Library and Information Science Education in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

The paper aims at providing a glimpse of the situation of LIS education being provided in India with a special focus on the regions of central India. The states covered in the central India are Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. From the central region, six universities imparting LIS education were selected for the present study. It was seen that these universities still have to provide an integrated two-year postgraduate course in LIS, which is being widely accepted all over the country because of its recognition by the UGC in its model curriculum.

Keywords: LIS education, India, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh

1. INTRODUCTION

Library and Information Science (LIS) education incorporates a field of professional education that provides the training to the future librarians to manage the libraries and information centres 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. It is fundamentally a content centered discipline with information as its subject. The basic objectives of LIS education include:

✂ To familiarise the students with the history and philosophy of the profession of librarianship.

✂ To make them understand the concept of information and its transmission in various environments.

✂ To make them aware of the importance of information flow to the society.

✂ To provide them information about theories of library administration and organisation.

✂ To provide skills needed for evaluation of library and information systems and services.

✂ To make them understand the importance of resource sharing.

The basic goal of LIS education hence is to provide knowledge and skills needed for the LIS profession in the present age of information overload and the ever-decreasing budgets of libraries. Keeping in view the changes taking place in the society, libraries have to sustain themselves with modern technologies of information transmission and communication. For providing effective services, the information professionals need to have knowledge and training in information technology applications and information handling procedures. As a result, the changes in the curriculum in LIS need to be carried out to keep pace with the advances in technology and communication phenomena. The field now encompasses information and knowledge creation, communication, identification, selection, acquisition, organisation and description, storage and retrieval, preservation, analysis, interpretation, evaluation, synthesis, dissemination, and management. 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. The student population will learn the LIS, one way or the other, at one stage or the other, as a means of learning their chosen specialised subjects. 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. LIS EDUCATION IN INDIA

LIS education in India has undergone substantial changes since W.A. Borden initiated training in 1911 at Baroda followed by Asa Don Dickenson who started such training programmes at Punjab University, Lahore in 1915. There after Prof. Ranganathan contributed for the upliftment of the profession in India. By the time India got independence, only six departments offered Diploma courses in library science. Presently, there are more than 100 universities (regular as well as distance education) that conduct various courses including BLIS, MLIS, MPhil, and PhD. More and more institutions are offering library science courses without even having the required infrastructure including the trained teachers. Although by 1956, the number of schools of library science rose to 10, there was no written document regarding the policy of library science education. Hence, UGC Review Committee on Library Science was appointed in 1961 under the chairmanship of Dr Ranganathan to lay down a detailed pattern for LIS education. Besides the departments of LIS at various universities, Documentation Training and Research Centre (DRTC), Bengaluru, National Institute of Science Communicaton and Information Resources (NISCAIR), New Delhi, etc., also provide some specialised courses in Information Science.

To update the LIS curriculum, UGC appointed the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) 2001 to restructure the courses in LIS, which prompted the LIS schools to include various aspect of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in their curricula. So far, most of the departments of LIS in India have broadly adopted the scheme as given by the CDC.

3. LIS EDUCATION IN CENTRAL INDIA

The States included in the central region of India are: Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh have comparable population density of 154 and 196 and rank 26th and 23rd in the population density in India, respectively. However, both Chattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh have an average literacy rate of 64.66 and 63.74, respectively in comparison of the overall literacy rate of India, i.e. 64.84[1].

The universities offering post-graduate (PG level) courses in LIS in Chhattisgarh are: Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur (GGV); and Pt. Ravishanker Shukla University, Raipur (PRSU); and those in Madhya Pradesh are: Awadesh Pratap Singh University, Rewa (APSU); Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Indore (DAV); Doctor Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya, Sagar (DHGV); Jiwaji University, Gwalior (JU); Madhya Pradesh Bhoj Open University, Bhoj (MPBOU);

Mahatma Gandhi Chitrakoot Gramodaya Vishwavidyalaya, Chitrakoot (MGCGV); Makhanlal Chaturvedi Rastriya Patrakarita Vishwavidyalaya, Bhopal (MCRPV); and Rani Durgavati Vishwavidyalaya, Jabalpur (RDV).

Vikram University (Ujjain), which is also offering LIS courses could not be included in the present study due to lack of access to the university website. Thus, its data could not be gathered at the time of the study.

4. LIS EDUCATION IN CHHATTISGARH

4.1 Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya

Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, a Central University is located in Bilaspur. It was established under Central Universities Act 2009, No. 25 of 2009. Formerly called Guru Ghasidas University (GGU), it was established by an Act of the State Legislative Assembly and was inaugurated on 16 June 1983[2].

The Department of LIS of GGV was established in 1985 under Faculty of Arts to impart quality education and modern skills in the field to the students. It is engaged in research and career guidance too. As a part of curriculum, project work is assigned to each student. Tutorials are also conducted regularly. The Department organises academic tours, besides activities like seminars and workshops. The majority of pass outs have occupied good positions throughout the country[3].

4.2 Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University

Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, Chhattisgarh's largest and oldest institution of higher education, was founded in 1964 at Raipur. There are 29 teaching departments in PRSU and 180 educational institutions affiliated to it[4].

The University established the Department of LIS in 1971 under Arts faculty. In the beginning only BLIS was started. Later on in 1988, it started MLIS. In 1991, Information Technology and Information System Analysis and Data Processing were introduced in MLIS syllabi. From 2003-04, PRSU started MPhil in LIS. The University now also offers PhD degree in LIS. UGC Model Curriculum for MLIS is being followed by it[5].

5. LIS EDUCATION IN MADHYA PRADESH

5.1 Awadhesh Pratap Singh University

The University was established on 20 July 1968 and got UGC recognition in February 1972. APSU is a teaching-cum-affiliating university with its jurisdiction over 65 colleges, 21 Sanskrit Colleges and 85 Sanskrit

Schools spread all over Madhya Pradesh. It offers BLIS and MLIS as both regular as well as correspondence courses[6].

5.2 Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya

Devi Ahilya Vishwavidalaya was established in the year 1964 by an act of legislative assembly of Madhya Pradesh[7]. The university Central Library was also established along with the establishment of the university. It started BLIS from 1993-94 as a part-time course. BLIS and MLIS as regular courses were introduced during 2006. MPhil in LISc has been started from the academic year 2009-10. It also plans to introduce PhD in LIS and PG Diploma in LAN (Library Automation and Networking). The School of Library and Information Science is under the Faculty of Engineering Sciences. It conducts one-year (two semesters) full-time courses leading to the degree in BLIS, MLIS, and MPhil[8].

5.3 Doctor Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya

Doctor Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya, formerly University of Saugar, was established on 18 July 1946 by Dr Harisingh Gour. It is one of the oldest and the biggest university of Madhya Pradesh. This university was declared a Central University on 15 Jan 2009. The State Legislature changed the University of Saugar name to Doctor Hari Singh Gour Vishwavidyalaya in February 1983[9]. Department of Library and Information Science of DHGV, founded in 1970, offers BLIS and MLIS courses. It has a departmental library along with ICT facilities including two PCs, laptop, printers, scanners etc[10].

5.4 Jiwaji University

Jiwaji University was established as a teaching and affiliating university on 23 May 1964, under the provision of MP Govt Ordinance No. 15 of 1963[11]. The Jiwaji University started post-graduate teaching and research from 1966-67. In 1984, the School of Studies in Library and Information Science was established to impart quality education and modern skills in the field to the students leading to BLIS and MLIS, as well as PhD. The department is also engaged in research and career guidance too. The School has ICT for teaching and training at degree, PG and research level[12].

5.5 Madhya Pradesh Bhoj Open University

The National Policy of Education (NPE) 1986 emphasised that distance education is an important medium for the development and promotion of higher education. In this context, for the expansion and promotion of distance education the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), Government of India, took an important decision that in the VIIIth year plan every state should establish a state open university following the distance education pattern. On this basis, Madhya Pradesh Bhoj (Open) University (MPBOU) was established under an Act of State Assembly in 1991. The university emphasises in use of different modes of educational inputs such as lessons in print, text books, contact teaching, practical classes, TV/Radio/Video/Audio programmes, using satellite communication, etc[13]. Two LIS courses are being offered by MPBOU, i.e., BLIS and MLIS. Both these courses are of one-year duration. These courses come under the category of need-based programmes[14].

5.6 Mahatma Gandhi Chitrakoot Gramodaya Vishwavidyalaya

The Vishwavidyalaya was established on 12 February 1991 on the banks of the holy river Mandakini through a separate MP Govt Act (9, 1991) at Chitrakoot. The main objectives of the MGCGV are to provide education and dissemination of appropriate technology.

The MGCGV has jurisdiction in the entire state of MP and plays a great role in the field of rural development through higher education and in preparing innovative models of rural development[15]. It has established a number of Distance Education Centers in the entire state for imparting higher education for those who can not able to attend regular classes due to economic or other reasons[16].

The academic programmes of teacher education, mass communication, and LIS have been clubbed and a department of "People's education and Mass Communication" has been established under the faculty of Education, Fine Arts, Humanities and Social Science[17].

5.7 Makhanlal Chaturvedi Rashtriya Patrakarita Vishwavidyalaya

Act No. 15 of 1990 of the Legislative Assembly of Madhya Pradesh set up Makhanlal Chaturvedi Rashtriya Patrakarita Vishwavidyalaya at Bhopal. There is a wide network of over 500 study centers associated to MCRPV in different parts of the country, where various courses are conducted[18].

Its NOIDA campus, offers BLIS course with duration of one-year (2 semesters). The objective of the course is to provide knowledge of technical working of libraries and to develop skills for information management, i.e., classification and cataloguing. It also offers PhD in Library & Information Science[19].

5.8 Rani Durgavati Vishwavidyalaya

The Vishwavidyalaya was established at Jabalpur in 1959. In addition to the teaching departments, RDV comprises 151 colleges. There are 13 fully functional faculties in the RDV[20]. The discipline of LIS was introduced in one of the affiliated colleges, known as KP Guru Bhasha Bharti, way back in 1970s. However, the teaching, due to one reason or the other, could not be introduced at the UTD level. The RD University, Jabalpur, instituted MLIS course at UTD level from 1998. The department of LIS, which is integrated part of the University Library, has been successfully imparting instructions to MLIS students for the last four years. From 2002, the university decided to introduce BLIS along with the existing MLIS course making it an integrated two-years course leading to BLIS and MLIS. In all, there are 30 seats for BLIS and 20 seats for MLIS being run under Self-Financing Scheme. The admission is subject to entrance test as well as merit[21].

6. ELIGIBILITY AND ADMISSION CRITERIA

Table 1 gives details of the minimum eligibility of different courses offered in central India along the admission criteria for these courses. Table 1 shows that all the universities accept graduates for BLIS. BLIS qualified are eligible for admission to MLIS course and MLIS qualified candidates for admission to MPhil degree. But, the lowest cut-off marks for admission differs from university to university.

While all universities offering MPhil course accept candidates with a minimum of 55 per cent marks, minimum marks for admission to BLIS and MLIS may vary from passed to 50 per cent marks. Only the 5-year integrated course, offered by GGV, provides admission to undergraduate candidates, who have passed 10+2 with 50 per cent or more aggregate marks.

As far as admission criteria is concerned, only APSU and RDV take students on the basis of merit as well as entrance tests, where as other universities give admission on the basis of merit of marks of the qualifying degree only. Only DAV takes interviews of the applicants for its courses.

7. SEATS OFFERED

Jiwaji University offers the maximum number of seats, i.e., 40 each for both the LIS courses. This is followed by PRSU and RDV with 35 and 30 seats, respectively for BLIS course and 2 seats each for the MLIS course. PRSU also offers 10 seats for its MPhil course. On the other hand, the lowest number of seats is offered by MGCGV with 15 seats each for both courses, by MCRPV for BLIS course. GGV in its 5-years course offers 30 seats, and 20 seats in one-year MLIS.

8. SYLLABUS

The syllabus for PRSU for regular as well as the part-time MLIS course is almost identical with 10 theory and two practice papers spread out in two semesters. For MPhil, it offers 3 theoretical papers along with a dissertation submission. PRSU offers ICT-based courses on all levels of its LIS education.

Awadhesh Pratap Singh University offers a single paper on ICT and that too as an optional paper. However, it does provide its students with the opportunity of

Table 1. Eligibility and admission criteria of LIS courses offered by the universities of central India

State	University	BLIS	MLIS	MPhil	Integrated MLIS	Admission criteria
Chhattisgarh	GGV	-	BLIS(50)	-	10+2 (50)	Merit
	PRSU	G	BLIS	MLIS(55)	-	Merit
Madhya Pradesh	APSU	G(45)	BLIS(50)	-	-	ET + Merit
	DAV	G(50)	BLIS(50)	MLIS(55)	-	ET + Interview
	DHGV	G	BLIS	-	-	ET + Merit
	JU	G(50)	BLIS(50)	-	-	Merit
	MPBOU	G	BLIS	-	-	Merit
	MGCGV	G	BLIS	MLIS(55)	-	Merit
	MCRPV	G	-	MLIS(55)	-	Merit
	RDV	G(50)	BLIS(50)	-	-	ET + Merit

Note:G=Graduate, ET=Entrance Test, Figures in brackets are marks required for eligibility

undergoing research by submitting a dissertation. Also, it offers practice in both classification and cataloguing papers. MPBOU offers 8 papers in each of its one-year BLIS and MLIS courses. It offers exclusive paper titled 'Telecommunication Technology and Information Networking' in its BLIS course and at MLIS level it has papers including content on Media Technology', 'Database Management Systems' and an optional paper titled 'IPR and Cyber Laws'. The courses have been revised in 2009.

Devi Ahilya Vishwavdyalaya offers 4 and 3 papers in its two semesters, respectively for its BLIS course. Also, it includes an Internship at the end of the second semester and the students are required to submit a project report and face a viva based on it, on which they are marked. The MLIS has a similar pattern of papers except for the internship report. MPhil comprises three semesters with papers in the first two semesters, with the option of an elective paper in the first, while the third semester comprises marking based on dissertation, seminar, and assignments. It was also noted that DAV follows credit system in marking their papers.

9. SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

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. Initiatives may be taken to infuse research, may be on a smaller scale, into the MLIS curriculum. As far as the information and communication technology (ICT) aspect of the education is concerned, no one should be left behind. So, it has become extremely vital for the universities to incorporate ICT into their curriculum at all levels, both in theory as well as in practice, Also, their has to be provision for computer laboratories for the students to hone upon their skills in ICT. In some LIS schools, provision for optional papers in specialised areas should be included in the syllabi.

Provision for Internet connectivity and subscribed content along with library automation and digitization software for practice are a must. An internship program provides LIS students with the opportunity to gain valuable job experience during the academic year in various library operations. 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. Students must undergo internship of 3-4 months in a library supervised by a mentor. They should also be paid stipend during the training period[22].

There is need to enhance the number of faculty members in almost all the LIS schools in central India. In the case of RDV, a separate full-fledged department should be set up with full-time faculty members. The library profession is facing various challenges wherein, library and information science professionals have to navigate electronic networks, deal with multimedia products, and understand and master database searching, preservation and management of digital collection etc. The growth and development of library and information professionals depends on their capacity to change traditional approach, adapt the new technology, and add new library and information services. They have to play multiple roles as a global information provider and facilitator in the information-seeking process, educator, and specialist in information literacy and ICT. It is necessary that growth and proper human resource planning is required for systematic development of libraries and information instead of haphazard growth. In the changed context, it is necessary to reassess the human resource requirements for different types of libraries and departments of LIS.

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