

## RESEARCH TRENDS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE IN INDIA

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*The analysis of trends of Ph.D. level research work in library and information science (LIS) and related topics in Indian universities since the award of first Ph.D. degree in 1950 showed that the years 1984-88 were the period of maximum growth in research, and the most popular subject had been Academic Libraries. The LIS Department of Karnataka University is the most productive school in the field. Suggests some measures to prevent possible dilution of research work in this subject.*

### INTRODUCTION

"Research is the only sure way to constantly expand the fund of human knowledge and solve the problems that face the mankind today" [1]. Research in the field of applied sciences and professional disciplines has an added significance, since through research they develop better and advanced tools and techniques for their works which ultimately lead to improvement in service to and living condition of human being. Being a developing profession, the library and information science (LIS) does not have a very long and inspiring research tradition. Librarians remained indifferent for long to research in their own profession despite the fact that they are the purveyors to researchers. Of late, the scenario has begun to change - thanks to social pressure and self-awareness [2]. While justifying offering of Ph.D. programmes in LIS, Wilkinson has rightly pointed out that "if librarianship aspires to become a profession, it

should depend upon research to develop its knowledge base and its theoretical framework" [3].

### BACKDROP

Though LIS education in India started as early as in 1911, it was only after the World War II that it was gradually recognised as a full-fledged discipline and separate departments were set up in universities offering courses leading to bachelor and master degrees. This eventually set the stage for formal research activities in the subject. Informally, however, Ranganathan was single handedly conducting research in every sphere of LIS ever since he became the librarian of the Madras University Library. It was he who was responsible for instituting Master Degree and Ph.D. programmes for the first time in Delhi University with the active cooperation of Sir Maurice Gwyer, the then Vice-chancellor of Delhi University, in 1948 and 1950-51 respectively. At present, formal research in LIS is conducted at four levels, viz., M.L.I.Sc, M.Phil., Ph.D. and D. Litt. The research projects at M.L.I.Sc level aim at providing hands-on training in application of research methodology and involve elementary level of research work. The M.Phil. level research aims at advanced training in research methodology and is confined to only two universities, and D. Litt. has been awarded to only one candidate so far. Therefore, the dominant role in formal research in LIS is played by Ph.D. workers. The present study mainly covers the research work

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carried out at Ph.D. level, but includes also the lone D. Litt. work.

### **Ph.D. LEVEL WORK**

Dr. D.B. Krishna Rao was the first person to be awarded a Ph.D. degree in LIS in 1957. He worked under the guidance of Dr. Ranganthan. It was after two decades that the second Ph.D. degree was awarded in the subject by Punjab University, after which research in LIS gradually picked up. Nevertheless, research in LIS related subjects started even earlier, in 1950, when Calcutta University awarded a Ph.D. degree in science to Minendranath Basu for his work relating to preservation of museum articles and library materials. Several Ph.D. degrees were awarded to other candidates on LIS related topics even during the lull that followed the award of the first Ph.D. degree in the subject. However, all such works were carried out in departments other than LIS and under the guidance of scholars belonging to other fields. Besides, some library personnel and LIS teachers have done research work leading to Ph.D. in LIS at universities abroad or Ph.D. on subjects other than LIS: Thus, there are four categories of research work conducted by Indian library personnel, including library workers and LIS teachers. These are

- i) research conducted in LIS schools in India on topics related to LIS or inter-disciplinary topics involving LIS;
- ii) research conducted in university departments in India, other than LIS departments on topics related to LIS or inter-disciplinary topics involving LIS;
- iii) research conducted in LIS schools abroad on topics related to LIS or inter-disciplinary topics involving LIS; and
- iv) research conducted in Indian universities on topics relating to subjects other than LIS.

Since the purpose of present study is to investigate trends of research in LIS in India, the last two categories of research work have been excluded from its purview.

### **COVERAGE AND DATA COLLECTION**

As indicated earlier, the pace of research in LIS in India was quite slow till 1970s; but during the next decade, it accelerated considerably. For the present study, the whole period since 1950 has been divided into four convenient time intervals. These are the periods before 1979; 1979-1983; 1984-1988; and 1989-1993, the first one being of a longer period for obvious reasons. Prior to this work, some other studies on Ph.D. level research work in India have been conducted. These include

- i) a study conducted by Dev Raj Sharma in 1985 [4]. He analysed the trend from 1950 to 1985 which listed 53 theses for which doctorate degrees were awarded during the above period;
- ii) a bibliography of research in LIS compiled by Vijay Pathak and L.S. Ramaiah in 1986 [5] which covers 56 doctoral theses;
- iii) a bibliography compiled by P.S.G. Kumar in 1987 [6] that included 71 theses for award of doctoral degree. This bibliography included not only doctoral theses on LIS submitted to Indian universities, but also the theses of doctorate degrees by foreign universities;
- iv) a bibliography prepared by Dev Raj Sharma in 1990 [7] which lists 56 theses for which doctorate degree was awarded by Indian universities during 1985-1990; and
- v) a bibliography compiled by Dev Raj Sharma and D.K. Sharma in 1992 [8] listing 80 dissertations accepted by Indian universities for doctoral degree during 1990-1992.

In addition to above sources, data have also been collected from the University News; Herald of Library Science; ILA Newsletter; IASLIC Newsletter; IATLIS Newsletter; and UPLA Newsletter to ensure comprehensiveness in coverage.

### **GROWTH STUDY**

The growth of Ph.D. level research in LIS in India may be observed in the following Table.

Table 1

*Growth of Ph.D. level research in LIS*

Year	No. of Ph.D.s	Year	No. of Ph.D.s
1950	1	1983	10
1957	1	1984	18
1963	1	1985	21
1966	1	1986	5
1972	2	1987	8
1973	1	1988	9
1977	4	1989	13
1978	3	1990	17
1979	2	1991	21
1980	4	1992	47
1981	4	1993	16
1982	3		
<b>Total</b>		<b>212</b>	

Note : The figure for 1992 includes one D Litt.

It is evident that research activities in the field of LIS were at a very low ebb till 1982. Only 28 Ph.D. degrees were awarded in 33 years. No degree was awarded during 1951-1956 and 1958-1962. Significantly, majority of these research works, at least 17, were conducted in departments other than LIS departments under the guidance of specialists in other subjects. The main reason was possibly non-existence of LIS departments and/or Ph.D. facili-

ties in LIS in many of the universities where research work was conducted. The number of Ph.D. degrees awarded reached the double figure in 1983 and since then, research activities maintained a regular rhythm till 1991 except a brief set back during 1986-88, the reason for which is difficult to guess. A great spurt was noticed in 1992 when as many as 47 degrees were awarded, the highest in a year so far. In 1993, the figure has again dropped to 16. It is possible that the information collected for that year may be incomplete. The study of growth that were achieved during the four time intervals mentioned earlier reveals that upto 1978, 14 degrees were awarded, which increased to 23 during 1979-83 registering a growth of 64 percent. The figure further increased to 61, during 1984-88, the growth rate increasing to 165 percent, and to 114 during 1989-93, the growth rate dropping to 87 percent. It is possible that when the full information for 1993 is available the rate may go up but certainly it is not expected to match the growth of previous period. Hence, the period 1984-88 may be termed as the period of maximum growth in the field of LIS research in India.

**SUBJECT ANALYSIS**

The analysis of the subjects on which researches have been conducted has been presented in Table 2. It shows that upto 1978 the most popular area of research was Library Movement/Library Legislation (7 theses); during 1979-83 it was Library Classification/Theasaurus (5 theses); during 1984-

Table 2

*Subject-wise analysis*

Sl.no.	Subject	Number of Ph.D.s (including one D. Litt.)				
		Before 1979	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	Total
1.	Academic Libraries	1	3	10	15	29
2.	Archives			2		2
3.	Bibliometrics/Citation Studies			5	10	15
4.	Cataloguing				1	1

(Contd.)

**RESEARCH TRENDS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE IN INDIA**

Table 2 (..Contd.)

Sl.no.	Subject	Number of Ph.D.s (including one D. Litt.)				
		Before 1979	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	Total
5.	Children's Literature		1		1	2
6.	Classification/Thesaurus	2	5	2	2	11
7.	Indexing		1	5	5	11
8.	Knowledge/Communication				2	2
9.	Libraries/Information Centres (general)			2	2	4
10.	Library & Information Science Education			1	7	8
11.	Library & Information Services		2	4	6	
12.	Library & Information Systems	1	1	3	5	
13.	Library Automation/Computer Application			3	6	9
14.	Library Cooperation/Resource Sharing		1	1	2	4
15.	Library Management			3	1	4
16.	Library Movement/ Library Legislation	7	1	2	5	15
17.	Library Profession/ Library Professionals			1	5	6
18.	National Libraries			1	1	2
19.	Periodical Publications		1	1	2	4
20.	Personal Contribution				2	2
21.	Preservation		1	1	1	3
22.	Public Libraries	1	2	4	8	15
23.	Reference Sources/ Information Sources		4	5	5	14
24.	Special Libraries & Information Centres			2	6	8
25.	Universe of Subjects			1	2	3
26.	Users Studies/Use Studies	2	2	6	17	37
		14	23	61	114	212

88 Academic Libraries (10 theses); while during 1989-93, studies relating to users were the most popular topic of research with 17 theses. Research on Academic Libraries maintained a continuous upward growth trend from one thesis before 1979 to 3 during 1979-83; to 10 during 1984-88; and to 15 during 1989-93. User/Use studies was the subject of research in two cases each, upto 1978 and during 1979-83, but in subsequent periods it became the subject of research in 6 and 17 cases respectively. Public Libraries was taken as a topic of research in one case only before 1979, but it

received continuously increasing attention during the next three periods. During 1979-83 two persons worked on this subject; during 1984-88, 4 persons; and during 1989-93, 8 persons did so. Indexing on which Ph.D. level research began during 1979-83, became a popular topic during the subsequent periods (5 each). On Library Automation/Computer Application three persons worked for the first time during 1984-88, but it attracted 6 persons (i.e. double) during the subsequent period. On the other hand, topics relating to Classification/Thesaurus which became popular during

1979-83 (5 theses), after only two persons working during the previous period, lost its popularity during subsequent periods (2 theses each). On the whole the most popular subject for research in LIS has been Academic Libraries (29 theses), followed by User/Use Studies (27 theses); Bibliometrics/Citation Studies (15 theses); Puiblic Libraries (15 theses); Library Movement/Library Legislation (15 the-

ses); Reference/Information sources (14 theses); Classification/Thesaurus (11 theses) and Indexing (11 theses).

### LIS SCHOOLS' ROLE

The role played by different LIS schools in furthering research in LIS has been shown in Table 3.

Table 3

*Quantitative analysis of research in LIS schools*

LIS school	No. of Ph.D. degrees awarded				
	Before 1979	1979-83	1984-88	1989-93	Total
Karnataka University		5	9	9	23
Punjab University	2	1	11	3	17
Rajasthan University		3	6	8	17
Andhra University		2	2	10	14
Gulbarga university		1	3	9	13
Delhi University	1		2	6	9
Jiwaji University			2	7	9
Banaras Hindu university		1	5	2	8
Burdwan University			1	6	7
Poona University	1	1	2	3	7
Calcutta University	2	2	1		5
Vikram University		1		4	5**
Utkal University				5*	5
Calicut University				4	4
Jadavpur University				4	4
Other Schools & Subject Depts.				65	

**Note :** Schools here include non-LIS departments where researches have been conducted.  
 The table shows the details of only those schools which have produced at least four theses.  
 \* The figure includes one D Litt degree.  
 \*\* The figure includes 2 Ph.D. theses by one scholar.

The table indicates that though the LIS Department of Karnataka University initiated Ph.D. programme quite late during 1979-83, it has emerged as the most productive school in the country for research in the field with 23 Ph.D. degrees awarded till 1993. The other major schools in decreasing order of productivity are the LIS departments of Punjab and

Rajasthan University (17 degrees), Andhra University (14 degrees) and Gulbarga University ((13 degrees). Significantly, Delhi University which started Ph.D. programme in LIS for the first time in the country and also awarded the first Ph.D. degree in LIS and Calcutta University which awarded the first Ph.D. degree in science on a topic related



to LIS are lagging far behind with 9 and 5 Ph.D. degrees respectively. Utkal University is the first and the only university to have awarded the highest degree of D. Litt. in LIS, while Punjab University awarded the highest number of Ph.D. degrees during any five year period in 1984-88

(11 degrees).

**GUIDES' ROLE**

The role of different guides as far as conducting the research in LIS has been shown in Table 4

Table 4

*Research guides' contribution*

Name of guide	No. of candidates guided	Name of guide	No. of candidates guided
S R Gunjal	14	K A Isaac	4
M R Kumbhar	12	M R Riswadkar	3
J S Sharma	10.5	S N Srivastava	3
C R Karsidappa	7	A Tejomurty	3
P B Barua	6	P Dhyani	3
P N Kaula	5	Guides with less than three candidates	66
K S Deshpande	6	Candidates whose guides could not be verified and those who did Ph.D. without guide	47
M Mahapatra	4.5		
K Siva Reddy	4		
S R Ijari	4		
S M Tripathi	6		
C D Sharma	4		
<b>Total</b>			<b>212</b>

**Note :** In case where a person has guided a candidate jointly with another guide, the number of candidate has been taken to be 0.5.

From the above table, it appears that as many as 99 theses have been submitted under the guidance of the first 17 guides. Remaining 66 theses have been submitted under the supervision of 56 guides. Prof. S.R. Gunjal is the most active research guide in the field of LIS followed by Late Prof. M.R. Kumbhar and J.S. Sharma. It may be noted here that many well-known teachers in LIS have guided only a few candidates, some even less than three. This may be due to their other assignments or to give more time to the respective candidates working under them.

**CONCLUSION**

The above study has clearly manifested the current trends in Ph.D. level research work in the field of LIS. It has shown that altogether 209 persons have been awarded 211 \*Ph.D. degrees and one D Litt degree for their research work on various areas of LIS and related subjects till 1993 and research activities in the field are constantly on the rise. This is certainly an encouraging sign for any subject and more so, for an emerging profession like LIS. The recent spurt in Ph.D. level research work is often

\*Two scholars has been awarded two Ph. D. degrees each.

attributed to the increasing importance being attached to this degree for the purpose of employment, the increasing self-consciousness among the library and information personnel and increased opportunity for Ph.D. work. While appreciating this trend, it needs to be ensured that this spurt does not result in any dilution of research work, but helps in further advancement of the subject and profession. To this end, the following measures may be taken.

1. Ph.D. programmes should be operated only in those LIS schools where necessary infrastructural facilities and competent guides are available.
2. The subjects chosen for research work should be of high standard which can genuinely lead to creation of new knowledge or new tools and techniques for effective library and information work.
3. The areas requiring special attention for research work should be identified and taken up for conducting research. The subject-wise analysis of Ph.D. theses shown above may be of help for this purpose.
4. The number of candidates to work under a guide should be limited. In some universities the limit is as high as 10 candidates, which is not helpful as it is not possible for one person to give equal attention to many candidates simultaneously.
5. Joint guidance should be encouraged for interdisciplinary subjects.
6. The wasteful research-in-parallel should be avoided by regular bibliographical control of Ph.D. theses in LIS accepted in different universities and/or exchange of information relat-

ing to on-going research projects between different LIS schools.

7. Strict quality control should be effected for awarding the degrees in the subject.

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