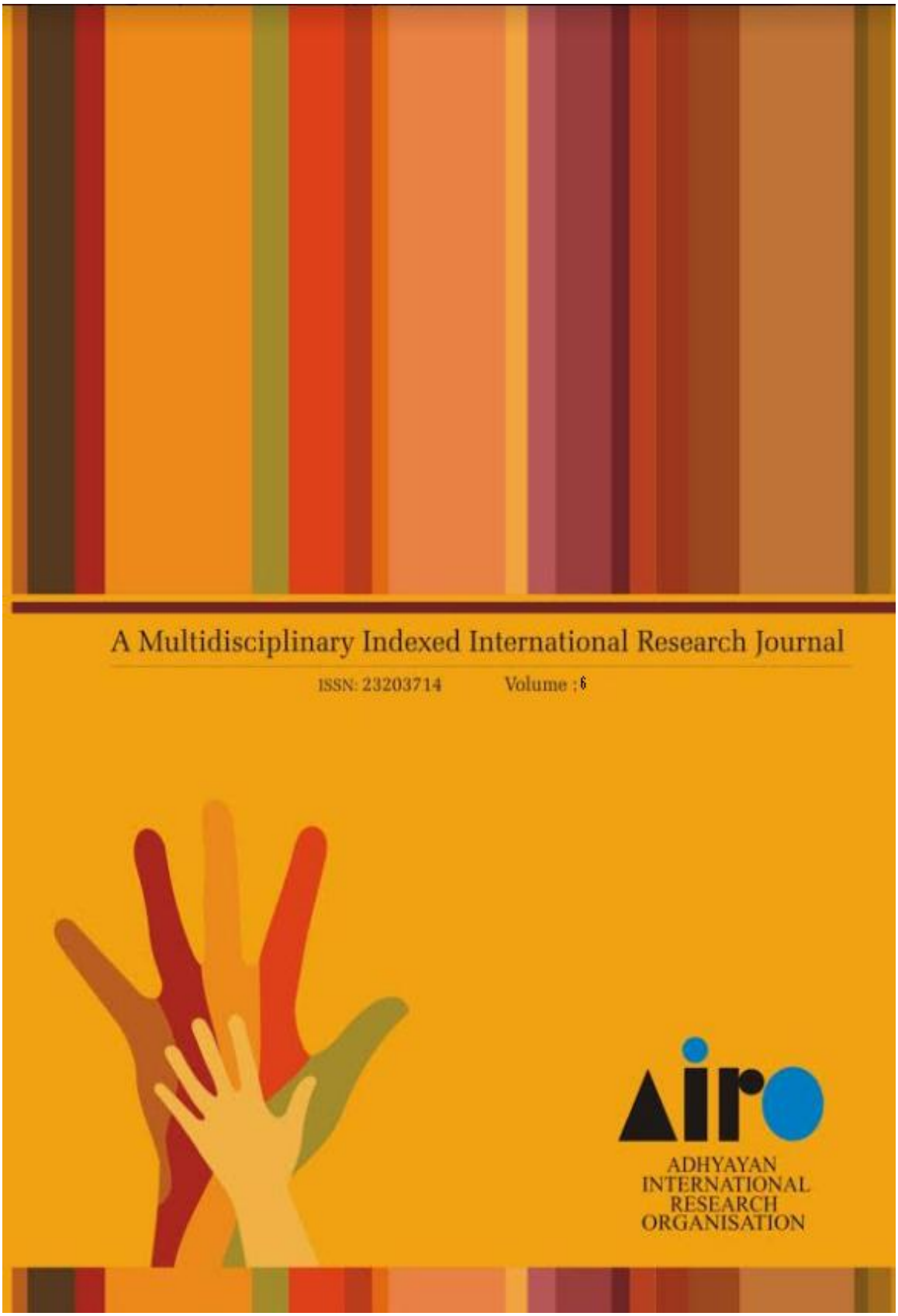
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Development of the Discipline Library & Information Science and its Future Course Contents According to Meet the Manpower Needs of Emerging Digital Era in 21st Century

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Abstract

The LIS experts, librarians, information managers etc. concerned with the growth and development of LIS education should think seriously about the future course contents of LIS education in 21st century. This article aims to discuss the historical development of LIS education, renaming of LIS education, development of LIS course contents according to meet the manpower needs of emerging digital era in 21st century. Our professionals are managing libraries in the traditional way where cataloguing, circulation, and other activities are doing manually. Our LIS education has to provide fully practical approach to computerized Library and Information Centers. LIS Department may have to introduce some special course such as Digital Librarianship, Organization of Non-Book Materials, Library automation, Subject Special Librarian Course, Community librarianship etc.

Keywords: LIS Education, Information Technology, Curriculum and LIS Nomenclature.

1. Introduction

In the 1970s, 'Library Science' (LS) changed its nomenclature to 'Library and Information Science' (LIS). The professional status and education programme received global attention because of internationalization of information. It also changed its philosophy and focus from 'preservation for posterity' to 'Books are for use', and finally to 'Global access to information/knowledge' (UGC Model Curriculum, 2001: 76-78). Saracevic (1999) is among the researchers who believe in isolation of Information Science from Librarianship. Similarly, Ebrami proposed the idea of 'Knowledge Science' for the first time in his book, 'Understanding Knowledge Science'. He provided a well-structured and detailed discussion about the history and function of the library as the repository of human knowledge and as a communication tool. He argued that 'Library and information science' should be renamed as "Knowledge Science", because librarians are in fact manipulating knowledge which is the concomitant product of information processing in the form of information careers/containers, and not just information (Ebrami, 1977). In 1991, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) conducted a global study on the image and status of librarians. The study included an ongoing review of accessible literature, analysis of existing data and surveys conducted among

members of library associations all over the world. The study found that 82 percent of the survey respondents were convinced that the librarian's profession suffered from low status. It also showed that 74 per cent of the respondents believed in the correlation between the type of the library the practitioner was working in and the social status the practitioner enjoyed. Finally, it was concluded that a new title should be given to the profession to give it a facelift and librarianship does not solve the problem completely (Prins & De Gier, 1992). There was a gradual shift in emphasis from 'Libraries and Librarianship' to 'Information' (Bell, 2002). India has till now used Library Science or Library and Information Science as the subject titles.

2. Renaming of LIS Discipline

The renaming from 'Library Science' to 'Information Management' is still a controversial problem. Meng's view is that, compared with those in the West, indeed, some LIS have not changed their educational objectives and curriculum systems, but are eager to change their names. The point is that not all LIS schools are prepared to change into 'Information Management'. Libraries need LIS education, and LIS education should train professionals for libraries and information centers because many schools of former LIS dropped the term 'Library' from their titles. We must find a good solution on how to change while keeping LS education alive. Some schools have not changed their educational objectives and curriculum systems, but are eager to change their names (Chu, 2001). Lin (2007) discussed current status of LIS development in East Asian countries of Taiwan, Korea, and Japan. Here the LIS development in East Asian countries had been through stages of Library Science, Library and Information Sciences (Studies), Information and Library Sciences (Studies), Information and Communications. Currently, School of Information is a trendy title. The contents of curriculum tend to be more Liberal Arts oriented. The development of information science has gradually increased the number, and presumably, the curriculum will be altered to more computer-oriented accordingly. The USA uses 'Library and Information Science' or 'Information Science and Library' nomenclature. Library and Information Science developed into a full fledged profession developing with its fundamental theories, philosophies and practices. These basic aspects achieve the goal to provide 'right information, to right user, at right time, in right form' through these technological tools. Purely as a 'Management' subject, LS is concerned with how knowledge is represented, stored through technology, how it automatically processes through artificial intelligence, and how it is organized outside the library in the globally spread system through internet. Some scholars also favour the designation of 'Librarian' to 'Information Manager'. The move for renaming of library schools was initiated in China, Some supported it, while others opposed it. The definition of the LS has been an unresolved problem since long with the coming of the information age, it was believed that libraries would be coming to an end and LS would virtually disappear. However, this viewpoint was criticized severely by many librarians and others because renaming was only in form what is

required is changing the educational content. This is also because the educational objectives of library schools in training professionals for the information industry, not just for libraries (Chu, 2001). The new title of "information management and information systems" according to a course catalogue issued by the Chinese Ministry of Education in July 1998. This new specialty was formed with the merging of five formerly separated specialties, namely, economic information management, information studies, scientific information, management information systems and forestry information management (Chu, 2001a, b). In the UK, full time undergraduate courses in Librarianship, have decreased with only four, graduate and 16 masters level programme with four programme having 'Library' as part of their title.

3. Development of LIS Courses and LIS Course Contents

Library school's course descriptions and course titles do not necessarily reflect much of what happens in a course. Moreover, these departments are seriously suffering from insufficient infrastructure, inadequate faculty, lack of quality research and document support. In India as well as in other South Asian countries, the main emphasis was laid on the subject's traditional aspects. Cataloguing and Classification dominated the curriculum. Library management, information sources and services came to a close second. While most courses were designated as Library and Information Science, there is little or no element of 'Information Science' in these programme. The course contents are also not reflecting anything of the emerging employment opportunities in the corporate sector. Whereas, the core continues to stick to classification, cataloguing, indexing, and vocabulary control, the emerging themes, such as information literacy, knowledge management, e-learning, ICT applications, use of networks in teaching, and teaching about networks have not been adequately integrated in the curricula. In fact there is lack of consistency between LIS education and Practice Industry (Singh & Wijetunge, 2006). "Most Indian Universities have changed the names of their LS departments to LIS departments without giving adequate representation to 'Information Science' components in the curricula of various courses run by them and without ensuring adequate infrastructural facilities to adequately support the programme. Information management pervades librarianship; information science, archival studies, and records management are related components under one umbrella term which may be called 'Information Studies'. Alternatively, records management and archival studies can be offered as electives under library and information studies. In the library components, all areas related to automation and management of traditional libraries need be retained. Yet, the course contents should be free from overlapping of subjects (Singh & Jagtar, 1997: 207). Alimohammadi conducted a survey on the worldwide web and found that information management, knowledge management, information science, information studies, library and information sciences, computer and information sciences, information and library studies, knowledge science, library and

information management, information and communication sciences and communication and information studies were the most common names used for modern library schools (Alimohammadi, 2007).

4. Information Technology Impact on LIS Education

A study conducted by Raju (1997) revealed that "the impact of IT has been felt by LIS departments in the country and it is evident that various aspects/areas of IT have been included in the syllabi of MLISc programme either in the form of one or two papers"**.** Information Technology in LIS schools is necessary for survival in the 21st century. Mahapatra and Das (2000) felt that courses on new technology should be provided. The information needs of the user community and the overall changes that have taken place due to need based adoption of ICT; the work in libraries has necessitated implementation of appropriate changes in the Library and Information Science syllabi for various levels of courses. These factors are to be taken up seriously while designing the course structure. But in India, it is having a peculiar problem as regards to organization of libraries is concerned. It is felt that about 90% of libraries are required to continue with traditional management and organization of their activities. Therefore, in India there will two types of libraries i.e. Digital and Conventional type. In this context it is required that majority of our manpower manage libraries in the traditional way where classification, cataloguing, circulation, and other activities are mostly to be carried out manually. In this situation, the LIS education has to look after both the aspects and may continue to provide both educational configuration for manually operated conventional library system and fully computerized Library and Information Centers as well. In such cases the educational institute of the country may have to introduce some special paper like Manuscript Librarianship, Organization of Non-Book Materials. Digital Librarianship, Community librarianship, etc. is to be introduced, which would take care of providing in-depth knowledge on these types of libraries. This may help to produce manpower, which will be suitable for both types of libraries. The LIS specialists, academicians, librarians, information managers, and intellectuals concerned with the development of libraries should think seriously about the future course contents of LIS education in the country. Nevertheless, the concept of outsourced teaching patterns from the specialist of IT and ICT industries would harvest a better knowledge base through industry-academia–interface, supporting the proper absorption and adoption of digital environment. Wilson (2002) stipulated that Librarians and information workers of all kinds have been one of the groups most significantly affected, not only in terms of the technology being used for 'housekeeping' purposes (cataloging, book issue, periodicals control, etc.), but also to deliver information to the desktop of the information user through the Internet and the World Wide Web. This ‘technological ubiquity’ presents problems in defining what LIS professionals do, but it also presents us with opportunities to do different and new things. With the increasing use of information technology, the second control factor, technological ubiquity, is affected; when libraries were large

buildings with books, and librarians knew what they were doing, in most countries the library profession was cohesive. Horvat (2003) argued that the changes brought by the new ICT have impact on LIS education that required updating of the curriculum and new topics be added in the LIS curriculum. "Modular form of delivery of LIS educational topics has become common and its adoption is related to the influence of technologies". Wilson found that impact of the Internet and the World Wide Web are much more diverse than the publishers who provided most of the information resources in the days when information supply was dominated by print on paper. The LIS curriculum continues to cover this area. However, the sources have diversified greatly and, increasingly, have become electronic in form, rather than physical, consequently the means for identifying, organizing and providing access to sources have also changed and the curriculum has changed and is changing, to keep pace. Jain, Kaur and Babbar (2007) realized the need for periodic examination and analysis leading to necessary changes and improvements in curriculum for the interpolation of new and fast developing areas of information technology and computer science. The objective for training of LIS professionals is to promote library, to educate, to articulate and provide for the need of the clientele to increase productivity and economy. Most of the library schools and departments have revised or are in the process of re-designing their curricula. 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 require 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, and scholarly discussion lists, mailing lists, Usenet newsgroups, websites, CDs and DVDs. The ground reality of the present LIS education system in India indicates that quality improvement is essential and unavoidable. Minishi-Majanja (2007) concluded that sub-Saharan Africa is in the mainstream of ICT exploitation and consumption, even if somewhat lagging behind. Sub-Saharan LIS schools have embarked on this task by incorporating ICT modules in their curricular. Curriculum development, which is largely under departmental jurisdiction, has been attended to and most LIS schools have developed relevant ICT modules. LIS schools in Africa must harness the opportunities offered by ICTs in teaching and learning, for instance, in the development of appropriate market-driven curricula, acquiring relevant, up-to-date educational technologies and resources, and the use/application of state-of-the-art educational methods and techniques such as mounting on-line courses and enhancing computer assisted learning. It is important that the Head of a LIS school possess the vision, knowledge, commitment and exploratory flexibility to adapt to new changes/challenges and spearhead or apply the theory of 'Individual Innovativeness' by allowing early adopters to provide guidance.

5. Conclusion

Information technology (IT) was the driving force behind the development and enhancement of LIS programs. The majority of courses that focused on technology were available to students as elective courses. Examples of these technology courses are artificial intelligence, cryptology, data and file structures, data fusion, data mining, information visualization, natural language processing, system development, software life cycle management, telecommunications, networking, and many more. To support change in the curriculum, faculty may have to seek new staff to teach in new areas. The curriculum remains strong in traditional coursework that seeks greater understanding of users, their information-seeking behavior, and the sources and services that libraries provide to users generally and to special populations. Library educators are warned against placing too much reliance on a single niche such as users or information technology. Instead, programs should stake unclaimed or disputed areas such as the organization of information, content creation, authoritative information, and/or collection preservation. Library educators must continually face the challenge of defining and redefining themselves to remain viable in the face of technological advancements that threaten to usurp their role or replace them altogether (Markey, 2004).

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