The sphere of higher education has been marked by a phenomenal expansion during the last four decades all over the world. It must also be accepted that doubt arises in the minds of scholars about the usefulness of university education. The effectiveness of any system hinges on the system's ability to achieve its objectives. How satisfactory and successful the process is in achieving its objectives would indicate the quality or standards of the system.

A: OBJECTIVES OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION:

In order to remove the doubts about effectiveness of higher education, education Commissions have been constituted in various countries and they have made extensive surveys and examined the basic issues.

According to Robbin's Committee Report of U.K. (1953), Higher Education should

i) contribute to material prosperity;

ii) promote general powers of the mind of the individuals;

iii) pursue the search for truth; and

iv) build up a healthy society.

According to Carnegie Comission on Higher Education set up in USA in 1957, the purposes of higher education are
1. Intellectual, aesthetic, ethical and skill development of individual students;

2. Advancing human capability in society at large;

3. Support artistic and intellectual creativity;

4. Self updating of the society through individual thought and persuasion.

President, Dr. Radhakrishnan being basically a teacher and the philosopher and the Chairman of the University Education Commission in the University Education Commission Report (1948-49) stated "Education according to Indian tradition is not merely a means to earning a living, nor is it only a nursery of thought or a school of citizenship. It is an invitation into the life of spirit, training of human souls in pursuit of truth and 'Practice of Virtue'."

The report of the Education Commission (1964-66) outlines the functions of higher education as pursuit of truth, full development of the youth physically, intellectually, socially and morally with a sense of social purpose, to promote equality and social justice, and promote attitudes and values needed for developing the 'good life'.

While addressing the 37th session of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi observed "The real purpose of education is to enhance the intellectual horizon and emotional
activities so that we may not only have better workers but also better human beings who are mature and who can face the growing challenge.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) (1986) states that education is a unique investment in the present and the future. The aim of higher education, according to this policy is facilitating the process of national development through its manifold tasks of generation, dissemination, utilization and expansion of knowledge. Specifying this goal, the NPE recommends fostering the spirit of national integration, international understanding, social responsibility, encouraging scientific temper, instilling innovative and creative thinking among students etc., as the objectives of higher education.

While speaking at the second convocation of the Jamia Hamdard University held on 4th July, 1994 the Prime Minister, Dr. F. V. Narasimha Rao said while a large number of universities were coming up in the country, there was a need to enforce high educational system. He said it was sad that degrees awarded by many universities were denied recognition even in some developing
countries. He urged the University Grants Commission (UGC), policy-makers and teachers to take note of this and ensure that educational institutions impart quality education.

Mr. Rao said imparting standard education right from the primary level was the need of the hour.

B: SHORT-COMINGS/STANDARDS:

Some of the remarks of the NPE on Higher Education are:

"The condition of universities and colleges is a matter of great concern to the nation"

"The facilities in the 6000 odd colleges vary widely but, on the whole, are far below the level of qualitative viability"

"Universities and Colleges are becoming notorious for rampant casteism, regionalism and in-breeding"

"The achievement of the university is judged not on the basis of the quality of its research or the competence of its students but by its adherence to the schedule for examinations and the prevention of forced closures"

"The present system of Examination has lost its credibility"
"College and University education lays excessive emphasis on teaching which often degenerates into dictation of unrevised notes prepared long time ago."

"Universities are no more than a part time occupation aimed essentially at the award of degrees, which have generally lost credibility and value."

"Accountability remains a concept without any content."

While discussing quality and education, the NPE says "That a quality conscious system would produce people who have the attributes of functional and social relevance, mental ability and physical dexterity, efficiency and reliability, above all, the confidence and capability to communicate effectively and exercise initiative, innovative ability and experimentation with new situations."

These statements, bring the opinion of eminent educationists, indicate, without any doubt, that standards of education and research in many universities in India are declining sharply. But we must also accept that there are no physical measures for evaluating educational standards as standards are subjective in nature. It is also true that there has been no large scale direct objective assessment of standards.
of higher education over the years. But there are circumstantial evidence for down-ward trend in standards. All the statements quoted from NPE are conclusions drawn on the basis of such evidence.

Most of the Universities and Colleges work less than 100 days in a year and actual teaching days are less than 50. The evaluation system is faulty and the student, through a process of selection and elimination, can get through the examination by reading 30% of the prescribed syllabus from made-easy guides in the last 100 hours before the examination.

Most of the students including those at the Post-graduate level do not read text books or reference books or journals up to the level expectant of them.

Due to lack of reference for assessing standards of articles, many poor quality papers are being published in poor quality journals.

The results in the national level tests and other competitive examinations indicate the standard of graduate teaching.

It is reported that 3000 out of 6000 colleges are nonviable.
The reasons for the deterioration of standards in terms of quality are listed below from various articles on this subject by eminent educationists, viz. Malcolm Adiseshiah, Amrik Singh, K. N. Bhatnagar, D.A. Ghanchi, J. N. Kapur, Moonis Raza and Majorie Fernandez. (Collectively from articles published in Journal of Higher Education (UGC) and University News (AIU).

1. Rapid unplanned expansion, inadequate inputs in terms of money, material and talents;
2. No comprehensive policy;
3. Timid and unchallenging curriculum;
4. Uninspiring and demotivating classroom interactions;
5. Resistance to change and innovation by the system;
6. Unmotivated students, undedicated teachers;
7. Crazy rush for degrees;
8. Brain drain - the cream of the student community attracted by foreign countries;
9. In-breeding and parochialism in selection of teachers;
10. Inadequate work pattern, work ethics, and work tempo;
11. Lack of professionalism;
12. Facilities for corporate life - non existent;
10. Low level of aspiration among all concerned;

11. Crisis of confidence among the various participants of the system;

12. Under-performance syndrome;

13. A climate of alienation, generating attitudes of apathy, negligence and hostility towards the system;

14. A vulgar craving for gains without exertion;

15. Colleges established more for non-academic reasons, such as caste, community or political patronage;

16. Exploitation of students in the name of tuitions;

17. Students not averse to resorting to malpractices to get the degree, not bothered about learning or academic scholarship;

18. Parents, not averse to using their influences for unfair admission and unfair marks;

19. Demographic pressures, aspirational explosion, educational aberration, political contamination, economic compulsion, managerial inadequacies; &

20. Lack of will power on the part of the UGC and universities to curb unhealthy practices and disaffiliate sick institutions.

The three criteria recommended by researchers to judge standards in higher education are adequacy, dynamism and international comparability. Adequacy implies that instruction should be based on identified objectives, dynamism would judge whether instruction changes according to the changing demands of the situation, and international comparability would examine how our students compete with
their counterparts in other advanced countries in terms of their motivation, knowledge, competencies and abilities as problem solvers. If we use these criteria, we do find that our higher education has not served the goals of national development, it has not helped the growth of the country's economy but has actually impaired and impeded the growth of economy by its inefficiency, low productivity and wastage of resources.

The university system is so rigid that in spite of the many recommendations made by the various commissions, the curriculum has not responded to the changing demands. In terms of international comparability our degrees are not recognized by the advanced countries and in terms of knowledge and competence, there is only a small minority of quality students from the few institutions of excellence. The NPE states, "a preponderant majority came out of institutions of higher education, perhaps with a little more of book learning and of course a degree but with very little capacity for self study, poor language and communication skills, a highly limited world view and hardly any sense of social or national responsibility".

D. SHORT COMINGS OF STANDARDS IN LIBRARY EDUCATION:

Today, there are over 80 universities in India having
library education programme at undergraduate and postgraduate degree levels. Together they produce about 3000 B.Lib. Sc. and M.Lib. Sc. degree holders annually. Every year a few Universities start new library science courses and then add M.Lib.Sc. Course after a few years. Over and above the University level library education, a large majority of the state library associations and several other professional associations conduct short term courses. In addition, Indira Gandhi National Open University and a few other Universities are conducting B.Lib.Sc and M.Lib.Sc. courses through their Directorate of Correspondence Courses. Proliferation at this speed and level has naturally resulted in sacrificing the quality of the training programmes.

There is no system of accreditation of these fast changing professional courses. No individual or organisation - public or private has raised alarm at the colossal wastage of resources in churning out this huge manpower, a large section of which are frightfully under-employed or unemployed. The situation is likely to worsen with every passing year if some drastic step is not taken immediately.

Up to the end of 1990s a major part of the Indian library systems would be using computers in most of their library operations and also establish closer linkages through Local Area Network (LAN) and global communication networks. These are inevitable. The most satisfying feeling
is that today majority of the professionals are aware of these forthcoming changes and a very small section are consciously making moves to achieve this goal.

This future scenario would enforce us to seriously give a second look at the existing library education programme in India. "It must be accepted by all those responsible for professional education of a wider responsibility than merely producing practitioners for the situation as it is today; a professional school must also identify future professional trends and needs and prepare practitioners to meet them. In other words, it should lead rather be a pale reflection of it." (W. L. Saunders)

There cannot be two opinions on the view that today we have too many institutions producing too many stereotyped library professionals who may not be fit enough to meet the future professional challenges. Already a large section of them are waiting to get an opening in the job market. The situation is likely to worsen every year if the present trend continues.

3: PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

As all of us are aware that great interest is shown at the various conferences/seminars in the possibility of
devising academic standards for the Indian Library and Information Science Training Programmes. The issue of standardisation of Library and Information Science education is hanging with the Academic authorities for several years without reaching any positive conclusion. Presently, the standardisation of Library Science Education is a burning issue among the Library and Information Professionals; and professional institutions conducting Library Science Programmes.

People in University Library profession have observed that the need for establishing the standards for accreditation at the national level was uppermost in the minds of the Library and Information Science Professional and academic community. Accordingly, this topic was assigned to me for pursuing Ph.D. in Library and Information Science under the guidance of Prof. M. L. Wali, Head, Department of Library and Information Science; and Dean, Faculty of Arts, University of Kashmir.

F: OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To study the concept, implications and ramifications of the term accreditation;
2. To study accreditation and its impact on higher education;

3. To review the accreditation programmes in Library and Information Science Schools in different countries;

4. To examine the possibilities of having a programme of accreditation of Library and Information Science schools in India;

5. To evolve standards for accreditation;

6. To formulate guidelines, manuals and evaluation procedures; and

7. To evolve a National Policy on Library and Information Science Education.

G: RESEARCH METHOD AND INSTRUMENT:

The survey method of research was used in collecting data for this study. A questionnaire proved to be the more practical and economical approach because of the geographic location of Library and Information Science Schools in India. Since no suitable instrument was available, the investigator had to develop one to be used in this study. A few techniques used in related studies were examined. Information and ideas from these sources were utilized in preparing the preliminary draft of the questionnaire. A final draft of the questionnaire as approved by the guide was then devised incorporating his comments and suggestions.
The final draft of the questionnaire (Appendix III) consisted of ten pages covering different aspects such as Faculty, Courses, Admission requirements, Duration of the Courses, Governance, Financial matters and Physical Resources of the LIS Schools. The questionnaire contained separate section about the accreditation.

Personal acquaintance of the guide and the investigator with many of the Head of the LIS Schools in India greatly facilitated the survey. Considering the disturbed conditions in J&K State, mailing problems, and distances involved, the response was surprisingly quick and high.

The questionnaires were sent by post to the Heads of LIS Schools in October, 1993. By the end of January, 1994, most of the questionnaires had been returned, only one follow-up letter was sent to those schools who didn't response in time. Few more questionnaires were received after the follow-up letter was sent. Since the response was already high, it was decided not to pressure those LIS Schools who were among non-respondents. In spite of that, it was tried to get the information about their schools from the other latest sources. Most of the non-respondents appear to have been people who were either "too busy" or
generally indifferent to appeals for co-operation. Although it was not possible to exactly classify the non-returns, personal knowledge of LIS Schools in the sample indicates that the questionnaires returned are true representative of the total sample.

II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

To get acquainted with the problem area and to define it, the investigator made a search in the secondary information sources in the field of Library and Information Science, i.e. Library Literature, bibliographies on Library education, Library and Information Science Abstracts etc. and few primary sources not covered by the secondary information sources. In this way the investigator prepared an exhaustive bibliography of articles and documents (Micro as well as Macro documents). After preparation of bibliography, the investigator reviewed the literature from the primary documents with the feeling that "..... the existing knowledge can be further advanced or enriched by integrating or linking the past ideas with the new ideas or linking (and that)..... every research project should be based on all of the pertinent as well as relevant ideas, theories and research that have preceded it".
The Micro and Macro documents consulted for the compilation of this study include back as well as current issues of Journals, Yearbooks of various associations, seminars/conference proceedings, directories, reports of ministries, reports of various committees/commissions, prospectus of different Library Schools of India.