



LIS education in India: an appraisal of the parity between the syllabus and the market demands

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ABSTRACT

History and development of the LIS Education in India have been traced from its early inception up to today's scenario. Towards this discussion, different modes of LIS training have been delved into- namely, regular courses offered by the universities, specialized courses by NISCAIR (INSDOC), DRTC, NCSI, etc., distance education LIS courses offered by open as well as regular universities and also the certificate course offered by BLA and some other organizations. Against this proliferation, this study tried to map the resources (input) used for teaching LIS by comparing syllabuses of different Universities and Institutes and to assess how far these resources co-relate in imparting LIS education with the today's market demand for LIS professionals, whether there are any gaps and recommendations to fill up those gaps (if any). The basic issues to be addressed in this paper are the connectivity between uniting LIS education and manpower requirements to transform India of the 21st century into a knowledge society, as envisaged by the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) set up by the Prime Minister of India in 2005 with the challenging mandate to transform India of the 21st century into a knowledge society. NKC has emphasized on trying to raising standards and promoting excellence in LIS education in the light of the country's manpower requirement.

Keywords: *Library and Information Science (LIS) Education-India, Quality Indicators, Employability, Market Demands, Bologna Process.*

1. LIS Education in India- the Scenario

1.1. Education in India- some statistics: Association of Indian Universities (AIU) is an important umbrella organization for the universities in India. Universities Handbook (AIU, 2006) by AIU gives the figure that India has 354 university level organizations among which 279 are AIU members. Of these, 172 are conventional universities (including 33 institutions for specialized studies in disciplines), 37 institutions provide in agriculture, 16 in health sciences, 38 in engineering and technology, 1 in journalism, 5 in law and 10 are open universities.

1.2. The Background: India is an ancient civilization with a rich lineage of cultural heritage. A need to breed Librarians as facilitator was always there. LIS education is being imparted in India since as early as 1911 when the first Library School was started in Baroda, in the state of Maharashtra with the direct royal patronage of Sayaji Rao Gakwad II. In 1915, it gained the first-time university patronage under the umbrella of Punjab University. Starting from Certificate and Diploma Courses, Indian universities gradually started offering Bachelor's and then Master's Degree in LIS. The first PhD in LIS was awarded to Dr. D B Krishna Rao in 1958 by the University of Delhi. India is gradually emerging as a key player in the LIS education scenario as is evident from the fact that more than 85 universities in India offer Master Degree in LIS whereas over 50 Indian universities have provision for guiding Ph D Scholars.

Parallel to this, we have institutes like National Institute for Science Communications and Information Resources (formerly, Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre), Documentation Research Training Centre, National Centre for Science Information, International School of Information Management (Mysore) are imparting specialized training for breeding the generation 2K information scientists.

As a third wave, there are the Distance Education Courses run by the National Open Universities started with the effort of Indira Gandhi National Open University which has started Bachelor's Degree in 1989 and Master's Degree in 1996. State Open Universities like Netaji Subhas Open University (West Bengal) and various general universities quickly follow suit to offer a gamut of LIS courses in the distance mode.

1.3. Courses available in LIS in India (AIU, 2006):

1. Certificate Course

- ICT Application in Libraries
- IT enabled Services
- Librarianship
- Library & Information Science

2. Diploma Course

- PGDLAN (Post Graduate Diploma in Library Automation & Networking)
- Diploma in Library Automation
- Diploma in Lib. Sc. /Inf. Sc.

3. B. Lib. Sc. or B. LIS.
4. M. Lib. Sc or M. LIS.
5. M. Phil.
6. PhD (Doctorate in Philosophy)
7. D. Litt (Jain, Kaur, and Babbar 2007)

One excellent list of Indian universities offering LIS education along with courses offered, contact address, etc. is available under the name of 'Library and Information Science Education in Asia' in <http://dis.sci.ntu.edu.sg/cisap/schools/india.htm>.

1.4. Universities and LIS Courses- some examples: University of Kerala offers courses like B.LISc., PGDIT, M.LISc. (Regular), M.LISc. (Evening), M.Phil and Ph.D. University of Calcutta offers BLIS, MLIS, M PHIL and PhD. University of Jadavpur offers BLIS, MLIS, MLIS (Digital Library) evening course and PhD. Kalyani University offers BLIS, MIIS and M PHIL.

Many universities are providing optional papers in Health Science Information System, Business Information System, etc to cope with the job field.

1.5. Distance Education and E-Learning in LISⁱ: The report of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1993) underlined the fact that only seven percent of the relevant age group is enrolling for higher education in India. So, formal education is not enough. To substantiate, we need models to follow The Open University (OU) in Great Britain and such like. Starting towards late 1960s, by the 1980s there were 34 Indian universities offering single-mode (distance) and many others dual-mode teaching of LIS. Distance Education Council (DEC), founded in 1992, is the nodal agency responsible for their quality standards and procedural aspects.

Initially the Distance Education schools were much frowned upon but later many of them (especially Indira Gandhi National Open University) gained a pride of position with their constantly changing quality study modules (course materials) prepared by the crème of the LIS fraternity and also for arranging classes by the best faculties and providing very good lab facilities. This flexible mode is especially suitable for those who already have a connection with the LIS job scenario directly or indirectly.

Ghosh & Kanjilalⁱⁱ have delineated in detail the modalities for the setting up of a truly useful distance learning system for LIS. Their model might well be a model to be followed by other universities in India and indeed is highly praised and successful one.

Kawartaⁱⁱⁱ (2006) and all have dealt beautifully the E-learning aspect in LIS education in India. List of Indian universities offering distance education is available at <http://www.indiastudycenter.com/univ/distance-education.asp>

The e-Learning has emerged as an additional medium for imparting education in many disciplines to overcome the constraint of physical capacity associated with the traditional classroom methods. For a vast developing country like India, this provides an immense opportunity to provide even higher education to remote places besides extending the library services through networking. Thanks to the recent initiatives by the public and private institutions in this direction, a few web-based instruction courses are now running in the country. This has been thoroughly discussed in 'ICTS: A catalyst for

enriching the learning process and library services in India' by S Chanda and V. Patkar^{iv}.

1.6. The Present Scenario: Library & Information Science has reached the height of a full-fledged discipline in the present era with many universities offering M.Phil. and/or PhD in the subject. Though there are still doubts among LIS professionals themselves so as to determining its acne under the faculty of science or humanities or social science stream. Most Indian universities have placed it with Journalism and Education in a separate faculty consisted of the trio.

Initially, the librarians were much thought of as custodians mould rather than from a service oriented angle. The education also conforming more to that respect but gradually shift came towards use and one eye-opener in this direction is the great 'Five Laws' of library science by S. R. Ranganathan, the father of Indian Library Science. 'Custodian' and 'Curator' concept gradually replaced by the concept of 'Depth Classification' by him and his worthy disciples Ganesh Bhattacharya and Neelameghan. In fact the journey for the Colon Classification was one that led Indian Library Science towards 'Facet Analysis' and 'Analytico-Synthetic' ways of subject building.

2. LIS Education Libraries- the Controlling Mechanism

2.1. University Grants Commission (<http://www.ugc.ac.in>): Established in 1956 by the Government of India, UGC is the statutory body for planning and monitoring. Its objective is to promote and coordinate university education and to determine and maintain standards of teaching, examination and research in universities. It regulates standards as well as provides funds. UGC provides development (plan) grant and maintenance (non-plan) grant for academic purposes whereas state government grants are received occasionally. The universities are often to work under tight budgets and resultant cuts often affect the computer laboratory and other infrastructural facilities required for the less privileged subjects like LIS. An effort is urgently needed to seek the help of non-governmental sources for financing higher education.

UGC has undertaken different programs towards fulfilling its objectives, like **Special Assistance Program (SAP)**, **Examination Reform**, **INSAT-1B Satellite program** on Higher Education (available on television network throughout the country) and holding of annual competitive examination for Junior Research Fellowship (**UGC NET**) at the national level.

It also has established 57 **Academic Staff Colleges (ASC)** till May 2007 (<http://www.ugc.ac.in/orgn/staffcollege.html>). Through Orientation Program, an ASC tries to refresh the already employed with a cutting edge of recent trends in his subject.

2.2. Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) Centre (<http://www.inflibnet.ac.in>): It is an Autonomous Inter-University Centre (IUC) of University Grants Commission involved in creating infrastructure for sharing of library and information resources and services among Academic and Research Institutions. INFLIBNET works collaboratively with Indian university libraries to shape the future of the academic libraries in the evolving information environment.

Two important activities of it are creation of **SOUL (Software for University Libraries)** and **UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium**. The electronic resources subscribed under the Consortium are available on subscription to the universities and other academic institutions.

SOUL has been used in building up a great project **IndCat**. IndCat is the Online Union Catalogue of Indian Universities of books, theses and journals available in major university libraries in India. The union database contains bibliographic description, location and holdings information for books,

journals and theses in all subject areas available in more than 112 university libraries across the country.

Database	No. of Records	No of Universities
Books	10697998	112
Theses	220206	238
Current Serials	22471	200
Serial Holdings	50164	89

The saddest thing is that despite this gigantic endeavor of INFLIBNET of unifying India in LIS terms (especially considering the vastness and multilingual plurality of our country), **SOUL is still to be incorporated in the LIS syllabus of the Universities** and yet to take top seat in the library function of many universities. Likewise much other library software- is it proprietary like **LibSys**, **VTLS** or open source and/or free like **Koha** are yet to be a part of the LIS curricula though questions regarding that software often form a crucial part of most job interviews.

2.3. Absence of an All-India Body: There are bodies like Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Indian Council of Medical Research, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Indian Council of Social Science Research, etc to supervise over different disciplines. Also there are Indian Administrative Service, Indian Statistical Service, Indian Forest Service, etc. to nurture the cadres of a particular genre. Sadly though, we are yet to get an Indian Library & Information Service for us. If constituted, it would surely help in transparency and better employability of potential LIS candidates. Furthermore, it would encourage in the smooth flow of quality professionals throughout India and would help all employers (and institutes) to find appropriate quality personnel to fill up their vacant positions.

3. LIS Education: the Problems

3.1. Medium of Instruction and Employability of LIS students: Perhaps as a legacy of almost 200 years of British colonial rule, higher education in India is still dependent mostly on English language. Our LIS is no exception especially in Masters and Research level though certificate, diploma and sometimes graduation (B LIS) is done through the local Indic language. Though now some LIS books are available in Indic languages, still LIS students with English language option gets wider coverage of quality LIS books written by LIS experts from India and abroad. There are other serious considerations associated with this choice of medium. Today's Indian LIS job world has become more sophisticated where communication skills matter much and it also helps the candidates to seek job anywhere in India and also abroad whereas students coming from rural India and/or from non-English-medium schooling background, fare not so well in the job market. Their options are confined to the sector speaking only the Indic language(s) they are comfortable with. Unfortunately, this aspect has so far been neglected by the curriculum development bodies. This language factor is perpetuating the gaps between the haves and have-nots in the field of LIS.

3.2. Problem of Nomenclature and Determination of Discipline: Traditionally prone towards Arts, and sometimes Social Science, LIS discipline is turning more and more towards Science stream with the inclusion of subjects like Information Technology, Communication Technology, Statistics and sometimes many mathematical formulations also. There are doubts and uncertainties about its exact position and status. Many universities have positioned it - along with other multidisciplinary subjects like Journalism and Education - under a separate faculty from ARTS, Science and Commerce. This obscurity sometimes prevents the entry of more brilliant students into the fold of LIS.

3.3. Asymmetrical Treatment of the Subject under Different Universities: There are so many discrepancies among different universities about treating the subject. Some universities requires 10+2+3 schooling before entering BLIS, some used to prefer till 1990s, a Masters (10+2+3+2) degree before entering the same course. Some requires Honours (i.e. Major) in the Bachelor's Degree level whereas others will do without. Some universities offer two years Masters Course (as is done for all other subjects in all the universities) but some LIS Masters course is of 1 year duration. Some universities have a quota for admitting Certificate Course holders while others have no such preference. All these ambiguities make it impossible for easy and uniform entry of quality intake.

Some of the universities have only the traditional subjects (cataloguing, classification, library management, information sources, etc.) in BLIS whereas some has papers like Library Automation and Networking (theory and practice), Document Description (a new name for Cataloguing that reflects the changing nature of the subject) that truly reflect the effect of market demand. An important point to observe here is the young departments are more prone to take on the changes whereas the older ones are more hesitant towards radical transition. Whereas 'Information Sources, Services and Users' have been clubbed into one paper, many universities have separated them into different papers on 'User Study', etc.

3.4. Ill-equipped Infrastructural Facilities: By nature, LIS departments needs print materials, CD-ROM based materials, audio-video tapes and a very good departmental as well as central library to provide these in adequate amounts. They need practical classes in well-equipped lab with adequate nodes for every student with provision for digital learning through Internet and other Web based materials. Many of them still lack in good labs with adequate nodes, regular maintenance and up gradation and faculties knowledgeable and willing to provide hands-on. Sadly, LIS departments do not have Technical Assistants to help in lab set up. It's difficult even for well-meaning faculties to give their best, teacher-student ratio being a burden.

4. LIS Education-the Employability

4.1. Placement Opportunities for Passed out Students: Unlike other professional courses like Medical, Engineering, etc. LIS course providers rarely offer any placement opportunity. At the most, some advertisements for positions cut and pasted on a notice board are provided by some LIS departments. Some student-friendly faculties sometimes act as a liaison between a student and a job. Career Counseling and job placements are yet to be included within the periphery of LIS teaching obligations and/or curricula.

One placement avenue frequently followed is to explore the connections made by the teachers of the concerned departments and another is the contacts of the well-placed alumnus. The later is more effectively followed when there are active alumni associations connected with the departments.

4.2. Industry-LIS Interface: Apprenticeship generally does not constitute a part of the curricula. This lacuna provides harmful in many ways:

1. Dearth of frequent Industry-LIS interaction leaves the LIS departments unaware of the

requirements and happenings of the current job-market bosses.

2. The students lose the opportunity for knowing the cutting edge of the stocks-in-trade and thereby increasing their own employability.
3. The Departments lose the opportunity of revamping their curricula, teaching methods and orientation towards market demands.

4.3. Information Literacy as a part of LIS Curriculum in India: American Library Association (1989) has defined the concept of Information Literacy as a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed, have ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information. Even in India, information is growingly being acknowledged as a key component of an Information Society that is leading towards a knowledge-based society. In fact along with community centers, media and some others, libraries have the primeval role to play in the field of lifelong literacy. Karisiddappa & others^v (2004, IFLA) have discussed about the inclusion of Information Literacy in the LIS curricula.

The paper on “Information Sources and Services” demands that students get to nurture their capabilities for preparing their individual/group search strategies and aided by the guidance of an innovative faculty and/or library professional create their own information-seeking acumen that helps them on all their future unique dealings with information. It will also to help them to educate and train the user community in optimum utilization of the information for development.

5. The Efforts towards Solving the Problems

5.1. Efforts of University Grants Commission^{vi}: Since its inception in 1956, the University Grants Commission has tried to overhauling the arena of LIS education vis-à-vis services. The first two committees (1959 and 1965) saw the eminent Indian LIS scholar S. R. Ranganathan as its mentor. Both Committees set as its purview infrastructure & service of LIS in Indian universities and colleges. After that almost 20 years passed away with thriving of LIS education against many odds as manifested in the studies held by Mangla and Singh and collocated by Sarkhel^{vii} (Sarkhel, 2006)

- Unplanned proliferations of library schools
- Lots of variations in syllabi and no norms or standards are maintained in regard to course contents
- Lack of consensus regarding duration of the LIS courses at various levels
- Student-teacher ratio
- Lack of uniformity in
 - Selection criteria for admission
 - Intake
 - Class periods
 - Teaching methodology
 - Distribution of marks
 - Methods of evaluation and
 - Research programs
- Inadequate infrastructure in respect of
 - Space
 - Faculty members
 - Information Technology Laboratory
 - Library and
 - Teaching aids
- Inadequate training facilities to update the professional competence of in-service teachers

- Existing UGC refresher courses failed to provide needed expertise and skills to meet the growing complexities of information environment
- Lack of internal quality assurance and accreditation mechanism.

5.2. Curriculum Development Committee and its model curriculum for LIS (UGC Model Curriculum: Library & Information Science 2001)^{viii}: To allay these malfunctioning, to instill quality considerations and to impart ‘Unity in diversity’ among the deviant syllabuses adopted by LIS Departments in different parts of the country, University Grants Commission after a considerable gap of about 18 years formed and declared the report of the Kaula Committee on Curriculum Development in Library and Information Science in 1993. It was seen from practice that there are problems of exactly adopting any one stipulated curricula by a LIS department is going against the specific demands and uniqueness of a LIS Department. So, to provide a flexible framework as well as to satisfy the need of a standardized curriculum- the concept of ‘model curriculum’ came into being in 2001 in the report of the Karisiddappa Committee on Curriculum Development in Library and Information Science. It stated the learning objectives of each module, the syllabi is divided into distinct units, the whole thing revolves around a balance of theory and practice (60:40 ratio)

LIS Curriculum is generally changed by every Indian university once in every few years to accommodate the new ideas generated in the field. This also helps in purging the redundant ideas and imbibing the new ideals.

5.3. Quality Control Mechanisms: University Grants Commission is the statutory body that looks over the funds and functions of the Indian universities. It has set up **The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)** for evaluative assessment of the courses and curricula as offered by the Indian universities on the basis of a set of criteria on a regular interval on Institutional & Departmental performance. Different grades are offered as a result that signifies the concerned LIS Department’s degree of conformity with the Model Curriculum. But so far no LIS Department has been reported so far (Sarkhel, 2006).

6. International Scenario

6.1. Effort of IFLA: IFLA through its ‘IFLA Education and Training Section’ and ‘IFLA Division Education and Research’ is working hard towards removal of obstacles and facilitating access in LIS education in the world through the induction of international collaboration in the field of education and research.

In this context, we must consider Tammaro’s^{ix} words regarding how the LIS people should be trained in the Web 2.0 Environment and also how important the equivalency of LIS degree conferred by universities of the different countries in the world.

Prof. Aira Lepik has also dealt with a section of international Collaboration in IFLA Norway conference in the paper ‘The Nordic-Baltic cooperation in doctoral education: the case of NORSLIS’^x.

6.2. The Bologna process^{xi, xii, xiii} and Related Efforts in India: The Bologna process aims at creating a European educational space characterized by transparency and promoting mobility of academic staff and students, as well as professionals within the LIS Sector in order to promote employability and facilitate integration. It aims the academic cooperation in European LIS education as evidenced in the cooperative efforts like facilitating exchange of staff and students among members, developing cooperation on research projects, encouraging support from stronger to weaker members, and also encouraging mutual recognition of curricula or parts thereof. Some experimental models have been derived -examples are the cooperation between Tallinn University in Estonia and University of Parma in Italy and another is a Scottish University and University of Parma in Italy-. Indian efforts towards

academic cooperation with other countries in LIS field are also found. We cite an example here: Kolkata International Book Fair (held in end January every year) is an important activity in the Indian calendar. This year's theme country was Scotland. Through the collaborative efforts of British Council Library Kolkata, LIS-professional association IASLIC, Calcutta University, Calcutta University Department of Library & Information Science Students Association (CUDELSAA), etc.; a series of lectures were arranged by eminent Scottish LIS professionals in different universities and associations.

Likewise **evidence of academic cooperation** may be found in **India** in:

- Fulbright scholar programs in LIS that work between USA and India,
- Commonwealth Fellow programs that work between UK and India,
- arranging special lectures by eminent professors of other universities,
- arranging special lectures by eminent scholars & practicing librarians- those who are not in the teaching positions, thereby increasing university-(LIS) Industry Liaison,
- inviting eminent LIS professors/scholars as resource persons to conduct classes in Refresher Courses,
- inviting eminent non-LIS professors/scholars as resource persons to conduct classes in Orientation Courses, thereby opening platform for interdisciplinary interaction,
- Frequent interaction is happening between Indian LIS Professionals with Malaysia, Singapore, etc.

7. LIS Education- Areas for Consideration

7.1. Skills Required of LIS professionals in the Indian Employment Market: Along with the professional degree (Bachelor's/Master's, etc.), today's market scenario necessitates acquiring a whole range of skills by the potential employee (Kwarta^{xiv}, 2006)

- Library related activities - Network Administration/Coordination
- Information services and supports - Network service
- Information brokerage - Office automation
- Information systems services - Telecommunication
- End-user training - Information system design
- Information product evaluation - Information Technology planning
- Usability analysis - Data security
- Information Analysis and - Internet Resources
- Consolidation - Internet site architecture
- Online searching

7.2. Recommendations for Consideration in LIS Curricula^{xv}: The following concepts/services may be considered as to be part of the practical classes/apprenticeship programs:

1. Proper propagation of educational programmes offered by IGNOU through Panchayati Raj systems to remote villagers
2. Using the CLICs (Community Kiosks) effectively
3. Children's Library
4. Subject Librarianship
5. Information Commons

6. Outreach Services
7. Technical Writing Classes/Workshops
8. Evidence-based librarianship
9. Case Studies
10. Documenting Heuristic Knowledge
11. Appropriate apprenticeship programs are also to be arranged so as to develop leadership qualities (Mahapatra, 2006)^{xvi} through exploring 'information handling; communication, crisis management, team building and decision making'.

8. LIS Education, Marketability and Positive Players

8.1. Positive Role Played by the Discussion Forums: Discussion Forums like LIS Forum (by NCSI, Bangalore) is frequented by many professionals and provide a valuable platform for interaction on many relevant issues including LIS education. IATLIS forum also offers teaching-related information. Digital Library Research Group (DLRG) run by Prof. ARD Prasad and others at Documentation Research Training Centre, Bangalore is a valuable source from IT and Digital Library related issues that concern the teaching of LIS. Except these major three, there are some other specialized groups that cater to the need of the LIS education related information.

8.2. The Crucial Role played by Indian Association of Teachers in Library & Information Science (IATLIS): Since 1990s, India is witnessing an economic as well as cultural awakening where she tries to envelop the world through its liberalization, globalization and market-centered progression. Despite debates among left and right wing political forces regarding pros and cons of these steps, many of these changes have made tremendous impact in our LIS employment market in the form of increased opportunities in India and abroad.

To take significant part in this march towards the knowledge economy, LIS Departments should make a continual assessment of the market demands and periodic evaluation and modification of their curricula.

National Library Associations may take an active role in this endeavor. In fact, Indian Association of Teachers in Library & Information Science (IATLIS) is continually working towards this goal with the following programs and more:

Building Curriculum with a Difference: A Vision for LIS Education in the 21st Century: XXIII IATLIS National Conference, held at Department of Library and Information Science, Punjabi University, Patiala from 23-25 November, 2006. Dharwad, IATLIS, 2006 (Chairmen: C R Karisiddappa and B D Kumbar).

IATLIS organised National Workshop on LIS Teachers and the Digital Future during 17th to 19th January 2007 (Director: Dr. Harish Chandra). 46 participants from 17 states attended the program.

Changing Face of LIS Education: Learning Styles and Teaching Methodologies: XXV IATLIS National Conference, 2008, Organized by Department of Library & Information Science, Panjab University, Chandigarh, November 27-29, 2008.

There are some similar efforts in Asia where some Indian LIS experts took part:

Asia-Pacific Conference on Library & Information Education & Practice, 2009: preparing Information Professionals for International Collaboration, 6-8th March 2009, at Tsukuba, Japan

8.3. National Knowledge Commission- the Ray of Hope for LIS Education and for Libraries: It is indeed a giant step forward integrating demand and supply of information- a boon to the masses- (www.knowledgecommission.gov.in/downloads/documents/NKC_Library.pdf). While inaugurating The **National Knowledge Commission (NKC)**, Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh told that the time has come to create a second wave of institution building, and of excellence in the fields of education, research and capacity building to make us better prepared for the 21st Century. National Knowledge Commission (NKC) under the chairmanship of Mr. Sam Pitroda envisaged **Knowledge Society** as the **Goal for India**. As NKC sees it- along with many other countries of the world India is to join in the march of Knowledge Society. Knowledge Society needs information professionals well equipped with the zeal of documenting, preserving, sharing, and in short, facilitating the use of information in whichever way possible for the growth and development of our country. Towards that end, LIS curricula must incorporate into it the concepts of ICT-D (Information & Communication Technology for Development), Web for Development, Information Literacy, etc. There should also be a tremendous thrust so as to preserve and disseminate the indigenous knowledge not only in the S & T sector but also in the field of literature, social science and also every little tit-bit that is important to portray our culture.

The **Terms of Reference of National Knowledge Commission Working Group on Libraries** are:

1. To redefine the objectives of the country's Library and Information Services sector;
2. To identify constraints, problems and challenges relating to the sector;
3. To recommend changes and reforms to address the problems and challenges to ensure a holistic development of information services in all areas of national activity;
4. To take necessary steps to mobilize and upgrade the existing library and information systems and services, taking advantage of the latest advances in Information Communication Technology (ICT);
5. To explore possibilities for innovation and initiate new program relevant to our national needs, especially to bridge the gap between the information rich and the information poor within society;
6. To suggest means of raising standards and promoting excellence in Library and Information Science education including re-orientation and training of working professionals;
7. To assist in setting up facilities to preserve and give access to indigenous knowledge and the nation's cultural heritage;
8. To set up adequate mechanisms to monitor activities for securing the benefits of acquisition and application of knowledge for the people of India;
9. To examine any other issues that may be relevant in this context.

The **National Knowledge Commission (NKC) Working Group on Libraries** gave **ten recommendations** for a journey towards Knowledge Society -

1. Set up a National Mission on Libraries
2. Prepare a National Census of all Libraries
3. Revamp Library and Information Science education, training and research facilities

The proposed Mission on Libraries must assess as soon as possible the manpower requirements of the country in the area of Library and Information Science management, and take necessary steps to meet the country's requirement through Library and Information Science education and training. To keep the sector abreast of latest developments, necessary encouragement should be given to research after evaluating the research status in this field. Establishing a well equipped institute (**Indian Institute of Library and Information Science**) for advanced training and research in library and information science and services would provide the necessary impetus to this task.

4. Re-assess staffing of libraries
5. Set up a Central Library Fund
6. Modernize library management
7. Encourage greater community participation in library management
8. Promote Information Communication Technology (ICT) applications in all libraries
9. Facilitate donation and maintenance of private collections
10. Encourage public - private partnerships in development of library and information services

9. Conclusion

Despite being a well-paid job in terms of remuneration, job-security, etc., LIS professionals still face an identity crisis due to perceived lack of glamour/sophistication attached with this profession. The effort is therefore for reaching the sublime height of a faculty position which somehow redeems its lack of glory covering it with an enviable and exalted status of being 'Teacher'. Once entered, a few seek the new pastures of higher learning & research, but mostly tend to gloat over their privy position and indulge in the laid-back attitudes of having reached the journey's end. The real fight is to convince them that the road just begins there. For it is up to them to imbibe a new generation of LIS scholars towards a path of learning where they can mingle the academic brilliance and professional intelligence into some visionary delight.

NKC has raised a lot of hope in the heart of the LIS professionals that with the fervent activities of NKC under the dynamic leadership of Mr. Sam Pitroda, importance of libraries and LIS professionals are heavily underlined and re-defined once again. Along with the educators, we LIS professionals have been asked to facilitate this inclusive society where knowledge as power is accessible to all.

The creation of the proposed **Indian Institute of Library and Information Science** by **National Knowledge Commission** is supposedly going to be the break through towards which every Indian library professional is looking forward.

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