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GRT VIEWS OF LIS DEPARTMENT HEADS REGARDING DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF MODEL LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CURRICULA IN EMERGING DIGITAL ERA IN NORTH INDIA

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Abstract:- *This article aims to explore the views of Heads of department of LIS Departments on LIS curricula in Northern Indian Universities. To promote quality education to LIS professionals, a model and custom built LIS curricula was required to be designed to match current market demands in emerging digital era. Teachers of LIS Departments are not feeling better in confining themselves to teach the traditional courses. The views of Heads of department and chairmen of LIS departments are very important because they can provide valuable information for improvement of LIS education in general and also the LIS curricula because of their experiential knowledge and their indolent in curricula design, development and revision. They are also associated with the policy framework of LIS education and its delivery. We needs to modify departmental LIS curricula module up to international level, an adequate manpower, infrastructure facilities and finance to develop LIS education in Northern Indian Universities.*

Keywords: LIS Curricula, LIS Department, LIS Curricula, LIS Education and Digital Era.

INTRODUCTION

LIS Schools in Northern Indian Universities developed their LIS Curricula according to the UGC Model curriculum accommodating some minor changes in their departmental curriculum. Most of the LIS Schools are teaching according to the traditional or old curriculum is not matching with the fast changes in technology and the skills required in the job market. Changing needs felt to bring in improvements and accommodate market demands and technological changes in course contents along with, addition and deletion in course contents to suit a digital era. LIS education at national level is facing many challenges in the realization of the objectives of conceiving and implementing the revised curricula. There are many challenges facing by the LIS Schools such as how to bring changes in curricula that many faculty members continue to fill comfortable with traditional aspects of teaching and learning. The discussion in conferences going on at national level but no concrete programme of action has been launched even today. The UGC Model Curriculum was revised more than a decade back, but no effort has been made till date to modify LIS curricula. The views of Heads of department of LIS Schools are very significant because they can provide not only valuable information for improvement of LIS education in national level but also can provide better suggestion to design and development of model LIS curricula to meet the manpower needs of emerging digital era. They have experiential knowledge and also associated with the policy framework of LIS education and its delivery. Professionals were being forced to rethink about restructuring the LIS curriculum. They were also expected to be academics of a higher order with updated skills and competence to work in a hypertext, networked, digital environment. The emerging market demands of the digital library have increased manifold and newer developments are constantly taking place in technologies of e-learning and Information Communication Technologies.

LITRATURE REVIEW

Limited studies have been conducted in India and all over the world. The review of literature covers all aspects of the study. Satija (1999) suggested that “every university being autonomous and free to frame their curricula. But at national level debate continued on whether uniform syllabus should be pursued at least at regional levels. There was no co-coordinating body to do this”. “The UGC Model Curriculum (2001) Committee adopted

practical and feasible approach to frame a modular curriculum keeping in view the contemporary developments in the job market demands in India. The special features of the UGC model curriculum has clearly stated the learning objectives for each module, unitized syllabi, special instructions to emphasize the theoretical and practical aspects, and it also indicates the implied concepts of information literacy in LIS curriculum” (Karisiddappa, 2001). Singh and Wijetunge (2006) found that there is “an immediate need for a model curriculum based on the cutting edge topics. According to him professional accreditation is an essential aspect of all instructions authentication infrastructure, competent faculty; sufficient document support, quality research and intake of promising students are the additional requirements. Collaboration with industry and marketing of the LIS courses via the web can go a long way to deliver the goods. These could be integrated in the LIS courses and reflected in the nomenclature”. Karisiddappa (2004) observed that “There is a need for rejuvenating the LIS courses in India in the light of the happenings in the International arena, the adoption of modular approach is a way of meeting the present and future needs of a dynamic curriculum. In brief the designed course contents should concentrate in developing knowledge, skills and tools corresponding to the four basic identified areas of creation, collection, communication and consolidation. It is hoped that this approach would serve as a guideline to future curriculum designing activities of developing countries”. According to Aina (2005) “an ideal curriculum would cater to the traditional library setting, and also to the emerging information market and job openings in the rural communities. It caters both to global and local needs. The curriculum consists of eight modules which are information communication technology, archives, record management, rural information services, research, management, publishing, public relations”. Wilson (2001) proposed a model based on four foundation fields for Information Studies as Information contents who represent Information resources in traditional curriculum, Information system represents Technology, people represent Information Provider and receiver, Organization represents Information Centers and Libraries. They may assist the process of curriculum development and related activities in Library and Information Studies Education. Lorrington (2004) suggested the “Academic LIS School Model to provide an academic quality to the LIS field. As per to this system knowledge organization is identified as the core of the subject and is analyzed from various theoretical angles”.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are described below to know the views of LIS department heads regarding need to design and develop model curricula according to current market demands of manpower in the growing digital era.

- (i) To know the views of LIS department Heads regarding modification of existing LIS curricula in selected Universities/Institutes in North India.
- (ii) To identify LIS courses which need to revision and updating.
- (iii) To explore issues of adapting LIS courses to the requirements of the emerging digital era.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study is limited to 28 LIS schools from seven states Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan and two Union territories Delhi and Chandigarh of Northern India to know the views of LIS department heads regarding need to design and develop model curricula according to meet the current market demands of manpower in the growing digital era.

METHODOLOGY/DATA COLLECTION

To achieve the objectives of the study survey method was adopted and questionnaire was also framed to collect view point of heads to make this study all encompassing giving representation to those who are concerned with the design and development of model LIS curriculum to meet the manpower needs of emerging digital culture. The relevant data for this study was collected up to December, 2013.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Technological innovations opened up several new areas in LIS education like digitization, Web 2.0, Library 2.0, Electronic Publishing, Blogs etc. The traditional roles of LIS changed drastically with advances in digital culture. It was observed that the imparting and imbibing of new knowledge and skills would help LIS professionals obtain sustainability and supremacy in an electronic environment that is rapidly changing and adapting to global demands. This demand for newer skills generated the demand for new courses that should be developed to impart hands-on knowledge and skills and this was evident in the responses of the employers. Most Heads favored the newer trends in Information Technology, Digital Libraries, ICT applications in libraries, Knowledge Management, Management skills, Short Term technical course were also considered useful as short term diploma type or even long term courses.

Demands of a Digital Era

The Digital library maintains all its resources are available in a machine-readable format. Technological innovations are changing the libraries of yore to the digital or virtual libraries of the present times and resources are making the electronic format available. The North Indian LIS schools were found to be sadly lacking in this field.

Table 1: Fulfillment of Digital Era Requirements by Existing Courses

Does existing LIS course fulfill the requirements of digital era.	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	13	46.4
No	11	39.3
No Response	4	14.3
Total	28	100

Majority (Table 1) 46.4% of the Heads favored the existing Library and Information Science courses and felt that they fulfilled the requirements of the digital era, while 39.3% did not. Also 14.3% did not respond at all.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DIGITAL ERA

An analysis of the data on Heads responses was very informative on what needs to be done to face up to the demands of the fast emerging digital era in Northern Indian Universities. They were sadly found to be lagging behind in many fields which were being used widely all over the current world of digitization and Library Science. Thus, overall the data analysis shows that respondents favored the fact that felt ‘Integrated curricula with software and hardware technology should be adopted; Develop LIS curriculum as per emerging demands of new digital era, with hands on experience of IT lab with the latest technology, equipment and infrastructure being established in LIS schools; Revised courses as per new trends and IT components with extensive practical exposure; Development of practical intensive module on digital library and Modification of LIS curricula to suit tailor made library requirements.

Table 2: Revision of the Course Contents by the Department

Year	BLIS		MLIS		M. Phil.		Ph. D	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2000	1	4.2	-	-	-	-	-	-
2003	1	4.2	2	10.0	-	-	-	-
2004	2	8.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
2005	-	-	3	15.0	-	-	-	-
2006	-	-	-	-	1	25.0	-	-
2008	-	-	1	5.0	-	-	-	-
2009	1	4.2	2	10.0	1	25.0	1	16.7
2010	2	8.4	2	10.0	-	-	1	16.7
2011	12	50.0	7	35.0	-	-	3	50.0
2012	5	20.8	3 (Integrated)	15.0	2	50.0	1	16.7
Total	24	100.0	20	100.0	4	100.0	6	100.0

Table 2 depicts the revision of syllabi during the period 2000-2012. There were twelve universities which revised their BLIS course contents in 2011, five revised in 2012 and two each revised in 2004 and 2010 respectively. In 2011 seven universities revised their MLIS course and two each revised their course contents in the years 2005 & 2012 respectively in 2003, 2009 & 2010 respectively and one revised in 2008. In 2012 two universities revised their M Phil course contents and one revised their course contents in the years 2006 & 2009 respectively. In the year 2011 three universities revised their Ph. D. course contents and one each in the years 2009-2010 and 2012 respectively. Thus, it is evident that most of the universities had revised their BLIS, MLIS, M. Phil and Ph.D. course contents by the years 2011-2012.

Adopting a Model LIS Curriculum

In the year 2001 C. R. Karisiddappa Committee keeping in view the market demand of LIS jobs, modular curricula was framed with accepted practical and feasible approach. Overtime a number of curriculum models have

been proposed by different agencies in the country. However, an attempt was made to understand the level of satisfaction the employers had with the curriculum being adopted by them currently.

Table 3: Curriculum Model Adopted at Present

Presently which LIS curriculum model you are adopting	Frequency	% age
UGC model curriculum along with some changes	11	39.3
Curriculum developed by your own department	10	35.7
UGC model curriculum 2001	7	25.0
Total	28	100.0

Table 3 shows that 39.3% departments had adopted the UGC model curriculum along with some changes, while 35.7% departments have adopted a Curriculum developed by their own department and 25% had adopted the UGC model curriculum 2001.

UGC model curriculum

The UGC exerted special efforts to design and update the LIS Curriculum in which a modular approach was adopted by the Curriculum Development Committee of UGC to design the Model curriculum for different levels of LIS education. UGC Model Curriculum was recommended by the Prof. C.R. Karisiddappa Committee in 2001. As this curriculum was found to be more useful, it was adopted by majority of the Indian LIS Schools. It was most important to know the views of the Heads/Chairmen about their level of satisfaction with regard to UGC Model curriculum 2001.

Table 4: Satisfaction with UGC Model Curriculum

Are you satisfied with UGC model curriculum?		
	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	13	46.4
No	13	46.4
No Response	2	7.2
Total	28	100

Table 4 illustrates the Heads’ views regarding their satisfaction with the UGC Model Curriculum 2001. There was equal response with 46.4% Heads/Chairmen being satisfied and a similar number being dissatisfied with the UGC Model Curriculum 2001, while 7.2% Heads/Chairmen did not respond at all.

Changes Required in the UGC Model Curriculum

While the Model Curriculum had been developed and adopted in 2001 by most LIS schools in India it has become quite redundant after a gap of 13 years from 2001 to 2014. This is basically because the information technology changed the application scenario radically and in totality. It was observed that the basic IT topics were to be upgraded according to the changing world demands. When suggestions were taken with regard to ‘what are the changes needed in the ‘UGC Model Curriculum 2001’, Heads reported that the Latest IT topics should be adopted, Upgrading Traditional aspects of LIS education, Introduction of Internship formats for LIS students’ practical training libraries, Digital library courses should be introduced with the LIS Curriculum having Open sources software courses to train students for Library automation, Advanced ICT aspects should be incorporated in UGC Model Curriculum, The demand for skills and competencies required in the market should be met by the curriculum, The Model Curriculum should be revised annually continuously.

Opinion on Departmental Syllabus

The LIS department syllabus should be updated with suitable courses to develop professional as well as technical skills. Technological development has raised challenges among educators to prepare LIS students to cope with these recent changes. The LIS syllabus should be organized to coordinate the learning of LIS topics and also their application in the current real settings. LIS educators should work in this direction and also necessarily to assess their opinion regarding present syllabus in their LIS Department.

Table 5: Opinion on Current Syllabus in LIS Department

Opinion on Current Syllabi in Department	Responses	
	Frequency	Per cent
Up to date	18	64.3
Partially Up to date	9	32.1
Out Dated	0	0.0
No Response	1	3.6
Total	28	100.0

The study shows (Table 5) that 64.3% of the Heads/Chairmen felt the present syllabus was adequate, 32.1% felt it was partially up to the mark while 3.6% did not respond.

Revision of LIS Curriculum

The new dimensions and changes taking place in LIS education have been influencing not only the LIS curricula but also nomenclature of LIS and job market needs. LIS schools in Northern Indian University do not imparting LIS education up to National and International standard. There is need to revision of LIS curriculum.

Table 6: Opinion on Revision of LIS Curriculum

Should the LIS curriculum be revised?	Responses	
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	21	75
No	7	25

Table 6 shows that a larger majority of 75% Heads/Chairmen wanted urgent revisions of the LIS curriculum, whereas 25% did not.

Centralized Agency to Monitor or Update the Curriculum

UGC setting-up a Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) was a significant effort towards centralization of LIS curriculum. But there was freedom for adoption of Model Curriculum recommended by the CDC, 2001. Most of the universities were liberated to develop their own department curriculum.

Table 7: Centralized Agency to Monitor or Update the Curriculum

Are you in favorthat there should be a centralized agency to monitor or update the curriculum?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	23	82.1
No	5	17.9
Total	28	100.0

Centralization of LIS curricula can make uniformity and it can be a step towards curriculum development. Table 7 shows that 82.1% Heads/Chairmen favored the establishment of a centralized agency to monitor and update the curriculum, while 17.9% did not.

Curriculum Uniformity

There is no national accreditation body at national level in India to monitor LIS education at national level, to make uniformity and standardization of LIS education. Table 8 shows that 71.4% Heads/Chairmen desired uniformity of the curriculum, whereas only 7.1% did not and 21.4% did not respond. The Data received, analyzed and presented below

Table 8: Uniformity in Curriculum

Should there be uniformity in curriculum?	Heads/Chairmen Responses	
	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	20	71.4
No	2	7.1
No Response	6	21.4
Total	28	100

Information Needs and Curriculum

LIS professional have ability to compete with other professionals to survive in the digital culture and LIS curriculum should be equipped with the current concepts demanded in the market. The UGC Model curriculum 2001 had recommended certain papers. Responses were sought on the acceptance of such innovations and are tabulated as follows. Table 9 shows that 64.3% of Heads/Chairmen felt the Library schools curricula changes did not match the faster changes occurring in the information world, whereas 17.9% of Heads/Chairmen felt that the Library schools were keeping abreast with the times and 17.9% did not respond.

Table 9: Matching of LIS Curricular Changes

Are Library schools curricular changes not matching the ongoing changes in the landscape of information?	Heads/Chairmen Responses	
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	18	64.3
No	5	17.9
No Response	5	17.9
Total	28	100.0

Table 10: Reasons for Not Matching the Curricular Changes

If yes, indicate the reasons and extent	Fully		Partially		Some Extent		Not Agreed		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Lack of efforts for revision of Curriculum	20	71.4	2	7.1	6	21.4	0	0.0	28	100
Lack of standard accreditation Agency	24	85.7	1	3.6	3	10.7	0	0.0	28	100
Lack of integration of LIS research as basis for curriculum	18	64.3	3	10.7	4	14.3	3	10.7	28	100
Lack of ICT components in Curriculum	11	39.3	6	21.4	8	28.6	3	10.7	28	100
Lack of efforts accommodate large scale needs of knowledge management	11	39.3	6	21.4	10	35.7	1	3.6	28	100

It is evident from Table 10 that Heads fully agreed that lack of efforts for revision of curriculum, Lack of standard accreditation agency, Lack of integration of LIS research as basis for curriculum, Lack of ICT components in curriculum and Lack of efforts accommodate large scale needs of knowledge management is the reason for not matching the fast changes in landscape of information, followed by agree to some extent, partially agree, and not agreed.

Table 11: Demand for Flexible and Need Based LIS Curricula

Do you think that in view of the contemporary information systems and emergence of new information management tools, more flexible and need based LIS curricula are desired?	Heads/Chairmen Responses	
	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	23	82.1
No	5	17.9
Total	28	100.0

Table 11 shows that 82.1% Heads/Chairmen favored the more flexible and need based LIS curricula in view of the contemporary information systems and emergence of new information management tools whereas 17.9% of Heads/Chairmen did not favour the same.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Curricula should be designed by the faculty of LIS departments and professionals i.e. practicing librarians. Curricula should be modernized every five years in the context of UGC. Course contents to be updated according to employers market and users demand.

Digitalized techniques are the need of the digital era. There should be inclusion of one paper each on digital library, practices and visiting library program. Curriculum should be according to the demands of society, recent trends in LIS and should update and equip the librarian according to the digital era.

LIS schools are facing several problems like the authorities not giving required importance to LIS education. Most teaching posts are vacant and the administration is getting by with giving minimum salaries to contractual teachers, the LIS departments lack infrastructure, finance, equipments and maintenance etc.

There should be an accreditation agency at national level to modernize the syllabus from time to time. The National level accreditation agency in other subjects like MCI, BCI, NCTE and AICTE etc. and Internationally recognized bodies for LIS education like ALA in USA and CILIP in UK. exist and are doing a great service. However, for LIS education in India, as yet no such independent accredited agency exists to monitor and evaluate LIS education in India.

The current LIS curriculum at the national level is not designed according to the job requirements in the market. There should be co-ordination between the market requirements and the LIS curriculum.

LIS students should have an apprenticeship course in Library and Information Science after completion of the course. However, most LIS departments were found lacking in such practical training to LIS students.

LIS schools lack infrastructure facilities deplorably. IT labs should be focused upon to provide state-of-the-art facilities to LIS schools to bring them up to the international standards operationally and be accepted widely.

Presently the LIS courses are being conducted throughout the country like other non-professional courses like History, Political Science and Sociology, etc. it is recommended that the LIS course be organized only through regular mode.

LIS schools have limited posts sanctioned to run the LIS course and some of them have been vacant from many years. These vacant seats need to be filled urgently to strengthen the delivery of the subject to its desired optimum level.

Western schools of LIS education are moving towards generalization of LIS courses and then turning them to specialization courses. They are not designing a single general course on LIS, but rapidly evolving and organizing specialized courses on Law Library, Medical Library, Public Library, Digital Library and Library Management etc. Such types of specialized courses need to be developed in India as well.

The LIS Courses should be based on the bachelor level and their nomenclature should be changed like B. Tech (Library and Information Science) and it should be made a more practical oriented course. Such a step would assuredly improve the quality and interest among the students, improve and enhance financial support from authorities and make the status and quality manpower all the more attractive. LIS is a professional or technical course, so why not change its nomenclature.

As recommended by the UGC the LIS curriculum should be 50% theory and 50% practical hands-on-training. The LIS Curriculum should be of an international level but should not ignore the local needs. It should be accepted that our LIS curriculum is weak and also LIS education is facing many challenges. It is an established fact that there is the requirement of upgrading the entire course to international levels. IT components of the UGC model 2001 curriculum should be updated according to current demands.

Summarizing the status, LIS departments have limited numbers of computers and even where present they are redundant besides their being dearth of qualified staff to teach. We are teaching PGDLAN course, but this course does not fulfill the purpose because we lack the requisite infrastructure and teaching staff. The staff present is lacking the technical skills and is not trained to teach the latest contents. Trained and sufficient teachers are not available to

teach current topics in LIS education. The earlier ones are giving importance to theoretical work and lacking in practical applications because of which the level of LIS education had declined totally. The Library is not financially supported.

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