

(Article: 10)

# CONNOTATION AND DENOTATION OF LIS EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH: AN OVERVIEW

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## Abstract

*Education is the lifeline of a nation; and LIS system is the lifeline of education. This paper has presented the expansion and extension of LIS education in Bangladesh. Historical background and recent development of LIS education and training is also discussed. Some problems through the discussion have pointed out and some viable recommendations to overcome the problems have also included in the present study.*

**Keywords:** LIS Education in Bangladesh, Library and Information Science, University Education

## 1. Introduction:

Education plays an important role towards development of a society or nation. Education is an aggregate of all the ways in which a person develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of positive value to society. Education is the result of acquired knowledge and the accumulation of observation and experience. 'Education' and 'Library' are two indivisible concepts, fundamentally related to and co-existent with each other. Neither is an end itself; both together are a means to an ultimate end. Education cannot exist alone in the absence of library, and library has no meaning if cannot impart education (Islam, 1968). Again developed library system is required for good education. Therefore we should established organized library system first. But without proper library professionals it is not possible to do the same. So LIS education is needed to equip the library professionals to run effective library system.

## Introduction:

Library education means educating students to be qualified librarians or information scientists through organized instruction and training. It represents a synthesis of professional action and testifies to the importance, value and necessity of libraries for the present and the anticipated future.

According to UNESCO, the goal of library education is to develop professionals who are qualified to established, manage, operate, and evaluate user-oriented information systems and services (Large, 1987). Library and Information Science (LIS) Education must deal with the essential principles and theories relating to human communication and information dissemination. Library training on the other hand, is meant to teach or impart skills. The process of library training is required to equip an individual with skills and techniques necessary to carry out certain tasks. But these two, are found as complementary to each other (Munshi, LIS Education and Training in Bangladesh, 2008).

Librarianship, which combines system of LIS education and services, is purely a technical profession that acquired special skills and facts through specialized intellectual study, teaching, and research for particular services to be rendered. It is a profession wholly directed towards the progress of culture and civilization (Munshi, 2007 & 2008). No nation can achieve its cherished goal in isolation of the world's literature well preserved in libraries and information centers. Librarianship has its professional organizations, which promote excellence in the work members, influence public sentiment and support, and endeavors to raise it to a position of dignity and social standing. From the facts stated, it inevitably follows that the 'research' in the field of librarianship is not only essential but also an integral part for future development of the profession and the society.

## 2. Objectives of the Study :

The main objectives of the study are:

- To present the current scenario of LIS education of Bangladesh at the national level.
- To map historical events about the LIS education in Bangladesh.
- To evaluate the present LIS education and training facilities in different educational institutions/organizations in Bangladesh.
- To find out the problems in the existing LIS education in Bangladesh.
- To put forward some suggestions to solve the existing problems.

### 3. Background of LIS Education in Bangladesh :

Bangladesh is one of the developing country of the Third World with an estimated population of 152.6 million crowded into an area of 1, 47, 570 sq. km (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2007). The literacy rate is 58.4 % for the population aged 7 plus and of 62% for the population aged 15 plus (Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics, Ministry of Education, Government of Bangladesh, 2014). The library movement of Bangladesh started in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century with the establishment of four public libraries in the district towns of Jessore, Bogra, Barishal and Rangpur. Over the last quarter century a good number of different types of libraries were established in the country, and a satisfactory number of library and information science institutions as well as schools were established throughout the country (Munshi, 2008).

The LIS in Bangladesh was started in 1952 by Mr Fazal Elahi, a London trained Librarian by introducing a 3-months training course for the library staff at the Dhaka University Library. The course was discontinued after only one session. Between 1955 and 1959, four 3-months subject-wise training courses were conducted with the help of Fulbright scholars under the supervision of Mr. M.S Khan, Librarian Dhaka University Library. These courses drew the attention of a satisfactory number of library staff and persons interested in librarianship. There was no training facility apart from this course available in Bangladesh until October 1958 when the newly formed East Pakistan library association (EPLA), now the Library Association of Bangladesh (LAB) instituted a regular 6- month certificate course in librarianship. It was the precursor of regular library education at undergraduate level in Bangladesh (Ahmed, 1993)

After successful running of the courses, authority of University of Dhaka introduced a one- year Postgraduate Diploma course in Library science in 1959 under the supervision of Mr. M.S Khan. This course was later elevated to a Master's Degree course, M. Phil and Ph.D. Degree in 1962, 1976, 1979 respectively. The available training programs for school librarianship at the National Institute of Educational Administration Extension and Research (NIEAR) Dhaka, now National Academy for Education Management (NAEM) began in 1963 and four Teachers training (TT) colleges from 1975. The Bangladesh library council (BLC) organized a 6- month certificate course in 1972(Munshi, 2007).

## 4. Present Picture of LIS Education in Bangladesh :

The LIS education in the Public Universities and Library Associations of Bangladesh are tabulated in table-1 and in the Private Universities are tabulated in table-2 according to the level of the courses.

- a) **Certificate Course in LIS (06 Months):** A Certificate course in librarianship was commenced by the Librarian of Dhaka University Library in 1952 that was not continued after conducting one session. Then The Library Association of East Pakistan started its certificate course in 1958. The entry level qualification is Higher Secondary Certificate or equivalent certificate and the duration of the course is six months. At present LAB and its branches are also offering the course.

**Table 1: Pattern of LIS education in the Public Universities and Library Associations of Bangladesh**

Level of Education	Nomenclature	Name of Degree	Duration Of Course	Offered by
<b>Certificate</b>	Certificate in Library and Information Science	<b>CLIS</b>	6 months	LAB
<b>Post Graduate Diploma</b>	Post-Graduate Diploma in Library and Information Science	<b>PGDLIS</b>	1 year	National university Rajshahi university
<b>Bachelor</b>	Bachelor of Information Science and Library Management	<b>BA (Hons.)/BSS (Hons.)</b>	4 years	Dhaka university Rajshahi university
<b>Bachelor</b>	Bachelor of Arts (Pass) (Optional subject)	<b>BA (Pass)</b>	3 years	National university
<b>Master</b>	Master of Information Science and Library Management	<b>MA/ MSS</b>	1 year	Dhaka University ,Rajshahi university
<b>Master</b>	Master of Information Science and Library Management	<b>MA (Evening)</b>	2 years	Dhaka University ,Rajshahi University
<b>Research</b>	Master of Philosophy	<b>MPhil</b>	2 years	Dhaka,Rajshahi & National University
<b>Doctorate</b>	Doctor of Philosophy	<b>PhD</b>	2-3 years	Dhaka,Rajshahi &National University

**Table 2: Pattern of LIS education in the Private (Non-Government) Universities of Bangladesh**

Level of Education	Name of Degree	Duration of Course	Offered by
Post Graduate Diploma	PGDLIS	1 year	Darul Ihsan University , Dhaka Isakha Interntional University, Bangladesh Kishorrngong, Borendra University,Rajshahi
Bachelor of Library and Information Science	BA (Hons.)	4 year	Khwaja Yunus Ali University. Sirajgong
Master of Library and Information Science	MA	2 years	Asian university, Royal University of Dhaka

- b) Postgraduate Diploma Course in LIS (1 Year):** A Department of library Science was established in 1959 at the University of Dhaka and the Post Graduate Diploma Course was introduced in 1959-60. Then LAB and University of Rajshahi began Post Graduate Diploma course in 1989-1990 and 1991 respectively. Later this course was abolished in 2001. Recently the course has again started. Some Institutes of Bangladesh are offering a one-year postgraduate Diploma course under National University. These Institutes are shown in table-3.

**Table 3: At Present PGD in LIS education affiliated by National University**

Name of the Institute	Location	Inception Year
1. Institute of Library and Information Science (ILIS)	Nilkhet, Dhaka	<i>It started its diploma in 1989-1990 under LAB but it began diploma under National University in 2000.</i>
2. Institute of Library and Information Management(ILIM)	Dhaka	1997
3. Institute of Library and Information Studies (ILIS)	Rajshahi	2000
4. S.B Science and Technology, College.	Bogra	2000
5. Bogra Library Science College,	Bogra	2001
6. Institute of Education Library, and Management College (IELAM),	Khulna	2001
7. Institute of Library and Information Science,	Barisal	2002
8. Institute of Library and Information Science,	Mymensingh	2003
9. Patuakhali Library and Information Science Institute	Patuakhali	2013

There are different levels of education on LIS. These Institutes are producing 2000 to 3000 LIS professional on an average every year. All of the above mentioned institutions/colleges (Table-3) are privately running and their infrastructural facilities are not satisfactory and most of them have no full time faculty members. Darul Ihsan University of Bangladesh (a private university) started one-year postgraduate Diploma course in library and Information Science in 2004. Isakha International University Bangladesh.Kishorgonj started one year (Three semester) postgraduate Diploma course in library and Information Science in 2013. They are continuing their programmes. Another Private University Borendra University, Rajshahi started postgraduate Diploma course in library and Information Science in 2014 but due to high tuition fees and other cost associated with this university course, it did not get minimum number of students to run the programme.

On the other hand The National University has been introduced Library and Information Science as an optional paper (with four Courses and 100 marks of each course) in B.A (Pass) course Curriculum. Near about 20 Degree Colleges have already started the Library and Information Science course. LalmatiaMahila College under this University at Dhaka has already started a Masters Degree Programme during 2003-2004 session with the students those who have a Postgraduate Diploma Degree. In addition to this the courses of studies of Library Training Education at Teacher's Training (TT) Colleges were introduced for graduate teachers undergoing training for a period of 10 months, normally commencing from July each year, as an optional paper in the course curriculum. Eight TT Colleges have already introduced Library Training Education Course till the present time.

- c) **B.A. (Honours) Course (04 Years):** The University of Dhaka inaugurated three-year B.A (Hons) course in LIS in 1987-88 and the name of the Department was changed to Department of Library and Information Science. Later in the changing scenario, the university initiated four-year integrated (Hons) course in the sessions 1997-1998 with total marks of 1900. In 2001, the Department had been renamed as Information Science and Library Management (ISLM). Another public university in Bangladesh namely University of Rajshahi began three year B.A (Hons) course in 1992-1993. Now B.A (Hons) course has been converted into four-year course at the University of Rajshahi. Only one private University of Bangladesh namely Khwaja Yunus Ali University, Sirajgong introduced four-year B.A (Hons) course in Library and Information Science in the year of 2014-15.

- d) **M.A. in LIS (1 Year):** A 1-year master degree program for the 4- years graduate students has been introduced by both the universities. Other Private Universities of Bangladesh specially Darul Ishan University, Royel University of Dhaka, Asian University of Bangladesh have introduced master degree programme in LIS.
- e) **M.A. (Evening) Programme (2 Years):** Again the University of Dhaka began 2-years master degree programme namely M.A. (Evening) Programme for the professionals who have already completed post graduate diploma in Library and Information Science since 2004-2005 session. All the students of the programme are not eligible to have the residential facilities in the university halls (dormitories). The University of Rajshahi started one-year master degree evening programme in 2013-2014 academic sessions.
- f) **Master of Philosophy (2 Years):** The Department has been providing 2- years M.Phil degree since 1976. It started the two-year M. Phil programme with coursework in which first year is for coursework and another year is for thesis. The students of the department of Information Science and Library Management who have secured 50 % or above marks in their master's programme can apply to enroll in the M. Phil. And for this, they will have to appear at the written test and to face a viva voce. On the other hand Rajshahi University and National University started this programme in recent past.
- g) **Doctor of Philosophy (02-05 years):** The Department has also introduced Ph.D programme in 1979. In the Ph.D. programme, no coursework is required before registration. The PhD candidates generally work on a thesis topic under the guidance of the advisor(s) and need to submit the thesis between two to five years after registration. Recently, Rajshahi University and National University started this Ph.D. programme.

Continuing education by definition is the provision of opportunities for people. Now a day it is very familiar as continuing education and lifelong learning. Changes and developments come very sharply to LIS domain. So all the universities and institutions should offer regular and diverse continued education programme in order to refresh and update the knowledge of past graduates, professionals and teachers.

Sincerely speaking, this education is almost absent in Bangladesh. Both Dhaka and Rajshahi University do not offer continuing education for their previous graduates and the professionals. In the recent past, the dept. of LIS of Dhaka University, organized a one-day international seminar on "Library Automation" held on 30 June 1998. Since then the department has not taken any initiative to organize seminar at national and international level.

#### **5.1 TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIS PROFESSIONALS AND STUDENTS:**

Though there is an actual need of development of LIS people, the training facilities for the LIS professionals in Bangladesh are not up to the mark. The University of Dhaka and Rajshahi do not offer any training programme. In Bangladesh There is no national body for providing training programmes for LIS professionals. There are some in-service training programmes for librarians in Bangladesh. These are:

- National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM) has been providing training programmes for college and madrasah (religious education) librarians of the country (2-3 weeks).
- Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) and the Library Association of Bangladesh (LAB) have arranged two training programmes for college librarians in 1998 and 2002.
- The UNESCO and Ministry of Education has arranged a training programme for college librarian 2002
- The Bangladesh Central Public Library has been organizing 1-month training programmes on "Library Operation and Management" for the public library staff twice or thrice in a year. The development project under the Ministry of Cultural Affairs has been funding the training programme.
- National book centre also arranged two weeks training programme for the librarian of district public libraries of Bangladesh.
- Department of Information Science & Library Management arranged a one month training programme on "Library Database Management System and Programming Languages" for the M.A. Final year students every year.



Moreover, Bangladesh National Scientific and Technical Documentation Centre (BANSDOC), DISC of ICDDR, and CIRDAP, CDL arrange regular library based computer training programmes for both students and the library professionals. Besides these, a number of private university libraries are providing training programmes on library-based software and their application throughout the year. ICDDR, B & IUB also offer library attachment training, but the participation of the course is not up to the satisfactory level due to high course fee. Some other libraries also organize training programmes sporadically, but the total effort is far below the requirements. Some past efforts are just enumerated below:

- Another leading private university, North South University started certificate course on “Online and Digital Librarianship” in 2004.
- East west University Library conducted a 6 (Six) day long workshop on “Integrated Library system and Digital Library system: Koha and Greenstone Digital Library software for building digital library” for LIS professional of Bangladesh during 2011, 2013 and 2015.
- BALID Institute of Information Management (BIIM) organized a Course on ‘Use of RFID Technology in Library and Open Source Library Automation Software-SLiMS in collaboration with Southeast University in during 2013 to 2015.
- Daffodil International University (DIU) has arranged “Automation of Information Institution Using Koha-ILS and MARC 21” during 2012 to 2015.
- CIRDAP has organized Two-days training on ‘Dspace: Institutional Repository’ and ‘Dublin Core Metadata Management’.
- In addition to the above mentioned efforts, some training programmes have also been organized by BSMMU, Bangladesh Agricultural University, BANSDOC, LAB, BALID for LIS professional and students in different times and in different areas of Bangladesh.
- Recently Bangladesh National UNESCO commission and Ministry of education jointly has arranged ten days ICT training programme for higher secondary college librarian of Bangladesh for different phase in 2015

#### 5.4 STATUS OF LIS JOURNALS IN BANGLADESH :

The Department of Library and Information Science published “Bangladesh Journal of Library and Information Science” for the second time Vol. 2, No.1, July 2012 after a long gap of publication of first issue in 1998. The East Pakistan Library Association which is renamed as Library Association of Bangladesh (LAB) published another Journal namely ‘The Eastern Librarian’ in 1961 and the publication of the journal is not continued ‘The last issue of this publication was volume 23 No 1 2012.

### 5.5 EMPLOYMENT & CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN BANGLADESH:

Most of the LIS professionals are working in academic libraries (School, college, Madrasha, and other) in Bangladesh but their pay structure and other facilities are far below the standard pay scale. Last five years the Government of Bangladesh has created near about 14000 (Fourteen thousand) new posts for school librarians. It has made a new phase in the field of LIS profession in Bangladesh. But, the number of public libraries is very less, so job opportunity in the public library is very limited. It is also worth noting that we have many research organizations/institutions where a good number of LIS professionals are having the opportunity to work but their salary and other facilities differ from one to another. The facilities depend on the willingness of the authority of the organizations or institutions as the Govt. of Bangladesh has no strict policy for the LIS professionals. As a result, the LIS professionals are not getting proper employment, status and career development opportunity.

There are many problems in the LIS education systems in Bangladesh. The Basic problems are as follows:

- a) Nonexistence of National commission to advise the government for the development of LIS education for preparing trained library professionals in Bangladesh.
- b) No provision of Curriculum development Committee and Programme to guide about the quality indicators for LIS education and about the revision of Syllabus.
- c) Insufficient infrastructural facilities available for providing LIS education effectively.
- d) Unequal pay structure among library professionals of same status.
- e) Lack of attractive job facilities and social status for the library professionals.
- f) Lack of training facilities for updating knowledge about new technologies for developing automated and digital library.
- g) The library and information professionals in Bangladesh are not having attractive and suitable job and the people of the country are not eager to show due respect to the librarians or information professionals and even the Government of Bangladesh is not also sincere to provide proper facilities to the information professionals. So brilliant students are not got themselves into the LIS profession.

## 7. Recommendations :

To overcome the problems stated above, following recommendations have been prescribed for betterment of the LIS education in particular and society as a whole in general.

- a) National Commission for Library Education and Library Development in Bangladesh need to be established as immediate as possible. The commission will advise the government on the effects and benefits of LIS education in Bangladesh.
- b) LIS curriculum will have to be revised by every university once in every few years to accommodate the new ideas generated in the field.
- c) Adequacy of infrastructural facilities is one of the important element for offering qualitative teaching. The infrastructure includes the teaching and other non-teaching staff and laboratory equipments. As the Universities/ Institutes offering diploma, Honors or masters courses have no sufficient classrooms, laboratories for cataloguing and classification and so on, the UGC should monitor and make it obligatory that departments have a sufficient number of classrooms for their students. All institutions and department should provide space for faculty member, for their own sake as well as for interaction beyond formal class lectures.
- d) The government has to take steps towards implementing uniform pay scale for similar posts in different institutions.
- e) The Bangladesh Government should take initiatives to provide proper status to the librarians of different levels.
- f) IT-based training facilities for upgrading knowledge of existing LIS professionals need to be organized regularly.

## 8. Conclusion:

Today's society is knowledge-based society. Everything is centered around the information and knowledge. Again new ICT has changed the nature of information from printed to electronic. The atmosphere of LIS is currently experiencing a holding up a rapid and dynamic evolution and need for qualified manpower for different types of libraries in Bangladesh is a burning issue. To cope with the present situation, it is proposed that the government should come forward with the provision for expansion and extension of LIS education and profession in Bangladesh.

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