

Need of Information Technology Skills, in Curriculum of Library and Information Science Education

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Abstract

Library and information science education scopes for various fields of information technology. In present environment of information explosion only the library science education provide the ease of knowledge sharing. But it is necessary to include the technology in the LIS education. The technological base of information on internet database requirs the perfect skill to share the particular knowledge to the society. The library professionals with lack of technology awareness may not serve properly in the libraries. The library curriculum in Indian universities are now changing their course syllabi with addition of information technology

chapters. In india, the various universities taught different LIS courses with their own curriculum and the students who come out of these universities fails to gain the knowledge of advance technology and research. The computer and internet environment of present days demands the wide range of technical skills to stand in the library and information profession. The IT and Management skills are required to taught in the library science courses in the universities, because the present world of information is based on the electronic media. The library professional must have to upgrade their knowledge with such skills and techniques of database development, so as to improve the quality and choice of knowledge sharing methods. Today's library professional is required to be search engine experts, effective net worker, service coordinator, information evaluator and marketer, keen innovator, prompt learner, information counselor and team worker. Several Indian LIS schools by and large are not preparing their students for such roles, desired competencies and skills. Therefore they require revamping their facilities, reviewing their educational programs, preparing their faculty, and building a curriculum with a difference that may match the needs of knowledge society.

Key words - LIS education, engine experts, information counselor, ICT

Introduction

The new knowledge resource based models are looking for information professionals who can quickly provide problem solving information indicating useful new ideas. Such models focus on unabated supply of refined, reliable and need based information for continuous learning and preparing and motivating imaginative minds for most appropriately and competitively doing the assigned jobs. LIS schools in India are not able to adequately respond to emerging information scenario created by the electronic publishing and dynamics of the knowledge society. Because of lack of adequate faculty strength several library

schools are letting the courses go on as they are going on. The course revisions if any are undertaken with some patches here and there, whereas the present courses are required to be completely redefined and re-casted keeping in view the contemporary information systems, global technological developments and local needs.

In the constantly changing landscape of information, library professionals are facing instability but not insecurity. They are required to constantly add value to existing services, intimately integrate technologies with work process for facilitating uninterrupted supply of information and innovate new services that suit the changing work styles in organizations and facilitate saving of time. As profile of libraries and information centers is changing, so do the role of librarians. Library professional's role has now expanded to solve every possible information problem through best possible manner in a given situation. Besides the knowledge of technical processes and tools, time management, collaborative work on networks, relationship management for better user services, cooperation with colleagues, image management, fund raising, technology selection and up gradation are also getting importance in the work performance of library professionals. The changing work performance requirements in libraries and information centers also profoundly influence the competencies and skills desired from library professionals.

Required Skills for LIS Professionals

In india, the various universities taught different LIS courses with their own curriculum and the students who come out of these universities fails to gain the knowledge of advance technology and research. The computer and internet environment of present days demands the wide range of technical skills to stand in the library and information profession. The IT and Management skills are required to taught in the library science courses in the universities, because the present world of information is based on the electronic media. The library professional must have to upgrade their knowledge with such skills and techniques of database development, so as to improve the

quality and choice of knowledge sharing methods. The library professionals need the organized training programmes such as, workshops, seminars and symposium etc.

Information Technology in LIS Curriculum

Information professionals have started facing the challenges, which are accompanied with the new information resources. The librarians, who are using computers and those who are not using computers but intend to use computers; both require rigorous training on new use of the information technology. The libraries have started using library automation for perform their functions. Computers are now being extensively used in many of the libraries for automating a number of library operations. Automation activities in special, research, university and academic libraries have been increased. Most LIS professionals are beginning to use e-mails, CD-ROMs, LAN, and Machine Readable Catalogue for resource sharing. But in the colleges, schools and libraries in the rural areas, the librarians lack of computer knowledge and they are not using computers in the libraries. In the present scenario application of information and communication technologies has revolutionized the whole concept of libraries, the system of information storage and retrieval and ways to access the information. Therefore, the objectives of LIS education have been revolutionized with the E Concept. LIS students are presently given more practical oriented computer knowledge equipped with intensive and extensive use of IT in libraries. Application of technology has opened up new vistas and thus, all LIS schools should think seriously in terms of the changing context. Students are given adequate knowledge of computers (including the hardware), computer and communication technologies, networks and networking, operating systems, Internet concepts, database management systems, along with with adequate practical exposure to handle these technological devices. Online resources, online databases, library management software, e-books/journals practical exposure is given to the students. In India most of the libraries are switching themselves from the traditional type of services such as documentation services, reference services, inter-library

loan, catalogue based services, current awareness services (CAS) and selective dissemination of information (SDI) to online services and E-generated library services. The situation is changing rapidly with the application of IT in the libraries. Networking of computers at the local, national and international level has made this possible. Collection development pose to be another challenge for the information professionals. The main job of the LIS professionals is to provide relevant information to users as fast as possible. Speedy retrieval of information is very important for information professionals. Presently, LIS professionals talk of computer-based information retrieval, use of computer networks for accessing databases and organizing library services on networks. The LIS professionals are concerned with the speed, cost and the reliability of information transfer.

Accreditation of Library and Information Science Courses

So far departments of LIS in the universities have broadly adopted the schemes of papers recommended by UGC Review Committee on Library Science in Indian Universities, 1965. But its other recommendations regarding staff requirement, physical facilities required and maintenance of department libraries have not been faithfully followed. The Review Committee considered a minimum staff of one reader and two lecturers for the BLIS course. Few universities, who have introduced these courses, have provided the recommended staff standard.

There is no accreditation agency in India like the American Library Association (ALA) Committee on Accreditation in USA and Canada to ensure reasonable standards and quality of educational programme. The report of the Committee on National Policy on Library and Information System (NAPLIS) stressed the need for such a body (Agarwal, 1997). The University Grants Commission, India appointed a Committee "UGC Review Committee on Library Science in Indian Universities" under the Chairmanship of Dr. S.R.Ranganathan in the year 1961 and the report published in 1965. The accreditation agency should be responsible for recommending minimum standards in terms of faculty strength, intake criteria, teacher student ratio, evaluation methods,

library and laboratory facilities, availability of teaching materials, finance and physical facilities. It should also take care of regular revision of LIS syllabi for uniformity and standardization in the overall

LIS Education System

India's LIS education system requires a strategic planning, in order to develop a comprehensive LIS curriculum at the national level. The Government of India has encouraged the application of computers and use of telecommunication through various policy decisions. But the role of the Government in LIS education is not satisfactory. The Government should play a leading role in promoting LIS education in India, in creating more job opportunities for LIS professionals and removing disparity in pay scales among LIS professionals. LIS professionals' pay are low In India and they should be paid more in the present scenario. The role of University Grants Commission (UGC) is very important in designing the curricula and in providing guidelines for developing LIS education in the country. The role of UGC is becoming more challenging in the context of growing information society and fast growing information technology. The professional bodies like Indian Library Association (ILA) and State Library Associations should organize useful courses, seminars and conferences so that the library professionals may increase their knowledge and efficiency in the application of ICT in their work. The library professionals should also put pressure on the Government of India to form a National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. In this context, the role of LIS schools and faculties is extremely important to improve LIS education. Similarly, University Grants Commission (UGC), the National Information System for Science and Technology (NISSAT) , the National Social Science Documentation Centre (NASSDOC), NISCAIR (National Institute of Science communication and Information Resources) earlier known as Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre (INSDOC) (www.insdoc.org), the Defence Scientific Information & Documentation Centre (DESIDOC) (www.drdo.org/labs/compsci/desidoc/index.shtml), university libraries, library associations, library and information science departments should play a pivotal role in this direction.

Significant Features of Indian LIS Courses

Academic institutions act independently in such activities as admission, tenure, curriculum development, and educational grading. Organizations such as the University General Allocation Commission (UGC) merely serve an advisory role. Although in general all educational departments suffer from inadequate or inappropriate levels of faculty memberships, financial assets, equipment, special library and even accommodation, a handful of universities are in a relatively better position. Student graduates from these universities fare better in the job market. There is a lack of a national accreditation centre. Although UGC sets the academic criteria and standards and makes proposals, no national body is charged with their enforcement. There is no control mechanism in place. There is also an absence of a national policy for LIS education. One of the problems plaguing LIS instruction in India is the absence of any body responsible for making manpower projections for the market at different levels, as well as making policies and educational programming. Thus LIS graduates numbers in excess of market need. This has led to unemployment or underemployment. In the past decade alone Indian universities have made an unwarranted push towards establishing and developing LIS courses. Without proper groundwork, they started to establish new courses and increase enrolment. Thus the number of LIS programmes has inflated from 38 to 67 by the end of the last decade. The followings are some suggestions for improving LIS education in India:

1. LIS departments provide training programmes with ICT specialization for teacher librarians.
2. Seminars, tutorials, assignments and field tours should be effectively integrated with curricula involving outside experts and agencies.
3. The syllabi in the LIS departments should view the developments taking place in information technology, information resources, information access and their impact on libraries and library profession.

4. It is necessary for the University Grant Commission (UGC) to see how these LIS departments could come up to international standards and the students coming out of these Departments excelled in their work.
5. There is a great necessity of funds for the acquisition of new technology in order to enhance the services in the library.
6. There is a need for strong networking of libraries for resource sharing.
7. The library professionals need more recognition and they are responsible for planning new information system.
8. LIS schools/departments may be provided with IT laboratories fully equipped with the latest hardware and software including Internet connectivity, networking and library management software.
9. The LIS students may have training in libraries, which should have IT environment for gaining practical experience.
10. ICT environment may be created in all types of libraries and information centres in the country.

Conclusion

Library and information science education scopes for various fields of information technology. In present environment of information explosion only the library science education provide the ease of knowledge sharing. But it is necessary to include the technology in the LIS education. The technological base of information on internet database requires the perfect skill to share the perticular knowledge to the society. The library professionals with lack of technology aware ness may not serve properly in the libraries. The library curriculum in Indian universities are now changing their course syllabi with addition of information technology chapters.

Library and Information Science students in India have to compete with other professionals to survive in the information business; they have to be equipped with a curriculum, which can make them function as competent information professionals. In the networked environment

there is a strong need for continuing professional education and training. Library professionals requires training and retraining to use IT-based resources and services, such as e-mail, FTP, telnet, www, browsers, search engines, databases, system software, application software, electronic journals, computer conferences, scholarly discussion lists, mailing lists, Usenet newsgroups, websites, CDs and DVDs. The ground reality of the present LIS education system in India indicates that the quality improvement is essential and unavoidable, not only for its survival but also for facing the major changes and challenges of today and tomorrow. Library schools in India need to look forward and take full advantage of the opportunities lying ahead of us. The use of information technology for training LIS students and professionals has become crucial for meeting the challenges of twenty first century. It has been predicted that a country that leads information revolution will prove to be more powerful than any other country. The significance of the role of library schools to train manpower for coming decades can contribute to the progress of the nation.

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