

Library and Information Science Education in Maharashtra: Current Status

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ABSTRACT

Maharashtra is the third largest state, in India, known for its outstanding educational quality and facilities at all levels in almost all the major disciplines of study. There are 35 districts in the state with best colleges and higher education institutions. As we are moving ahead in all areas of developments and making massive investments in education to convert our younger population into globally competent human resources. LIS education in India is completing a century of its existence during the period progress have been achieved in developing LIS education to tune with current practices. This paper traces the current scenario of LIS education in Maharashtra. It provides an overview of the universities providing present LIS courses at various levels through regular courses. From the Maharashtra, nine universities are imparting regular LIS education were selected for the present study. The eligibility and admission criteria and syllabus of LIS education is discussed. It was seen that major universities in Maharashtra have to provide an integrated two-year postgraduate course in LIS, which is being widely accepted all over the country. It has been used to analyse the research programs offered by various universities in Maharashtra.

Keywords: LIS education, LIS in Maharashtra, LIS curriculum, Maharashtra.

1. INTRODUCTION

Library and Information science (LIS) education in India is completing a century of its existence and has played significant role in the development of information society. Every stage of societal development requires an education system that can adequately reflects its need and demands. LIS education incorporates a field of professional education that provides the training to the future librarians to manage the libraries and information centers efficiently. The vision of LIS education includes teaching and research in the field of librarianship with a multidisciplinary focus on the issues of information access and equality. The basic objectives of LIS education are to: (i) Familiarise the students with the history and philosophy of the profession of librarianship. (ii) Make students understand the concept of information and its transmission in various environments. Universities provide information to them about theories of library administration and organisation and also provide practical knowledge and training of information technology applications and information handling procedures. The library education is such that the library professionals must withstand the continuing and ever changing information requirements and demands of the users and come up as successful professionals. This will automatically have its impact in the LIS education. Therefore, the library education in India has to be planned to keep pace with the changing needs of the Indian society.

2. SCOPE OF THE PAPER

The scope of this paper is limited to formal LIS education programmes/courses at the postgraduate level

conducted by the university departments in Maharashtra. Preliminary enquiry was made to find out: Year of establishment of the university, The year of establishment of the Department of LIS, courses conducted, annual/semester pattern of examination, whether integrated/non-integrated, intake capacity, whether credit based, recent revision, etc,. The study is a general overview of the LIS courses, Discusses the eligibility, admission criteria and not the detailed analysis of the syllabus of each university. This paper does not include courses conducted at the under-graduate level and certificate courses by various agencies such as library associations, teachers training institutes, polytechnics.

3. HISTORY AND CURRENT STATUS OF LIS EDUCATION IN INDIA

Library Science Education started in India in the state of Baroda in 1911, when the ruler of Baroda state Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaikwad-III called Mr. W. A. Borden from America to give suggestions for development of Libraries and initiated library movement in the state. In 1912, Punjab University invited Mr. Asa Don Dickinson at Lahore who started library training course for 3 months in 1915 for development and progress of libraries in India. Although Dickinson stayed in India for a very short period, he set up the trend of transformation. The first diploma course in library science was started in India by Madras University in 1937 by Dr. S. R. Rangnathan.¹ Aligarh Muslim University changed the Diploma to Degree course first in India in the year 1958. MLISc. course was first started in India by Delhi University. The first PhD degree in Library and Information Sciences in India

was awarded to D. B. Krishna Rao in 1958 from Delhi University. After 20 years in India the second Ph.D in Library Science was awarded to Dr. S.K. Pandey in the year 1977 by University of Delhi.

LIS education in India did the milestone efforts in the field of development of librarianship as a profession. The first school of Library Science was opened in University of Madras in the year 1929 and up to now more than 120 universities (including distance education) impart LIS education. A total of 105 universities provide Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) 78 universities provide Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS), 21 are offering two-year integrated courses, 16 universities provide MPhil in Library and Information Science, 63 universities provide PhD in LIS and 2 universities provide D.Litt degree. India maintains its 3rd World leadership in library research in library education and literature (Satija, 1998, p.21). The University Grants Commission (UGC) and Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) are promoting LIS research programmes by awarding scholarships to doctoral students. Thus, from 2001 to 2014, there is a tremendous increase in the number of institutions offering LIS courses in India which has increased by over 35 more universities in the last 14 years.

4. LIS EDUCATION IN MAHARASHTRA

In Maharashtra, due to the efforts of D. V. Joshi, 'Maharashtriyā Vachnalaya Sangh' was established in 1921. On 25th November 1935, 'Granthalaya Sangh' was formed at Pune. The credit of starting Library Science education in Marathi language goes to this Granthalaya Sangh. Accordingly 'Mumbai Granthalaya Sangh' (1942), 'Marathi Granthalaya Sangh' (1944), Kulaba Jilla Vachnalaya Sangh (1946) started functioning for promoting library movement in Maharashtra. University of Mumbai is the oldest university which was established in 1857 and also has the oldest department of LIS which was established in 1944. Upto March 31, 1960, there were 5 universities showing rapid progress made in LIS education. Similarly a change from Library science to library and information science came into effect in most of the universities around 1960-2000. Through regular courses, open university programs and learning programs of various universities in Maharashtra, every possible efforts is being made to meet the rising aspirations of the younger generation. The development of LIS Education is at top priority for the rapid progress of higher education in below mentioned Universities of Maharashtra.^{2,3}

4.1 University of Mumbai, Mumbai

The Jawaharlal Nehru Library of University of Mumbai was established in the year 1857. In 1943, the Department of Library and Information Science was established and since then, the department is working and imparting Library science education in Maharashtra. In 1943, the Diploma in Librarianship course was instituted

by them. Then university librarian and it was discontinued in the year 1963 and replaced by BLIS. The department has seminar room, full equipped conference hall and a computer lab. The syllabi of BLISc and MLISc course were recently revised since 2003-04; the department offers BLISc and MLISc, MPhil and PhD programs in Library and Information science. The Duration of BLISc and MLISc course is one academic year of two terms and the medium of instruction for both degrees are English. Total intake capacity for the course is 40 students for BLISc and 20 students for MLISc. The examination consists of two parts of written examination as well as practical examination.⁴

4.2 Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune

Savitribai Phule University of Pune was established in the year of 1948. Jayakar Library was established in January 1950 and the training in Library science started in the year 1958 with the first Diploma course in Library science. This Diploma course was converted into the Bachelors degree in the year 1965. Department of Library and Information Science in the Jayakar Library was started in the year 1978. It was established under the faculty of Mental, Moral and Social Science. It introduced 2 years integrated MLISc course programs and the medium of instruction was English. Intake capacity of LIS department for integrated course is 30. The examination consists of semester-wise and credit-based and conducted in two parts, i.e., written examination and practical examination. It has a Departmental library along with ICT facilities. Department started MPhil and PhD in Library Science in 1981 and since then, more than 40 scholars have been awarded the PhD in Library Science.

4.3 Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj Nagpur University, Nagpur

The Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj, Nagpur University was established along with the central Library in 1923. The Department of Library and Information science was started on 20th August 1956 and it is one of the oldest Department of Library and Information Science not only in Maharashtra but also in the country. Firstly, the department started Diploma course in Library and Information Science. This Diploma course upgraded to BLISc. The Department started MLISc of one year in the year 1984 and in year 2003, the MLISc two years integrated course as per the UGC guidelines was started since 1987. It also provides PhD program in Library and Information Science. The Department has upgraded its standard as one of the leading LIS educational institutes because of the contribution made by the Heads of the departments from time to time by their academic and administrative skills. Currently, the department conducts MLISc two years integrated course with English as a medium of instruction and intake capacity of 40+40 students. MPhil & PhD program is also being offered by the department.

4.4 S.N.D.T. Women's University, Mumbai

The central library of S.N.D.T. Women's University has its headquarter at the Bombay campus and branches at Juhu and Pune campus. It was founded in the year 1916 and the department of Library and Information Science namely 'Shri. Hansraj Pragji Thackersey school of library Science' popularly known as 'S.H.P.T. School of Library Science' was established in the year 1961. The department started 1 year BLISc and 1 year MLISc from 2012-13, the course converted into two years MLISc Degree Course with English language and also PhD programs in Library and Information science. The intake capacity for this integrated course is 25. The examination pattern consists of semester-wise and credit-based. The department allows computer laboratory to all students to become familiar with computer applications in Library and information science. Full time access to internet provides additional facility to the students.

4.5 Shivaji University, Kolhapur

Shivaji University, Kolhapur was established in 1962. The department of Library and Information Science of Shivaji University started in year 1964. It is one of the oldest departments which were started immediately after establishment of the university. Initially it started post graduate diploma as Bachelor in Library Science (BLSc) and changed its name as Bachelor in Library and Information Science (BLISc). In year 1986, the department started MPhil in Library and Information Science. It has also made provision for PhD degree in Library and Information Science. The department conducts BLISc as well as MLISc Course of one year duration. However the duration for MPhil is 1½ year. 6 PhD's have been awarded by the department and right now registered students are 11. The department has well equipped computer Laboratory having 15 computers.

4.6 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad

The Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University was established in the year 1958. The university introduced the PG Diploma in Library course during June 1969, the nomenclature of the course was changed and the examination of the course was conducted as 'Bachelor of Library Science in March/April, 1969. The course in Library Science was started by the university in 1968 but the Department of the Library Science was started in the year 1979. However, Master of Library Science course was introduced in the year 1985-86. The PhD program in Library and Information Science was started by the department from the year 1996. Since 2002, the university introduced 2 year integrated MLISc course with semester pattern. The course consists of 16 modules with 64 credits. The intake capacity for MLISc is 22 students with the duration of 2 year and for MPhil the intake capacity is 15 students with duration of 1 year. The examination consists semeste were and credit-based

written examination as well as practical examination. The teaching faculty consists of one professor and head along with one reader and one lecturer.

4.7 Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University, Amravati

The department of Library and Information Science of Sant Gadge Baba University, Amravati is established under the faculty of Social Sciences in the year 1983 and the department of LIS started in the year 1990. The BLISc and MLISc course are offered by the department for the duration of 1 year for each. The intake capacity for BLISc is 30 where as it is 20 for MLISc. The students have to complete project work for successful completion of the course. Database search facilities as well as e-mail and internet facilities are available to students.⁵

4.8 Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Nanded

The Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Nanded was established in 1994. The Department of Library and Information Science was started in 1999. This is also one of the Newest Department of LIS in Maharashtra. The Department started two year integrated M.Lib&Inf.Sc with English as a medium of instruction. Intake capacity of the course is 20 per year. The examination consists semester-wise and credit-based and conducted in two parts, i.e., written examination and practical examination. It also provides PhD program in LIS as per the UGC guidelines, and more than 7 PhD degrees have been awarded in LIS subject from this department.

4.9 North Maharashtra University, Jalgaon

The North Maharashtra University, Jalgaon was established in the year 1989. The department of Library and Information Science was established in the year 2000. This is the newest Department of LIS in Maharashtra. It was established under the faculty of Mental, Moral and Social Sciences. It offers integrated BLISc and MLISc course with an intake capacity of 20 students. Examination pattern is semester-wise since 2010-2011.⁶

The Solapur University, Solapur do not provide Library and Information Science education, as this is newly established university in Maharashtra.

5. ELIGIBILITY AND ADMISSION CRITERIA

Table 1 gives details of eligibility conditions to different courses offered in universities in Maharashtra.

Table 1 shows that all BLISc course require at least a graduate degree for admission. Most of these give admission on the basis of merit while some have more rigorous criteria involving entrance tests.

6. COURSE CONTENT AND SYLLABUS OF LIS

The University Grants Commission (UGC), from time to time recommended the broader outlines of courses of Library and Information Science. The UGC and other

Table 1. University-wise courses and required eligibility

S.No.	University name	B.Lib & Inf.Sc (BLISc)	M.Lib & Inf.Sc. (MLISc)	2 Years integrated M.Lib & Inf. Sc course
1	University of Mumbai, Mumbai	Graduate from any faculty (ET+PI)	B.Lib&Inf.Sc from any university (ET+PI)	-
2	Savitribai Phule Pune University	-	-	Graduate from any faculty (ET+PI)
3	RTM University, Nagpur	-	-	Graduate from any faculty (ET+PI)
4	SNDT Women's University, Mumbai	-	-	Graduate from any faculty (ET+PI)
5	Shivaji University, Kolhapur	Graduate from any faculty (ET)	B.Lib&Inf.Sc from any university (ET)	-
6	BAMU, Aurangabad	-	-	Graduate from any faculty (ET+PI)
7	Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University	Graduate from any faculty (ET)	B.Lib&Inf.Sc from any university (ET)	-
8	SRTMU, Nanded	-	-	Graduate from any faculty (ET)
9	North Maharashtra University, Jalgaon	-	-	Graduate from any faculty (ET)

ET: Entrance test; PI: Personal interview

higher bodies' now give emphasis to semester system rather than annual system, and credit-based rather than marks-based system. Every university in Maharashtra being autonomous is free to frame its own course of studies, and syllabi of many universities/schools are quite modernised. All university programs to educate librarians share certain characteristics. Programmes typically offer courses in the history of books and librarianship to give students a background in the professions past. It also includes courses in knowledge organisation (classification, cataloguing, bibliography, indexing & abstracting, metadata, semantic & syntactic analysis, controlled vocabularies, etc.), collection development (acquisition), information seeking behaviours of users, search strategies, library services (dissemination of the acquired library materials, reference), and management of the collection (preservation & conservation of documents). It also includes contents related to scholarly communication (bibliometrics, infometrics, scientometrics, webometrics), digital libraries and virtual libraries.

Technology in LIS has been used extensively to store and retrieve information in different forms and structures. This new dimension is reflected in the course structure of almost all universities that provides courses in LIS. The courses include topics that impart new skill in organising web resources, and providing web-based services. All universities in Maharashtra provide scope of practical knowledge rather than restricting to only theory part.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Library and Information Science education has reached a global dimension since it has harmoniously adopted the developments in information and communication technologies. It is a change from managing libraries by librarians to manage the flow of information by one and all. Earlier,

LIS students after the education became librarians, now professionals teach this science and learners choose this profession to manage the information. LIS education in India started with an aim of training in-house library workers in handling various related functions.

UGC Model Curriculum (2001)⁷ is an eye-opener to restructure the LIS educational programme suiting to the requirement of the information society in the state. Now there is a need to design fresh syllabus of LIS for the purpose of rendering better services. UGC has given a model curriculum for an integrated two-year MLIS course, so there should be more and more of the universities adapting to such programs in the future. As far as the information and communication technology (ICT) aspect of the education is concerned, universities in Maharashtra to incorporate ICT into their curriculum at all levels, both in theory as well as in practice. Also, there has to be provision for computer laboratories for the students to hone upon their skills in ICT. Provision for internet connectivity and subscribed content along with library automation and digitisation software for practice are a must. Students must undergo internship of 3-4 months in a library supervised by a mentor. It helps students to acquire essential practical experience required to work in a library. The well-planned internship prepares the intern for future job responsibilities and a chance to put his knowledge to work and prepare for future job responsibilities.⁸ They should also be paid stipend during the training period. The need of the hour is to devise uniform eligibility criteria and selection policy that can really attract those students with aptitude and attitude for the profession.

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