



Scope of Research and Grant Opportunities for the Scholars of Library and Information Sciences

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Abstract:

This research paper explores the scope of research areas in the library sciences. Research in Library and information Science briefly means the collection and analysis of original data on a problem of librarianship done within the library schools according to scientific and scholarly standards. Research broadly includes investigations, studies, surveys, academic work at the doctoral, postdoctoral level and research by practicing librarians, information personnel and document lists. This paper describes the types of research, its need and status of the research in LIS in India. UGC, Raja Ram Mohan Roy Foundation, Council of Library and Information Science Research and many more organization caters to the research needs in LIS but they need to adopt a modern approach. The reasons for slow growth in research and scanty financial support to it have been explored. It further explores certain avenues which can be approached to get financial aid. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Council on library and Information Resources, Ford Foundation Program and Full Bright Program etc. provide financial support in LIS Research. Several suggestions to improve research activities in LIS are given. It concludes that research opportunities and research atmosphere exists in India and there is a need to orient library professionals and LIS faculty towards research programs and funding opportunities. There is a need to conduct seminars, workshops and discussions; monitor, abstract and index research reports and conference proceeding. Thus there exists a scenario which needs to be explored, developed and promoted by enthusiastic and inquisitive professionals.

Keywords: *Library and Information Science, Research, Funding, Grants*

1. Introduction

Research in Library and information Science briefly means the collection and analysis of original data on a problem of librarianship done within the library schools according to scientific and

scholarly standards. Research broadly includes investigations, studies, surveys, academic work at the doctoral, postdoctoral level and research by practicing librarians, information personnel and document lists.

2. What is Research?

Research is a careful, critical study or examination in seeking facts or principles; intelligent and diligent investigation in order to ascertain something.

A research may aim at the following objectivities:

- (a) To find new generalization with old data;
- (b) To know old conclusions with new data;
- (c) To attempt to conduct the critical and analytical study of evidence and the same set of data; arrives at new conclusions or new knowledge.

3. Need for Research

The need for research in librarianship has mainly three reasons:

1. Educational function-advanced studies in Librarianship.
2. Critical function-critical approach to librarianships.
3. Library and information science research activity maintains its historic focus on research that improves information services. At the same time it draws techniques from many disciplines in clarifying its concepts and attacking its problems.

4. Types of Research

1. Applied Research
2. Pure or Basic Research
3. Bibliographical Research
4. Team Research
5. Research in Librarianship in India
6. Solo Research by Ranganathan
7. Research Output in Indian Universities

5. Status of the Research in LIS in India

There are about 80 library schools in India offering B.L.I.Sc. Programme and over 48 universities offering M.L.I.Sc. Programme. At one time, there were about 8 universities offering M.Phil. Programme. Presently about 4 universities are offering M.Phil. which mainly serves as a preliminary course to doctoral studies. As part fulfillment of these programmes, students have to submit dissertations. Though the projects at B.L.I.Sc. Cannot be counted as research works, those works produced at M.L.I.Sc., M.Phil. and Ph.D. programmes can be counted as products of research. National Social Science Documentation Centre (NASSDOC), was established in 1969 as a Division of the ICSSR with the objective to provide library and information support services to researchers in social sciences; those working in academic institutions, autonomous research organizations, policy making, planning and research units of government departments, business and industry etc. NASSDOC also provides guidance to libraries of ICSSR Regional Centers and ICSSR supported Research Institutes.

6. Reason for Slow Growth

1. Traditional methods of teaching, and lack of research orientation among students of library sciences
2. Lack of research experience by the faculty and librarians;
3. Absence of knowledge about research methodology;
4. Inadequate strength of the faculty, which is overburdened with doing classroom teaching;
5. No availability of many qualified research supervisors;
6. Earlier intake of inefficient, indifferent, and disinterested persons by the library profession;
7. Inadequate financial support;
8. Lack of good library facilities and services;
9. Absence of essential data;
10. Entry of majority students to research in library and information science from an academic background which does not prepare them for this specialized activity;
11. Lack of incentives for doctorates; and
12. Absence of identification of research areas

7. Grant Opportunity

You can get started as a librarian with just a bachelor's degree, but many positions require applicants to have at least a master's degree in the field. While a master's degree in library sciences can undoubtedly help you earn more money and find a better job, many students opt to not go back to school because of the high cost of this advanced education. But what if you could go back to school with some financial assistance? You may be eligible for scholarships and grants that make it possible to get your advanced degree, even if you are on a budget and typically couldn't afford tuition.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy Foundation limits its grants mostly to public library studies. R&D sections of leading industries do finance some research projects, but generally they are tuned to the interest and services of that particular institution. The proposed CLISR (Council of Library and Information Science Research) should look to the financing aspects. Research takes people, brains, energy, time, money-and it takes a lot of, them. Not much, relatively speaking is being spent on this activity. Large chunks of money are essential for library and information science to establish the kind of research environment that exists in some other disciplines and then to test the relationship of that environment to the quality of education provided within it. The need for institutional financial support for research is being increasingly realized in India. With the infrastructure in library and information science education we have developed in the previous twenty years, and given the financial support by bodies like the UGC, ICSSR, Raja Ram Mohan Roy Foundation, research in library and information science will most certainly increase in the years to come.

7.1 Library Science Scholarships

Scholarships (and fellowships, as they're often called at the graduate degree level) give you money for school that does not have to be repaid when you graduate. Scholarships are typically available to students who show merit of some sort, by achieving academically, writing an essay, or having a special skill or talent. Most commonly, scholarships and fellowships (which

come attached to teaching or research responsibilities in many cases) are given directly by colleges and universities, so this is where you should start your search. In fact, you may want to factor in the financial aid availability when you're deciding which college to attend to get your master's degree in library science. Outside organizations and groups also offer scholarships for library science majors in some cases. In the past, funds have been available with the American Association of Law Libraries, the American Indian Library Association, the Library and Information Technology Association, the Art Libraries Society of North America, Beta Phi Mu, the Chinese American Libraries Association, the Coalition for Networked Information, the Council on Library and Information Resources, the library of Congress the Society of American Archivists, and the Special Library Association.

7.2 Library Science Grants

Like scholarships, grants don't have to be repaid after you graduate. Unlike scholarships, however, grants are typically awarded based on financial need. They can be awarded directly to students for tuition, or they can be awarded for specific research projects. Some of the places where you can find grants for library science students include the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services, LEXIS-NEXIS, the American Library Association, the Association for Library and Information Science Education, the International Reading Association, the Library of Congress, the Music Library Association, the North American Serials Interest Group, and the Women's National Book Association. For more information following link can be explored

<http://www.masteroflibraryscience.com/scholarship-and-grant-opportunities-for-master-of-library-science-students>

8. Avenues for Research Grants

8.1 ALISE Awards

Library and Information Science Research Grant is offered by OCLC Online Computer Library Center in collaboration with the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE). The program promotes independent research that helps librarians integrate new technologies into areas of traditional competence and contributes to a better understanding of the library environment.

8.2 Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

The International Library Initiatives of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation are dedicated to the development of international activities with libraries serving the general public throughout the world to enable all individuals to improve their lives with information and technology.

8.3 Council on Library and Information Resources

The International Program of the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) focuses its efforts on raising preservation awareness abroad and helping to identify methods and strategies for dealing with problems of access to library and archival holdings.

8.4 Engineering Information Foundation

The foundation carries out grant programs focused on training engineering faculty and students in the most effective use of information systems, researching behavioral factors, dissemination

issues, or linguistic concerns related to information use, or engineering informatics. Guidelines on how to apply to obtain a grant are also available on following link
<http://www.eifgrants.org/info/apply.html>

8.5 Ford Foundation Programs

Grants are given in the Foundation's fields of interest through a program division encompassing three broad areas: Asset Building and Community Development; Education, Media, Arts, and Culture; and Peace and Social Justice. A project to strengthen teaching, research, libraries and publications in the social sciences and the humanities was carried out in 1997 at the Eduardo Mondlane University (Mozambique).

8.6 Fulbright Programme

The Fulbright Program was established in 1946, at the end of World War II, to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries, through the exchange of persons, knowledge, and skills. Grants are made to citizens of participating countries, primarily for university teaching; advanced research; graduate study; and teaching in elementary and secondary schools.

8.7 IFLA Core Program for the Advancement of Librarianship

Books for all is a library project aimed to provide children and young people in developing countries with books. Librarians and teachers wishing to establish small libraries, to enlarge existing collections or to improve the quality of school libraries receive support. The *Danida Travel Grant* is a generous grant allocated yearly by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the purpose of setting up a Conference Travel Fund to be used by librarians from developing countries, to attend the IFLA General Conferences.

8.8 Dr. Shawky Salem Training Grant for Arab Specialists in Library and Information Sciences

The aim of this permanent, annual grant is to enable an expert in library and information science who is a national of an Arab country, to be trained in an aspect of modern technology in library or information science (including management, storage, retrieval, information technology, etc.) in one or more Western countries for a period of between one and three weeks.

8.9 Guust Van Wesemael Literacy Prize

It is a contribution to IFLA's efforts to promote literacy in developing countries. The focus of the Prize is public library or school library work. Both individuals and library institutions are eligible to apply.

8.10 Hans-Peter Geh Grant for IFLA Conference Participation

The objective is to sponsor annually a librarian from the geographic region previously called the Soviet Union, including the Baltic States, to attend an IFLA Seminar or Conference in Germany or elsewhere to become acquainted with new international developments in the field of information.

8.11 Library and Information Commission

The grants for participation in international research activities are specifically intended to produce results which will improve the provision and use of information services (including libraries) within the UK.

8.12 Library Programs of the Open Society Institute

The OSI Network Library Program (NLP) supports and contributes to the development of libraries in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union through a variety of activities, including a grants program, training workshops, library information science fellowships and conference support.

8.13 Rotary Foundation

Rotary International administers a broad range of humanitarian and educational programs and activities designed to improve the human condition and advance the ultimate goal of world understanding and peace. In India, the Valanthalai Rotary Village Corps, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Jaffna, established a mobile library to decrease the illiteracy rate. The Children's Opportunity Grant helped renovate rural libraries. Danish and Lithuanian Rotarians helped re-establish the Vilnius public library and arranged for twelve Lithuanian librarians to travel to Denmark to further their education. The reorganization of a Vilnius technical library in Lithuania is also underway.

8.14 Soros Foundations Network

As part of its commitment to bringing peace and stability worldwide, the Soros Foundations Network supports a wide range of projects. The Library Program has provided support to 150 projects to improve library automation, training, preservation and access, and services.

8.15 US-Mexico Fund for Culture

The US-Mexico Fund for Culture grants economic support to projects that promote cultural exchange and collaboration between Mexico and the United States. Binational collaborative programs involve the recuperation, cataloguing and/or digitization of documentary collections in Mexico and/or the United States.

8.16 Emerald Indian LIS Research Fund

Emerald offers research grant for Indian project in the field of Library and Information science research. More details are available on following site
<http://info.emeraldinsight.com/research/awards/indialis.ht>

8.17 The Library Grants Center

Salem's Library Grants Center, a free web tool helps librarians everywhere. The Library Grants Center is divided into three main sections: National Library Grants Search and browse grants and awards available to all libraries by category, purpose, deadline, and more. State Library Grants Use the clickable U.S. map to open up your state's page and get information on how public funds are used in your state as well as what local foundations support libraries in your city, county, or region.

8.18 National Centre for Science Information

NCSI was established in 1983, as a University Grants Commission India Inter-University Centre (IUC). The Centre also undertakes sponsored R&D projects and conducts a training programme on Library and Information Management.

9. Suggestions

When all is said and done, the research activity in library and information science in India is not at very high ebb. It is slowly, but steadily, picking up the threads, and gaining in strength from point to point. The increasing interest and aptitude for research deserve encouragement, direction. Financial assistance and coordination. It requires a concentrated endeavor on the part of the faculty, working librarians, and library schools. A few suggestions are given below to accelerate the speed of research in library and information science in our country.

1. On the patterns of the CSIR, ICAR, ICMR, ICSSR and NCERT, a national body CLISR (Council of Library and Information Science Research) should be set up. This can identify research areas; formulate national research policies, design and coordinate research activities; and work as a Dearing house.
2. Library and information Science Clearing House need to be established in India, with responsibilities for monitoring, indexing and abstracting research reports, conference proceedings and other publications in the field.
3. Library and information Research Round Table (LIRRT) should be established in India to contribute toward the extension and improvement of library research; to provide opportunities for discussing, disseminating and evaluating library research projects; and to orient and educate the members of other professional bodies, concerning research methods and their usefulness.
4. There must be provision for 'Information Packages' on topics of current interest relating to the library and library services, with detailed research project descriptions.
5. An annual list of completed research at the Ph.D, M Phil, and M.LlSc. levels should be issued. Similarly, a register of current research in library and information science in India should also be established. This work may be allotted to one or two library and information science teaching departments.
6. Research in library and information science in India should be made the theme of an All India seminar. In this, bibliographical organization of research, dissemination of research, national research policy, funding of research, publication of research reports, etc could be discussed.

10. Conclusion

Every profession needs men and women having imagination, and who can see beyond the details of their routine jobs. Library profession is no exception to this and needs such people. It is this need which advanced study and research in library and information science is meant to fill. On the whole, there is evidence that research in library and information science in India is alive-although certainly not without problems. There are research opportunities and research atmosphere in our country. The library professionals and the library and information science faculty are neither so perfect nor so dead that nothing is left to be done. It is my sincere hope that this paper puts its humble, but firm step in the right direction, and the proceedings of this national seminar would bear fruit and deliver the goods.

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