Exploring Library and Information Science Education in Central Universities of India

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ABSTRACT: Education plays a crucial role in shaping individuals and societies and is a critical resource for success in today's world. This paper will present a comprehensive overview of LIS education and research in India, explicitly focusing on central universities. The study explores the LIS programs offered by five prominent central universities in India, examining the range of courses available and their respective eligibility criteria. It provides a detailed analysis of the achievements and contributions of the LIS departments in these institutions. The paper highlights LIS education's various structures and levels, tracing its historical development, emerging trends, and the challenges that have impacted its growth. By examining these aspects, the study provides valuable insights into the evolution of LIS education in India and its ongoing transformation.

Keywords: Education, LIS Programs, Research, curriculum, Central University

1. INTRODUCTION

To describe the chronological development of central universities in India that have initiated LIS education. These universities have played a significant role in developing LIS education in India. The progress LIS education in India's central universities has evolved significantly over the decades. Initially, LIS education in India began in the early 20th century, with formal programs introduced in the 1930s. Among central universities, the University of Delhi was one of the first to launch a dedicated LIS department in 1946, offering diploma courses that later expanded to bachelors, masters, and doctoral programs. Aligarh Muslim University followed in 1952 with a diploma program, which grew into a full-fledged degree and research-based curriculum. Other universities, such as Banaras Hindu University and North-Eastern Hill University, established LIS departments in the 1960s and 1980s, respectively, focusing on meeting regional and national needs. With the rise of digital technologies, the LIS departments at these central universities have embraced modern trends, incorporating digital libraries, knowledge management, and information retrieval into their programs. Universities like Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, which established its LIS department in 1997, have emphasized theoretical foundations and information

technology applications in libraries. The University of Hyderabad was a trailblazer in digital education by offering the first online LIS courses in the early 2000s. In the early 2010s, Jawaharlal Nehru University established a dedicated LIS research center. North-Eastern Hill University became the first central university in the North-Eastern region to offer LIS education with its Department of LIS education in 1985. Among the new central universities, the Central University of Punjab introduced its LIS department in 2009, while the Central University of Ladakh set up its LIS program in the early 2020s, marking the first LIS program over time, the focus on research has deepened, with many universities offering M.Phil. and PhD programs that explore digital transformation, library automation, and the integration of ICT in information management. This evolution reflects the growing importance of LIS education in addressing the information needs of a rapidly changing digital world.

Objective: The main objectives of the present study are as follows:
- To assess the current state of LIS education in central universities.
- To observe the core and elective components of the MLIS program.

Methodology:
- To meet the study's objectives, data was sourced from the official websites of the selected universities. These websites provided reliable information on the contemporary status of LIS education. The researcher thoroughly reviewed each site to collect comprehensive and up-to-date details on curriculum, course structure and other relevant aspects of LIS education.

2. THE LEGACY AND PROGRESS OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE EDUCATION IN INDIA: HISTORICAL MILESTONES & GROWTH

The evolution of LIS education in India has a rich history, reflecting the growing acknowledgement of the importance of library systems in academic, social, and cultural contexts. The foundation of modern library development in India in 1911 was laid when Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaikwad III of Baroda invited W. A. Borden, a prominent American librarian, to initiate modern library practices in the state. Borden introduced many contemporary methods of library management, including classification systems and public access to libraries, which helped establish a foundation for future LIS education in India. A significant milestone in LIS education was achieved in 1915 when Asa Don Dickinson, a noted American library pioneer, introduced the first-ever formal library science course in Asia at the Punjab University in Lahore (now part of Pakistan). This one-year postgraduate certificate program marked the beginning of structured LIS education on the continent. It was only the second such program worldwide after Columbia University in the U.S. This initiative represented a significant step in formalising LIS as an academic discipline.

The University of Madras pioneered in 1929 LIS education by establishing India's first dedicated Library and Information Science School. This institution became a trailblazer in the field, offering structured courses aimed at training professionals in library management, cataloguing, and classification. 1937 The first library science diploma program was established at Madras University by Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, who is commonly recognised as the father of library science in India. His 1931 publication, The Five Laws of Library Science, transformed the way libraries

were viewed and run, and his impact greatly influenced the LIS course curriculum. Ranganathan's contributions to classification and cataloguing methods became essential for LIS education globally.

The year 1958, marked several pivotal developments in the growth of education in India. Aligarh Muslim University transitioned its diploma program into a full-fledged bachelor's degree, reflecting the increasing academic rigours of LIS as a discipline. University of Delhi introduced the country's first Master of Library and Information Science (MLISc) program. This postgraduate degree signalled a shift towards advanced study in LIS, with a centre on research methodologies, information, and management at a higher level. Delhi University awarded the first PhD in LIS in India to D.B. Krishna Rao in 1958, further emphasizing the growing academic depth of the field. Rao's doctoral research opened new avenues for scholarly inquiry in the discipline, and LIS education expanded beyond practical training to include theoretical and research-based approaches.

The curriculum has also evolved to include new topics such as information technology, digital archiving, and management, reflecting the changing landscape of library science in the digital age. As India transitions into an information-based society, LIS professionals play a critical role in managing information flow, ensuring accessibility, and preserving knowledge in both physical and digital form.

2.1 University of Delhi (DU)

Established: 1922

LIS Education Initiation:

- Under the direction of Dr. S.R. Ranganathan, who is regarded as the father of the library Science in India, the Department of Library Science was founded in 1946.

- The department was later renamed the Department of Library and Information Science.

Historical Development:

- A one-year postgraduate diploma in Library Science was initially provided.
- Introduced a Master's degree in Library Science in the 1970s.
- Expanded its curriculum to include emerging trends in information science and technology.
- Programs for research have been established that lead to Ph.D. and M.Phil. degrees.

2.2 Banaras Hindu University (BHU)

Established: 1916

LIS Education Initiation:

- In 1941, the Library and Information Science Department was founded.

Historical Development:

- Certificate and diploma programs were the first.
- Introduced Bachelor's and Master's programs in the subsequent decades.
- The curriculum has continuously evolved to incorporate information technology and management aspects.
- Provides research programs in library and information science, including M.Phil. and Ph.D.

2.3 Aligarh Muslim University (AMU)

Established: 1920

LIS Education Initiation:

- In 1952, the Department of Library Science was established.

Historical Development:

- Began with a diploma course.
- Grown to include Master's and Bachelor's degrees.
- The department strongly focuses on research, with M.Phil. and Ph.D. programs available.
- Emphasises modern trends in information science, including digital libraries and information management.

2.4 North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU)

Established: 1973

LIS Education Initiation:

- NEHU's Library and Information Science Department was founded in 1985.

Historical Development:

- **1985:** To meet the increasing demand for professional library education in the northeastern area of India, the department was founded with the introduction of the Bachelor of Library and Information Science program.
- **1990:** Expanded to include the Master of Library and Information Science (M.Lib.I.Sc.) program, offering advanced coursework and practical training.
- **1996:** Launched the M.Phil. Program to promote research and provide advanced scholarly training.
- **2000:** Announced the Ph.D. program, focusing on original research and contributing to advancing knowledge in the field. The department emphasizes modern library and

information science trends, incorporating subjects like digital libraries, information technology, and knowledge management into the curriculum.

2.5 Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU)

Established: 1996

LIS Education Initiation:

- In 1997, the Library and Information Science Department was established.

Historical Development:

- Bachelor of Library and Information Science (B.Lib.I.Sc.) program.
- Expanded to include the Master of Library and Information Science (M.Lib.I.Sc.) program, providing advanced coursework and practical training.
- Introduced M.Phil. & Ph.D. programs to focus on research and scholarly contributions in Library and Information Science.
- The department emphasizes modern trends and technologies.
- Actively engages in national and international collaborations, enhancing research opportunities and academic exchange programs.
- The department is equipped with advanced facilities and resources to support thorough education and research.

Table 1: Establishment years of Selected Central Library schools in India

Sr. no.	Name of the Central University	Year of Est. of University	Year of Est. of LIS Dept.	Course offered
1.	Banaras Hindu University Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh	1916	1941	M.Lib.Sc Ph.D.
2.	Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh	1920	1950	BA B.Lib.I.Sc M.Lib.I.Sc Ph.D.
3.	University of Delhi, Delhi	1922	1946	B.Lib.Sc M.Lib.Sc MPhil PhD
4.	North Eastern Hill University Shillong, Meghalaya	1973	1985	M.lib.Sc PhD
5.	Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University,	1996	1997	B.Lib.I.Sc M.Lib.I.Sc

Uttar Pradesh			Ph.D.

Results: BHU, established in 1916, introduced its LIS department in 1941 and presently offers M.Lib.Sc & Ph.D. AMU, founded in 1920, started its LIS department in 1950, providing BA, B.Lib.I.Sc, M.Lib.I.Sc, and Ph.D. DU, established in 1922, began its LIS programme in 1946 and offers B.Lib.Sc, M.Lib.Sc, MPhil, and Ph.D. NEHU, created in 1973, established its LIS department in 1985 and offers M.Lib.Sc and Ph.D. BBAU, the newest university, founded in 1996, started its LIS programme in 1997 and offers B.Lib.I.Sc, M.Lib.I.Sc & Ph.D.

Table 2: Programme Framework

Name of the University	Name of the Department	Teaching staff	Intake
Banaras Hindu University (BHU)	Department of Library & Information Science	8	46
Aligarh Muslim University (AMU)	Department of Library & Information Science	8	25
University of Delhi (DU)	Department of Library & Information Science	7	58
North Eastern Hill University (NEHU)	Department of Library & Information Science	7	_
Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU)	Department of Library & Information Science	7	38

Results: BHU and AMU have the highest faculty strength with 8 members each, while DU, NEHU, and BBAU have 7 faculty members. DU has the most significant student intake at 58, followed by BHU with 46 and BBAU with 38. AMU has the lowest intake, with 25 students, and NEHU's intake is not provided. NEHU's ratio cannot be calculated due to missing data. AMU's lower intake suggests a more focused approach, while DU accommodates a larger cohort.

Table 3: Faculty & Selection Criteria for Master Program in LIS.

Name of University	Department name	Faculty	Selection Eligibility for M.Lib.Sc
Banaras Hindu University	Library and Information Science	Faculty of Arts	Bachelor's degree under at least 10 + 2 + 3 patterns with a total of 50% marks in aggregate
Aligarh Muslim University	Library and Information Science	Faculty of Social Science	The candidate should have done Bachelor's Degree in B.Lib.I.Sc.

University of Delhi	Library and Information Science	Faculty of Arts	Bachelor's Degree in Library and Information Science.
North Eastern Hill University	Library and Information Science	School of Economics, Management and Information Science	Bachelor's Degree in Library and Information Science.
Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University	Library and Information Science	School of Information Science & Technology	B.Lib. Sc with 50% marks (45% for SC/ST/PH candidates

Results: BHU and DU offer their LIS programmes under the Faculty of Arts, while AMU conducts them under the Faculty of Social Science. NEHU places LIS under the School of Economics, Management & Information Science and BBAU under the School of Information Science & Technology. Eligibility criteria for M.Lib.Sc vary: BHU requires a bachelor's degree with 50% aggregate marks, and AMU and DU specifically require a B.Lib.I.Sc degree, NEHU mandates a bachelor's degree in Library Science, and BBAU stipulates a B.Lib.Sc with a minimum of 50% marks (45% for SC/ST/PH candidates).

3. CORE AND ELECTIVE COMPONENTS OF THE MLIS PROGRAM

The Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) program at central universities provides a thorough and extensive curriculum that provides students with in-depth knowledge and practical expertise in the library and information science field. The program typically contains core courses such as Advanced Library Management, which covers management principles and organizational behaviour within libraries; Information Sources and Services, focusing on evaluating and utilising various information resources; and Information Retrieval, which delves into techniques and systems for adequate information access. Students also study Library Cataloging and Classification, mastering advanced cataloguing principles and classification systems. The Digital Libraries and Information Systems course addresses the management of digital resources and implementing modern information technologies. Elective courses provide opportunities to explore specialized topics such as Knowledge Management, Archival Science, and Information Technology Applications, allowing students to tailor their studies to specific interests. Practical training is integral, including internships and fieldwork to gain hands-on experience in actual library settings and practical cataloguing and library management exercises.

Research skills are developed through coursework in Research Methodology and a significant research project or dissertation, enabling students to apply theoretical knowledge to practical challenges. Contemporary issues and trends in LIS, including emerging technologies and professional ethics, are also covered, ensuring graduates are well-prepared for the evolving demands of the field. The MLIS program provides a balanced mix of theoretical knowledge,

practical skills, and research experience, preparing students for advanced library and information science roles.

4. CONCLUSION

LIS education has adapted to the advancements in ICT, expanding its reach globally. The role of libraries has undergone significant change, with library professionals now focusing on information management rather than solely on managing physical collections. To preserve leap with the increasing demands of users, librarians must continuously update their knowledge of the latest trends in information management. The introduction of LIS education in India aimed to equip library professionals with the expertise to effectively carry out various functions, ensuring efficient library operations. The Master degree (MLIS) programs offered by central universities in India deliver a comprehensive education in the library and information science field.

These programs are meticulously designed to cover various essential topics, including advanced library management, information retrieval, cataloguing, and digital libraries. Through a blend of core courses, elective options, practical training, and research components, the MLIS curriculum ensures that students acquire both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Including contemporary issues and emerging trends prepares graduates to navigate and contribute to the rapidly evolving landscape of information science. With a focus on integrating modern technologies and addressing diverse information needs, the MLIS programs equip students to excel in various professional roles within libraries and information centres. Overall, the structured and dynamic nature of the MLIS coursework across central universities underscores their commitment to advancing the field and fostering expertise in future library and information science professionals.

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