

Guest Editorial

Library and Information Science (LIS) education in India is about to complete 100 years. It is time for celebration and introspection at the same time. Starting with part-time courses run for librarians to master library routines and practices, it has evolved into a fully grown discipline having courses at all levels, from certificate to the doctoral. There are even instances of a few post-doctoral studies done in the country. Numbers confirm the development in LIS education; there are at present around 120 departments offering Bachelor's degree, 78 offering Master's degree, 16 offering MPhil degree, and 63 offering PhD degree. In nearly one century of existence, we need to introspect on the quality aspects of our education system. Whether the educationists have been able to serve the profession by giving products (professionals) required at different levels. If not, where do they fall short?

There have been regular attempts to monitor the status of LIS education at national level. Conferences and seminars have discussed the issue very often. UGC has played its part by setting up committees and commissions to review the educational system. Recommendations were given, some adhered to, and some could not be. It is time to review and come up with new suggestions, modifications, and improvements. Before review, it is important to know the status.

This Special Issue in your hands is an attempt to present the status of LIS education in India. There are 11 articles in all. Five of these present the status of LIS education in the North, South, East, West, and Central India. Written by academics from the different regions, these present quite a detailed picture of the developments in the subject. The articles are based on data collected from reports, websites, prospectuses, and colleagues. The present status can be better appreciated if a study of the historical developments is also presented, and thus, there is an article on the history of LIS education in India. Research is important for a discipline to grow and gain a sound footing among other disciplines. It is opined that research in LIS needs revamping. Prof. M.P. Satija has presented a critical observation of research in the discipline in India. One needs to ponder over the issues and contribute in his/her personal capacity to overcome these for the discipline to grow. Employability of LIS graduates is an important concern for educationists. The paper on employability of LIS graduates: A case study of competencies expected and taught, presents an objective view of the competencies. The paper is based on the analyses of advertisements in the national dailies and also syllabi of some departments of LIS. Curriculum revision could take care of findings of such studies. Short-term training courses play an important role in education. Recent developments in the field can be taught in short-term courses. These courses pave way for their incorporation in full-time courses. Such courses also provide literature for others to know the developments. The article on short-term LIS training courses in India discusses their history and status in the country.

E-learning is one of the important areas being talked in all educational circles today. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has made a beginning in this direction in LIS education in the country. The area is worth debating before it can mature to take roots in the educational system in the country. There are issues related to the pedagogy, administration, policy, etc. The article on e-learning discusses these and gives guidelines also that could prove useful to those interested to make a beginning in this direction. No educational effort can succeed without the support of the government. Educational institutions need autonomy, but there needs to be some control to achieve standardisation and uniformity. The paper on LIS education: Some governmental initiatives provides a useful discussion of the efforts of Government of India in the development of LIS education in the country. The author has presented a brief description of the various committees, commissions, the National Policy on Education (NPE) and National Knowledge Commission (NKC) recommendations for LIS. He points out towards the non-implementation of many of these recommendations, which if implemented would make a difference.

I would like to thank Dr A.L. Moorthy, Director, DESIDOC, to have given this opportunity to me for organising thoughts in initiating a beginning afresh towards the improvement in LIS education in the country.

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