Attitudes and Perceptions of LIS Students towards Library Profession and Education in ICT Environment

Prakash Bhairu Bilawar* and Yuvraj G. Jadhav**


ABSTRACT

After graduation students have an open choice road-map of different dimension either to go for higher education or opt for service or business. At this stage they are unaware of the functioning of the system but only the focus is to get the entry in the system as in the later stage they are the integral part of the system. Once enrolled in the system then there is no excuse but to complete the task in time, it may be choices for higher education or steps to obtain service. Considering this aspect of choice for higher education, the present study is undertaken which discloses the attitude and perception in terms of opinion, dialogue, difficulties, usefulness of LIS syllabi components and potency of LIS students towards LIS profession in the current scenario. The findings of the study may help the students especially the new comers while selecting their career in LIS field.

KeyTerms: Attitude, Perception, LIS students, LIS Education, Library profession, ICT

INTRODUCTION

The LIS profession is a noble profession. Due to distinguished characteristics of service oriented activities involved in this profession, more number of students are admitting towards LIS courses at different universities and institutions/schools. As per the UGC guidelines, a significant disparity with regard to nature, duties and responsibility and service conditions between teacher and librarian has been noticed. According to Harinarayana, “the selection of lecturers at university level in India is not based on any scientific testing of teaching skills rather it is mostly based on qualifications in library & information science. When such candidates can perform the duties of a teacher, why not librarians with similar and/or higher qualifications teach”? Now days with changes in technology and tremendous availability of e-information in various e-formats, the role and responsibilities of LIS professionals also changes. It is the need of hour to adopt and apply advanced ICT (Information and Communication Technology) tools and techniques to get dignity in the profession.

At the same time necessary guidance in terms of further education in LIS, research, career opportunities and scholarship, impact of new technology and future facets in LIS field etc. are also brought to the notice of enrolled LIS students. In this direction to know the attitude and perception of LIS students towards library profession, their problems and usefulness of syllabi components, the present study is being undertaken.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is observed from the review of literature that numbers of studies have been conducted at national and international level to explore the attitudes and perspectives of the LIS students towards LIS profession in ICT environment and its related topic. It is briefly outlined below-

Farmer conducted a survey regarding attitude of LIS education and academic-practitioner liaison. The results shows that there is still a considerable gulf between academics and practitioners, and that although practitioners are enthusiastic about getting more involved in liaison, they are constrained by lack of time and resources. Jestin & Parameswari explored the challenges for library professionals in the new millennium. It found that library professionals in India were subjected to various challenges. It was
concluded that librarians should be ready to participate in the process of generating and distributing information and knowledge for quality of life and education for all1.

In the year 2005, Hashim & Mokhtar studied the trends and issues in preparing new era librarians and information professionals. They reported that the following trends are essential for new era librarians’ i. e. a vision towards information and knowledge rich society, globalization of information, integrated and widespread ICT applications, growth of electronic/internet resources, role of digital/electronic/virtual library, access role replaced with custodian role, strategic alliances, partnership and collaborations4.

Rahman, Khatun & Islam reviewed the library education in Bangladesh. The findings of the study reveals that majority of institutions in Bangladesh do not have well-equipped computer labs or sufficient numbers of computers for students5. In addition to this Siwakoti found that there was no government agency to control, monitor and evaluate the school libraries activities. There was lack of awareness programs, budgetary constraints, inadequate space, in adequate library materials, lack of trained and skilled manpower and lack of appropriate government policy in rendering LIS education6. Dasgupta resulted that in India there is non-existent of norms and standards for the education of librarians. Study further suggested that the Government of India should play a leading role in promoting LIS education in India, by creating more job opportunities for LIS professionals and removing disparity in pay scales among LIS professionals7.

To demonstrate an inquiry-based learning (IBL) to students, Mansourian conducted a survey. After employing IBL approach in teaching LIS modules it was resulted that it is an efficient way to prepare students for deeper involvement with learning activities and it helps them to gain a better understanding of their discipline’s scope, which consequently can prepare them for lifelong and independent learning in future8. Zeng examines high school students’ attitudes towards Physical Education Activity (ATPEA) and their sports activities preferences9. Jeevan explores on dual career option for library professionals and proposes an environment of dual career for library professionals where interested librarians can teach and interested teachers can practice in library10.

Regarding LIS Students’ perceptions about e-book, Noa conducted a survey which reports that LIS students have positive perceptions regarding the assimilation of e-books in the library11. Further they are aware of the change and possible effect it may have on library collections, budget, and policy. Further landmark in this direction was laid down by Kidane to determine the attitude of students towards agricultural education and training (AET). The findings shows that majority of students had high favorable attitude towards AET by a positive perception towards farming, agricultural education, high school agricultural knowledge importation and the importance of practical lessons12. In the same year Kadam focuses on how librarian choose librarianship as a career, are they aware of job opportunities and service condition in LIS discipline13.

From the above review of literature it is seen that no study regarding perception of LIS students towards the LIS profession and education was made, hence the present study is being undertaken.

**OBJECTIVES**

The basic objectives of the study are:

- To know the undergraduate level of education of enrolled LIS students.
- To know the motivating factors for selection of LIS profession.
- To understand the LIS students opinion about LIS education in the light of IT/ICT environment.
- To study the LIS students attitude towards LIS profession and affecting factors in the development of LIS profession in ICT environment.
- To know the expectations of LIS students towards betterment of LIS profession.

**HYPOTHESES**

For the present study following hypotheses are suggested:

- Before completing LIS course, the LIS students are of the view that there are less opportunities in LIS profession
- After completing LIS education the students realize that LIS profession is a highly recognized profession
- While doing LIS education the students of the view that the current components in syllabi are not suited best in ICT environment

**SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY**

A survey method based on a structured questionnaire was used for the present study. In preparing the questionnaire, similar studies and previously drafted questionnaires in this area were consulted. Well-structured questionnaire was designed which highlights on the issues like students attraction towards LIS education, their opinion on LIS education and LIS profession etc. and the same was distributed to research scholar and students of the Department of LIS of the Shivaji University, Kolhapur.

The scope of the present study is limited to LIS enrolled students for the year 2013-2014 at Department of Library and Information Science, Shivaji University, Kolhapur, Maharashtra i.e. students of B. Lib. & Inf. Sci (BLISc), M.Lib. & Inf. Sci (MLISc), M.Phil. And Ph.D in LIS subject.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

- **Respondent’s Profile**

  Out of 50 questionnaires a total 45 valid questionnaires are obtained, indicating an acceptable response rate (90%). The percentage wise distribution of the respondents over the different participating students is represented in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>No of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B.Lib. &amp; Inf. Sc.</td>
<td>20 (44 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.Lib. &amp; Inf. Sc.</td>
<td>12 (27 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.Phil.</td>
<td>03 (7 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D</td>
<td>10 (22 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>45 (100 %)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1: Number of Questionnaires Received**
From above it is clear that out of 45 (100%) respondents, there are 44% BLISc students, 27% MLISC students, 7% M.Phil and 22% Ph.D research scholars given their feedback to the questionnaire.

- **Gender wise Distribution**

Table 2 shows that out of 45 respondents, 29 are male respondent and 16 are female respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>29 (64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>16 (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Attraction Towards LIS Profession**

The following table reflects the feedback from LIS students regarding knowing about LIS education/course from various information sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Source</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Through Teacher/Librarian</td>
<td>20 (45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through Friends</td>
<td>11 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement/News</td>
<td>9 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Guidance</td>
<td>5 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that 20 (45%) students came to know the LIS education/course through their Teachers/Librarians, 11 (24%) other through friends, 9 (20%) by the way of Advertisements/News media and 5 (11%) came to know about LIS education from the family guidance for making their carrier in the LIS field.

- **Reason behind Selecting LIS Profession**

The data pertaining to this is represented in figure 1.

![Fig 1: Reasons Behind Selecting LIS Profession](image)

Fig 1 shows that out of total population, 27 (60%) students choose LIS course because they felt that LIS profession have better job opportunities, 6 (13%) by Choice/chance, 5 (11%) chosen this career as they want to broaden their reading habits, 3 (7%) to add degree in their credit and 2 (4%) each to carry research in LIS and by motivation of their family.

Here hypothesis no. 1 i.e. “before completing LIS course, the LIS students are of the view that there are less opportunities in LIS profession” is not proved.

- **Revision in LIS Education/Course**

35 (78%) students/scholars thought that there is need to revise existing LIS syllabus by introducing more ICT based components in the syllabus. The area where need to revise the syllabus by adding ICT components in the syllabus is represented in table 4.

- **Table 4: Revision in LIS Education/Course**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syllabus ICT based Component</th>
<th>Response (%age)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital/Virtual/Electronic Libraries</td>
<td>27 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Development</td>
<td>25 (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Resources and web based services</td>
<td>22 (49%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software Library/Open Source/Statistical etc.</td>
<td>19 (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Automation &amp; Networking</td>
<td>18 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web 2.0/3.0 &amp; Library 2.0</td>
<td>14 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT/ICT Basics</td>
<td>13 (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Technology</td>
<td>12 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>5 (11%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 illustrates that highest response rate was given to Digital/Virtual/Electronic Libraries (60%), for ICT based syllabus component by the respondents followed by components like Website Development (56%) and E-Resources and web based services (49%) in the syllabus.

Here hypothesis no.3 i.e. ‘while doing LIS education the students of the view that the current components in syllabi are not suited best in ICT environment” is proved.

- **Teaching Pattern**

The data pertaining to teaching pattern with regard to theory and practical aspects is shown in table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Pattern</th>
<th>Response (%age)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Practical</td>
<td>31 (69%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Practice</td>
<td>8 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Theory</td>
<td>6 (13%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As per the opinion of majority of respondents teaching of basics in the theory part and application/use in practical part is useful to understand the concept thoroughly. Apart from that, table 5 depict that 31 (69%) respondents suggests for more practical aspect than the theory, 8 (18%) gives consent towards more practice and only 6 (13%) of the view that more theory is useful.

- **LIS Course Teaching related Components**

Table 6 illustrate that 39 (87%) students/scholars are of the opinion that Study Tour/Training is essential as a vital part of the syllabus. 34 (76%) respondents gives highest consent towards Sectional work. 33 (73%) students/scholars towards...
Vacation/study leave, 32 (71%) towards Project/dissertation/theses/viva-voice work, 30 (67%) towards Examination system and 28 (62%) towards Semester pattern.

- **Problems Faced**

The bar chart shows various problems faced by the students while completing Library science course.

From the above table 7, it is clear that majority of respondent (56%) prefer job at academic library, followed by entry in special library (29%), public library (9%) and national library (7%).

- **Expectations from Government**

To bring bright future to Librarianship and Library, either Central/State Government has to initiate certain fruitful steps. The data pertaining to this is shown in following table.

The above table 8 shows that 30 (67%) respondents are expecting from the central/state government that the job recruitment be done as per written qualification and pay scale specified by higher authority, 28 (62%) respondents expecting addition of ICT based qualifications in LIS designations, 27 (60%) respondents expects strong library network through library associations and 26 (58%) participants expects from Government for making and implementation of powerful legislation for LIS discipline.

**FINDINGS/ SUMMARY**

- It is found that majority of the LIS scholars/students know about LIS profession through their respective Teachers and Librarians and they are choosing this LIS profession/course because of better job opportunities/job oriented profession.
- After completing first few months of LIS teaching at the department, near about all LIS scholars/students felt that they will complete the LIS course successfully during the course of time.
- Majority of scholars/students affirmed that the present LIS syllabus is best suited to get the LIS job opportunities by introducing more ICT based components in the syllabus. Further respondents of opined that with the changes in the technology, there is need to adopt IT/ICT tools and techniques by the LIS professionals.
- Majority of students/scholars are of the opinion that Study Tour/Training is essential as a vital part of the syllabus. Sectional work is crucial for better understanding of
functioning of the library. Further Project/Dissertation/Theses/Viva-voice work are the integral part of LIS course

- While completing Library science course apart from the other major problems, the main problem found is that basic background nature of LIS course is different as compared to other courses.

- Majority of respondents prefer job at academic libraries of college/universities but as a faculty of LIS school/department rather than Librarian at Library.

- Majority of respondents are expecting from the central/state government that the job recruitment/promotion be done as per written qualifications followed by eligibility criteria and pay scale specified by higher authorities.

- Majority of respondents thought that librarianship has bright future concerned with their career.

- Further, majority of respondents felt satisfaction about getting whole universe of knowledge at their minds after getting LIS knowledge through LIS course.

CONCLUSION

From the above findings and discussion of results, it is concluded that there is highly need to revise the LIS syllabus with advanced ICT components to compete with other professionals and to survive in the information business. The ground reality of the present LIS education system in India indicates that the quality improvement is essential and unavoidable, not only for its survival but also for facing the major changes and challenges of today and tomorrow. The use of information technology for training LIS students and professionals has become crucial for meeting these challenges. The significant role played by library schools/departments which are functioning at all levels; to train manpower for coming decades will definitely contribute towards constructive, dynamic and healthy progress of LIS education/profession. It is concluded that new era librarian will become a guardian of digital information and digital services. Librarians with newly acquired ICT skills and entrepreneurial qualities can play a meaningful and leading role in the networked information society of the millennium.

REFERENCES


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