FROM LIBRARY ECONOMY TO INFORMATION SCIENCE: EVOLUTIONARY TRENDS IN THE DISCIPLINE OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Librarianship is concerned with the activities to be performed in libraries in order to achieve the mission of providing right information to the right user at the right time. Only competent persons who had got some training related to the libraries can do the job efficiently and effectively. This need of training laid foundations of library science profession. Present paper highlights the nature of library science profession, genesis of the profession along with the developments taking place at both national and international level that ultimately resulted in the evolution of information science.

Keywords: Library Science, Information science, Librarianship.

INTRODUCTION:

People in the world are engaged in two types of activities to spend their time, do some service and earn their livelihood. These are vocations and professions. Vocations are the engagements into which people enter without requiring regular, prolonged education and training. They may require some physical strength, some mental capability and the like. For example, a labour, a mason, a carpenter etc; they don't need any formal education to enter into these jobs, though their complexities in present day world prompt them to have some sort of training. Professions, on the other hand, are engagements which need regular, longtime education in a professional institution and obtain a degree. This degree in a way is a sort of a license to enter into the profession. Social science researchers particularly sociologists of professions have accepted some traditional criteria and characteristics that distinguish members of a profession from members of a vocation. Traditionally, these commonly accepted criteria in the words of Wiegand (1986) include:

• Specialized training in professional schools attached to universities
• Acquaintance with (and some times contributions to) the development and growth of a common body of knowledge;
• Practical application of the principles of that knowledge.
• A primary commitment to serve the society rather than work for material gains.
• An allegiance to a code of ethics, membership in a professional association most often national in scope; and
• Work that is primarily mental , not physical

Every profession is based on some concrete set of knowledge. Wiegand (1986) is of the view that so far as knowledge is concerned, the hypothesis is that first, there is the professional, abstract and codified knowledge which is explicit, and forms the basis of formal education system leading to professional accreditation. Second there is tacit knowledge, possessed by the individual and developed over time, being situational within a field of practice and distinguishing the expert from the novice. Perhaps of greater significance, not only is it argued that both these types of knowledge are a necessary condition for professional statues but the clients must recognize the existence of the profession either explicitly or implicitly. Like many other professions (Medicine, Law etc) whose origins can be traced to the late nineteenth century, it can be claimed that librarianship does indeed qualify as a profession because it too meets the above mentioned criteria.

GENESIS OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE (LIS) EDUCATION:

The institution known as library is very old, as old as our modern civilization. Its history is interwoven with the history of civilizations itself. Yet its nature, scope, operations and services have not always been what they are today. It began as a repository to conserve what was recorded in a format called clay tablet. These formats changed from time to time with the development of other formats settling finally with print on paper as book and latter included other formats like journals, patents etc no doubt again print on paper. Now there are other formats, digital and cyber, which are competing with the print on paper (Wani, 2004).With advances in educational, political, economical, technological, social, commercial and like other sectors of the societies, information gained importance and is regarded as fuel in the progress and prosperity. Libraries gained importance and began to function as disseminating agencies for information. It is appropriate to mention here that librarians were acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary for performing their tasks in libraries through apprenticeship or "Learning by doing". In this connection Bramley (1981) commented that generally speaking, well into the nineteenth century, people came to high posts in librarianship by having jobs in the country's major libraries from the time they were young boys, thus learning the profession from its most notable practitioners.Gradually organization, operations and services provided by libraries began to grow complex. The librarianship could not remain a vocation, it became a profession. Most of the experts in the profession regard 1876, as the year in which Librarianship emerged as a profession. A number of events related to library profession took place in this year. Some of these events are:

• The publication of the maiden issue of Library Journal (founded as the American Library Journal).
• The 1876 conference held in Philadelphia which led to the formation of American Library Association.
• Publication of Dewey decimal classification Scheme.
• Publication of Cutter's rules for Cataloguing

Once librarianship attained the professional status, library education had its beginning, no doubt, in a humble way. Though some irregular, short-term training programmes have existed here and there, it is in the last quarter of the nineteenth century that the first course was launched in Columbia University, in New York on 5th January 1887. The harbinger was Melvil Dewey. The course was limited and different from what it is today. Gradually it matured into a discipline of academic status worldwide over the decades (Shera, 1972). In the

annals of librarianship, this event marked the beginning of a transition from haphazard, personalized preparation to formal standardized instruction. Thus formal education programmes in librarianship got started from USA with the establishment of the first school in librarianship having nomenclature "School of Library economy" in Columbia University (Lynch, 2008).

Beginning around 1900, various committees were constituted in order to investigate the work of the library schools. Carnegie Foundation took keen interest into the training of the staff working in libraries. In 1915 the Carnegie Foundation authorized an inquiry into library schools and the adequacy of the output of trained librarians. This inquiry was headed by Alvin Saunders Johnson. Johnson's report offered a dismal assessment of programmes with some recommendations.On the recommendation of Johnson's report, Carnegie Corporation in 1919 commissioned Charles C. Williamson to conduct a study of existing facilities for library training. The study was completed in 1921 and published in 1923 under the title "Training for Library Services". This report marks the turning point in education for librarianship in United States. Johnson's report, Williamson's report and the contributions of Carnegie Foundation have played their magnificent role in professionalizing library education (Shera, 1972).

Another important landmark in the LIS education was the establishment of the Graduate Library School at the University of Chicago in 1926. It was intended to be, as the president of the Carnegie Corporation put it, "a graduate library school of a new type which occupies for the librarian's profession a position analogous to that of Harvard Law School and the John Hopkins Medical School" (Nasri, 1972). For the first time there was a graduate, professional school for preparation of librarians, with a faculty dedicated to scholarship and research. Also, for the first time, the school functioned autonomously from the university library, which contributed to the freedom of the dean to devote his time solely to the formulation of suitable programs to meet the changing needs of librarianship. Another value of the Chicago school was its encouragement of publication of a periodical entitled as Library Quarterly. This school is having the credit of establishing the first PhD programme in the library science profession in 1928. With the passage of time new schools were established not only within United States but also in other countries and as such concrete foundations were laid for the professionalization of library and information science (Lynch, 2008).This is true of other countries as well. However, the regular education for librarianship is a twentieth century phenomenon. The education got a fillip once the library services became wide spread and they began to be recognized as useful services. Moreover, the changes in library education and training have taken place against the backdrop of broader changes in the system of higher education.

DEVELOPMENTS IN LIS DISCIPLINE:

A number of factors are responsible for bringing change in the discipline of LIS. Production of new genres of literature like journals, patents and other forms of micro literature, activities of national and international promoters like IFLA, UNESCO, OCLC, revolutionary changes brought by ICT like digitization and digital library projects, open access movements etc., led to the changing dimensions of LIS discipline. These developments are briefly presented as under:

EMERGENCE OF DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION SCIENCE:

One of the important developments was the emergence of "Documentation". Because of increase in research activities and change in the nature of research activities (from parallel research to research in series, from solo-research to team research and from discipline– oriented research to mission-- oriented research) have influenced the field of librarianship. With the emergence of micro-literature like journals, patents, standards, specifications etc., in large quantities a number of problems were faced by the researchers. Researchers were in need of pinpointed, exhaustive and expeditious information. Such types of information services were provided by the persons who were skilled in dealing with micro literature and this process of handling micro literature came to be known as Documentation. The pioneers like Henri la Fountain, Paul Otlet, S. C. Bradford, S. R. Ranganathan etc., are worth mentioning for their contributions in the field of documentation.Documentation as an extended area of modern librarianship came into existence only after the First World War, but it made significant impact when the name of the international institute of Bibliography (IIB), established in year 1895 by Paul Otlet and Henri La Fountain was changed to International Institute of Documentation in 1931 that later on was renamed as International Federation of Documentation (FID) in 1937 but has now closed its doors and is no more in existence. In USA American Documentation Institute (ADI) was established in year 1937 by Watson Davis with particular interest in microform technology (Estabrook, 2010). After the Second World War,

with the establishment of the Division of Documentation, Bibliothequeset Archive (DBA) by UNESCO, the term got introduced in different countries through the efforts of this division. National Documentation Centers were established with the assistance of UNESCO in different countries of the world and thus the term documentation received international acceptance. During 1960's, the invasion of automation brought many changes in library operations especially in the storage and retrieval of information. This technological revolution paved the way for transforming the concept of Documentation to Information science. In 1968 the name of the American Documentation Institute (ADI) was changed to American Society of Information Science and its official organ American Documentation was changed to Journal of American Society for Information Science (JASIS). During the decade of 70's professional status and educational programmes started receiving global attention because of internationalization and globalization of information and also due to the involvement of inter-governmental agencies such as UNESCO, UNIDO, FAO, IAEA etc. in the information handling activities. The establishment of international cooperative information systems like INIS, AGRIS and DEVISIS under the umbrella of UNISIST philosophy was a clear indicator of this fact (Karisiddappa, 2004).

In a society to which Toffler calls info-sphere (Toffler, 1980) all the information of past and present everywhere in the world constitutes as vital a resource as energy, minerals and the like. There emerged the concept of Universal Availability of Publications (UAP) to ensure the free flow of information, not only through traditional library services but also with the aid of modern communication gadgets for quick dissemination of information. Prof. Alvi rightly puts it in the following words "the philosophy behind this movement (UAP) is to make sure that any person, wherever he is, gets information he needs, in a language he can read, in a form he can use and at a time when he needs it most. Thus in this new environment the library and information services have become an essential component of all activities of men on earth. These are no more an aside in any activity as they used to be until the end of 19th century but are an integral part of it. Consequently we witness the establishment and operation of libraries and information centers, international, national and regional and making use of modern sophisticated computer, communication and photographic technologies in an increasingly complex "info- sphere" (Alvi, 1992). This shifted the emphasis of library and information profession from the national level to international level. The advancement of information science, informatics, information management and other specialties indicate the changing working patterns of the profession for offering specialized services. During this period, there was change in the nomenclature of the professional courses because of integration of a discipline like information science into library science. As Robbins (1993) points out, one has only to look at the current names of library degrees to realize that changes in professional education, while not yet assimilated uniformly, are nonetheless underway. Examples cited include Master's in Resource Information Management (M.I.R.M.), Master's in Information Science (M.I.S.), Master's in Management Information Systems (M.M.I.S.), and Master's in Library and Information Science Studies (M.L.I.S.). In fact, Miller (1996) points out that the current roster of forty-seven ALA-accredited programs lists no schools of just library science. Either "Information" or "Information Management" is dominant in their titles. From this evidence alone, it is clear that information science has become a significant theme in library education.

The establishment of databanks, information analysis centers, and translation centers marked the beginning of a new milestone in the global view of information activities. Concepts like resource sharing, consortium have also been incorporated in the field of LIS. The emergence of information and communication technology (ICT) has revolutionized each and every field and libraries and librarianship is not any exception. Emergence of World Wide Web, internet, search engines, Open Access Archives, Hardware and Software packages have profound influence on LIS profession. LIS professional's activities have crossed the four walls of the library and are now talking in terms of virtual and hybrid libraries. These developments have brought about a paradigm shift in the profession of LIS in terms of empowering professionals to act as facilitators in information life cycle activities.

Internet posed major challenges to libraries and LIS education. The W. K. Kellogg Foundation provided an opportunity for LIS education to examine itself during the period of radical change by supporting KALIPER project. The purpose of the KALIPER project was to analyze the nature and extent of major curricular change in LIS education (Pettigrew &Durrance, 2001). Between 1998 and 2000, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation funded for the Association of Library and Information Science Education (ALISE), an examination of curricula of today and needs for tomorrow. This project, dubbed as "KALIPER" for Kellogg-ALISE Information Professions and Education Reform Project, examined about half of the ALA-accredited schools, interviewing faculty, visiting some schools, and studying a variety of documents supplied by each school (including self-study reports, course

syllabi, annual reports, etc.). The KALIPER scholars, in their own words, found Library and Information Science Education as "a vibrant, dynamic, changing field".

CONCLUSION:

Library and information science profession has responded positively to all the developments that occur in the academic world. LIS schools having responsibility of educating the budding professionals have also taken necessary measures for adopting new developments emerging as a result of information and communication technology revolution. LIS schools are revising the curriculum being taught to students as per the demand of the day. Thus we find that in the curriculum of LIS schools there is deletion of the traditional components and introduction of modern technological developments in abundance. Concepts about digital libraries, institutional repositories, consortia, open source software, computer hardware and software aspects, internet, World Wide Web like components are prominent in the curriculum. Thus, we find that there are interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary trends prominent in the discipline of library and information science. All facets of librarianship are to be revisited by the peers in the discipline in order to frame strategies whereby profession is able to sustain and retain its position in the galaxy of other professions with proud.

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