graduate, and research levels. Currently, 96 universities in India provide Library and Information Science education as independent departments across different educational tiers. The University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) support research in library and information science by awarding scholarships to doctoral students.

Levels of Education

The various levels of Library and Information Science (LIS) education in India are outlined as follows:

Certificate/Diploma in Library Science (C/D. Lib. Sc.)

Numerous polytechnic colleges, schools, and Library Associations in India provide introductory library science courses that typically span six months to one year. The minimum requirement for enrolment in these courses is the completion of 10+2. These programs equip students for entry-level professional roles in libraries, such as Library Attendants and Clerks.

Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS)

This program is a one-year postgraduate degree course. The fundamental eligibility criterion is the possession of a three-year degree in any field. This course prepares graduates for junior professional roles.

Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS)

Certain universities offer the Master of Library and Information Science as a one-year postgraduate degree, while others offer it as a two-year integrated course. Many institutions that previously offered one-year BLISc and MLISc programs are transitioning to a two-year integrated MLIS course to align with other master's degree offerings. This program prepares individuals for senior professional roles in libraries, documentation centers, and/or information centers, as well as for teaching positions.

Associateship in Documentation and Information Science (ADIS)

The Documentation Research and Training Centre (DRTC)

in Bangalore (Karnataka) offers a two-year Associateship in Documentation and Information Science, which is now referred to as a Master of Science in Information Science. The National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR) in New Delhi, previously known as INSDOC, also provides a two-year documentation program for graduates, namely the Associateship in Documentation (AID). Both the DRTC and NISCAIR impose upper age limits for their courses, as established by the university departments concerning the ICT syllabus and enrolment capacity.

Master of Philosophy in Library and Information Science, M.Phil.

The Library and Information Science programme equips students for advanced research in LIS. To be eligible for admission to this program, candidates must possess a minimum of 55% in MLISc or an equivalent degree recognized by the UGC. As individuals with higher qualifications are favoured for better positions, numerous students are choosing M.Phil. courses to enhance their qualifications for superior roles.

Doctor of Philosophy in Library and Information Science

This advanced research program is available upon completing an MLISc or M.Phil. degree, depending on the university's requirements. The primary objective of a research degree, whether M.Phil. or Ph.D., is to train candidates in research methodologies and to cultivate critical and analytical thinking skills, enabling them to assume leadership roles within the profession. Other academic offerings include certificate courses, diplomas, post-diplomas, and honours programs in library and information science, a BLIS, a certificate in ICT applications in libraries (CICAL), an undergraduate diploma course, and a P.G. diploma in library automation and networking (PGDLAN). Library and information science courses are available in both face-to-face and distance learning formats. Additionally, various advanced short-term training programs are provided as continuing education by institutions and organizations equipped with the necessary infrastructure and facilities. such as NISCAIR in New Delhi, SAARC DOC Centre (SDC) in New Delhi, INFLIBNET in Ahmedabad, NASSDOC in New Delhi, DELNET in New Delhi, IIM in Lucknow, SENDOC in Hyderabad, and associations like ILA, IASLIC, and SIS. University LIS departments also conduct short training courses.

Job Opportunities in LIS

Currently, there are promising career opportunities in Library and Information Science. Qualified library professionals find employment in libraries, information centers, and various other fields. The job prospects in LIS can be illustrated across the following sectors:

1. Academic Library Sector

An academic library serves as a vital component of a college, university, or other postsecondary institution, aimed at addressing the information and research requirements of its students, faculty, and staff. Librarians and information professionals play a key role in numerous academic libraries, which are established to meet the informational

demands of their respective institutions. Academic libraries and information centers encompass school libraries, college libraries, university libraries, and institutional libraries or information centers. It is noteworthy that CBSE-affiliated schools generally feature a well-structured library and a designated librarian. Under UGC regulations, colleges and universities are mandated to maintain a high-quality library.

2. Public Library Sector

These institutions are established through legislation within their respective jurisdictions. Typically, they are managed by a board of directors or a library commission from the community. Mission statements, service, and collection policies represent the essential administrative characteristics of public libraries. Occasionally, private lending libraries operate like public libraries. There exists an extensive network of public libraries at various administrative levels of government, including villages, panchayats, blocks, district commissioners, and the state, among others. Therefore, it is evident that there are significant job opportunities for library and information professionals within the public library sector in India.

3. Research Library Sector

India ranks among the leading countries in basic research. Government research institutions are responsible for R&D activities in India, with support from the government for research institutes and private research organizations. The country is home to scientific research institutions, social science research institutes, humanities research institutes, and specialized institutes. All these institutions require library professionals, from the highest levels to junior grades, to ensure the efficient operation of their libraries and information centers. Some research institutions also employ library professionals in scientific roles. Consequently, research institutions represent a significant sector for the employment of library professionals.

4. Special Library Sector

Numerous technical institutes possess special libraries or information centers, which encompass news, law, government, engineering colleges, medical colleges, management colleges, prisons, corporate entities, and specialized institutes or organizations such as the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), and industrial companies like Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL). Any library owned and operated by an organization is classified as a special library. There exists a vast array of career opportunities for qualified library and information professionals in these libraries and information centers.

5. Libraries Associated with Institutions of National Importance, Museums, and Archives

India boasts a significant number of institutions of national significance, museums, archives, and well-organized libraries and information centers. These represent promising areas for skilled professionals.

6. Banking Sector Library

The Indian banking network, comprising several thousand banks, ranks among the largest banking systems globally. This banking system is integral to the Indian economy, and specialized libraries play a vital role in achieving this

objective. Reserve banks, nationalized banks, and private banks operate libraries to effectively implement banking policies. Qualified library professionals have the opportunity to contribute to these banks.

7. Corporate Sector Libraries

Large corporations, in particular, maintain Libraries / Information Centers to meet their informational requirements. These organizations employ qualified professionals in roles such as Information Scientists, Information Managers, Database Managers, Resource Managers, Knowledge Workers, Library Supervisors, and Librarians, among others. Recently, the National Knowledge Commission of India has proposed the establishment of the National Library Commission to enhance library networks across the country. Consequently, the prospects for librarianship appear increasingly promising.

8. Libraries of Non-Government Organizations:

Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) with national and international recognition necessitate the expertise and services of library professionals for the organization of their libraries. In India, numerous NGOs have established libraries and information centers, providing professionals with opportunities to engage in their work.

9. Private Libraries

From ancient times to the present, private libraries of various types have catered to the information needs of the user community. In ancient India, institutions such as Takshasila, Vikramshila, Nalanda, and Kanchipuram maintained extensive libraries. The Virtual Private Library develops highly informative custom subject directories utilizing advanced computer programs. A multitude of talented library professionals are dedicated to their work.

10. Manuscript Libraries

Manuscripts written in Sanskrit, Pali, and various other Indic languages that embody the history and culture of India require preservation. Manuscript libraries are responsible for collecting, organizing, and safeguarding these invaluable treasures of the nation. India is home to numerous manuscript libraries, including the Oriental Research Institute and the Manuscript Library. Library professionals with specialized expertise have the opportunity to contribute their skills in these institutions. Consequently, the prospects for librarianship appear more promising. In light of the information revolution, qualified library and information professionals are branching out into various new growth sectors, including database management, the development of reference tools, training users of databases, bibliographical projects, and the organization and management of information units.

Web Study of Job Portal

The discussion centers on where to find job information. It was noted that the most important job portal is the internet, which provides web-based job information. Web portals offer various services such as e-mail, news, job postings, and more. Today, many job portals are available online, including Monster India, Naukri India, Times Jobs, Jobs India, Indeed India, LIS Jobs- Info Librarian, LIS Links, Jobs Vacancy, Jobs Now, and others. These platforms

provide information about different types of jobs related to library science.

Medium of Job Information - Where to Search

Print and electronic media serve as the primary sources of information for job seekers. Both print and online versions of newspapers, journals, and professional newsletters advertise various job openings. Nowadays, most library positions are posted on the Internet, which includes online registration and resume submission. The Internet has become the most significant resource for job hunting. It has been noted that many employers prefer online advertisements. Below are the channels for recruiting library professionals in India:

Service Commissions

The Union Public Service Commission and the Staff Selection Commission are the governmental bodies responsible for recruiting various job categories for the Central Government. Each State Government has its own Public Service Commission for government job recruitment. Additionally, various ministries, departments, and councils of the government also independently advise on vacant positions. The College Service Commission is the agency responsible for college librarians, while the School Service Commission caters to school librarians.

Advertisement in Newspapers

National and local newspapers are crucial media for advertising job vacancies. Both the print and online editions of newspapers are primary sources in this context.

Announcement in Journals

Scholarly journals within the field not only enlighten readers but also announce potential job opportunities.

Announcement in Professional Newsletters

Newsletters are serial publications available in print, electronic, or other formats, containing recent information or news. Newsletters and house journals also serve as valuable sources of job information within the discipline.

Advertisement in Employment Periodicals

In India, there are periodicals published in English and various Indian languages that focus on employment. Notable publications include Employment News, Karmakhetra, Rozgar Samachar, and Yojana, among others.

Job Portals on the Internet

A web portal, often called a link page, consolidates information from multiple sources into one platform. Besides standard search engine functions, web portals offer various services including email, news, job listings, databases, and more. Many job portals are available online. These portals serve as resources for finding job openings in different library service categories.

Discussion Forum in LIS

A Discussion Forum is an online space where users, usually sharing common interests, can participate in open conversations. This term (also known by other names such as discussion group, message board, or online forum) refers to any online 'bulletin board' where people can post messages and expect responses. In India, like in other fields,

there are also discussion forums in Library and Information Science (LIS). These forums offer a place to share knowledge, experiences, and opinions. Participation in these forums helps members stay updated on recent developments, including job opportunities in the field.

Iatlis

The Indian Association for Teachers in Library and Information Science hosts a discussion forum. IATLIS is a national organization for educators. It currently has 528 members. The main goals of the forum are to improve communication and promote idea exchanges among professionals. It publishes the IATLIS communication. Submissions can be sent to: iatlis@yahoo.com. Information can be found at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/oatlis/>

LIS forum

LIS-forum functions as an email-based discussion platform for library and information professionals in India. It is managed by the National Centre for Science Information (NCSI) at the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore. Established in 1999, it now has 1992 members. The forum aims to promote inter-professional relationships. Additionally, this group is dedicated to sharing knowledge and experiences among information professionals from both developing and developed nations. Submissions can be sent to: lis-forum@ncsi.oosc.ernet.in. Further information is available at: <http://ncsi.iise.ernet.in/mailman/listinfo/lis-forum>

NMLIS

The New Millennium LIS professional forum encourages the exchange of views, ideas, and opinions related to the library and information sector. Founded in 1999, it currently has 1992 members. This forum aims to strengthen inter-professionalism. Moreover, it promotes the sharing of knowledge and experiences among information professionals from developing and developed countries. Submissions can be sent to: nmlis@yahoo.com. Further information is available at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/nmlis/>

D8IGILIB India

The Digital Libraries - India, commonly called the digilib India group, is an initiative aimed at raising awareness about issues related to digital libraries, library automation, and management. Established in 2001, Digilib India currently has 739 members and focuses specifically on topics relevant to the Indian library professional community. Submissions can be sent to: digilib_india@yahoo.com. Further information is available at: http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/digilib_india/

OADL

Open Access Digital Libraries (OADL) is a community dedicated to supporting and promoting open access to scholarly literature. Founded in 2006, this forum currently has 240 members. The digital libraries of OADL comprise collections of digital objects accessible to its users.

LIBTECH

LIBTECH serves as an open discussion forum designed for

communication among libraries and information professionals, focusing on the analysis, planning, management, and application of innovative technologies in library automation, networking, digital library systems, virtual libraries, and more. This forum offers a platform for the exchange of ideas and experiences regarding specific developments in technological fields pertinent to the discipline. Established in 2004, it currently has 721 registered members.

Corporate Libraries

Corporate Librarians is an interactive forum tailored for corporate librarians. Its primary objective is to foster a network among corporate librarians, promoting the sharing of insights for mutual benefit.

Submissions can be made to:

corporatelibrns@yahoo.com.

Further information is available at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/coporatelibrns/>

India-LIS

The India-LIS is a mailing list dedicated to Library and Information Science professionals in India. It aims to establish an open platform where professionals can share their knowledge and experiences to advance Library and Information Science education.

Submissions can be made to: India-lis@infoserve.inist.fr.

Additional information can be found at:

<http://infoserve.inist.fr/wwsympa.fcgi.info/india-lis>.

Blogs

A web log, commonly referred to as a "Blog," is a type of website typically maintained by individuals or organizations, featuring regular entries that include commentary, event descriptions, or other materials. R.S. Gordon launched a blog titled LIS jobs (www.lisjobs.com) in 1996 to provide career information for librarians and information professionals. Another significant blog (www.lisjobs.blogspot.com) posts updates on vacant job positions across various categories. These blogs chronologically announce vacancies on the final date for application submissions.

Professional Membership

Membership in professional associations. Regular involvement in study circles and meetings with field experts enriches professionals while enhancing job opportunities.

Building a network with professional colleagues

Liaison and communication among professional colleagues at conferences are also beneficial for job searching. Establishing human networks informally through social gatherings, professional meetings, mock interviews, etc., all contribute to placement and success.

Conclusion

Most positions in Library and Information Science (LIS) require additional competencies, including effective communication skills, proficiency in English, innovative methods for delivering library services, knowledge of information technology, library management expertise, and organizational abilities. A variety of professional skills and supplementary degrees contribute to the formulation of career strategies aimed at professional growth. It is essential

to establish meaningful collaborations between the industry, commerce, and higher education institutions, which can facilitate the development of suitable educational and training programs in information and knowledge management. Furthermore, there is a necessity to periodically assess employability within the LIS sector, which will yield a comprehensive understanding of the current trends emerging in the library science profession. This assessment will inform library science professionals about the latest employability trends in their respective areas. The groundbreaking progress in information and communication technology has redefined the role of library professionals from mere custodians of books to active information providers who foster information literacy and guide users through the vast expanse of global information. This approach will assist in bridging the digital divide, ensuring that all community members have adequate access to digital resources. Library professionals serve as educators in this digital era, assisting users in evaluating online information, navigating databases, and utilizing digital tools more effectively and efficiently. In this rapidly evolving digital landscape, library professionals must possess strong communication skills, technical expertise, leadership qualities, time management abilities, ICT literacy, and a willingness to adapt to the evolving needs and services of information users in this digital age.

LIS education in India has evolved into a comprehensive multi-disciplinary field. Postgraduate programs and the proliferation of LIS departments have increased demand for qualified library professionals. The digital age has created new job opportunities for LIS graduates, emphasizing their role as information providers and educators. Integration of advanced technologies and strategic partnerships supports continuous professional development, fostering information literacy in society.

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