“Hundred Years of Library and Information Science Education in India: Special Study of Maharashtra State”

Basically, Library and information Science (LIS) education incorporates a field of professional education that provides the training to the future librarians to manage the libraries and information centres efficiently. The vision of LIS education includes teaching and research in the issues of information access and quality as well. It is fundamentally a content centred discipline with information, as its subject is concerned. Libraries are recognised to play an important role in education, scientific research and socio-economic development of a country. This envisages the need for professionally qualified personnel to manage and run the library effectively and efficiently. Thus in order to feed the growing number of libraries, more trained library personal is the need of the hour. For this purpose LIS School were started at number of universities. The basic aim of library education is to provide balanced training, integrating theory with practical exercise and to cover all aspect of professional work of library.

Knowledge explosion and information explosion have expanded the catchments areas of learning at such a rapid pace that any field becomes obsolete in less than a decade. Library supplements a great deal in achieving educational goal and serves as a gateway for academic world. Libraries in general play an important role in the socio-economic and educational development of the state. Library is a social institution, the development of the libraries led to the development of a state as well as the nation. The library and information science profession requires a systematic education to make them dedicated for the cause to serve the humanity for the all round
development. Depending upon the prevailing educational system, the library science education has undergone changes since its beginning in the nineteenth century. Certificate course, Graduate, undergraduate and PG programmes in library and information science are growing in size and scope. The present programmes like CLS/DLIS/BLIS/MLISc/ M.Phil./Ph.D. are recognised by UGC. Many colleges and universities recognise the importance of this dynamic field and have invested significant new resources into these programs. Their shapes increasingly reflect the academic culture in which they exist. Library and information science has now become a recognised discipline of study like any other.

The foundation of library and Information Science Education in India was laid in 1911 when WA Borden, an American trained librarian started a short training programme at Baroda under the Patronage of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad to create manpower for organizing newly established libraries in the princely state of Baroda. The more systematic training programme was initiated by Asa Don Dickenson at Punjab University, Lahore (now in Pakistan). Madras library association conducted summer schools of three months duration for college librarians in 1928-30. Later on, the University of Madras started a full time Diploma Course for the first time in India in 1931. Andhra University and Bengal Library Association started training programme for librarians in 1935. The Imperial Library (now National Library), Kolkata conducted a training course leading to diploma in librarianship in 1935, which was continued till 1945. The first independent Department of Library Science was started in 1945 at the University of Delhi. The Libraries all over the world are now responding with adaptability, creativity and flexibility. Indian librarians of today serve in a society, which is actually in flux, torn by the technological revolution and rapid political changes. As a result of the sweeping societal changes, Librarians and Information Professionals in India are now experiencing both excitement and anxiety. Immediacy, availability and
affordability are key attributes of libraries in the new millennium. In order to deal with the present situation, LIS professionals of India have to play a more active role rather than passive role. They have to learn, develop and nurture various types of competencies required in library field. This can be dealt properly by the faculty members and administrators of different LIS School in the various universities of our country. Hence, the responsibility of library and information science education is very significant to prepare human resources for maintaining libraries in these changing environments. At this instance, library and information science education study can initiate cooperation for course structure to meet the needs of market.

    LIS education is linked with the growth of libraries. The origin and growth of the Libraries are depending on the educational and cultural conditions of the society. Library as a social organ has certain social obligations and these obligations vary with the educational and cultural needs. The personnel working in libraries must have proper library education then only they can implement the library techniques effectively to suit the requirements of the users. The LIS professionals should take responsibility to educate the users in accessing required information and must keep them update to cope up with the ever-changing information and requirements.

    Thus, Library and Information Science (LIS) education in India are completed hundred years in 2011 and it is time for introspection and a need of the hour to know the present status of LIS and areas that need improvement. History provides a picture of the growth and development, which lends a perspective to such a study. This study presents an insight of these historical developments in LIS education in India and especially in Maharashtra state.