

## **Duration of LIS Education: Suffering**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This paper deals with a proposal of restructuring LIS courses to make a uniform way of action to every LIS Departments. There is a disparity between different LIS course running differently with variable durations in West Bengal. For designing an effective curriculum we must consider the time factor that is duration of the course. Different advantages and pit holes of different LIS course structure have discussed here. On the way of uniformity we must follow a uniform pattern so proposal is made on the basis of that.*

**Keywords:** *Course duration, LIS education.*

**Objectives:** *The main objectives of this paper are---*

- *To enlighten on the fact that how many types of duration of courses are running side by side in different proclaimed universities in West Bengal.*
- *To give light on some self-against courses*
- *To find out advantages and disadvantages in different course-durations.*
- *To find out the heterogeneity and homogeneity in the course duration of LIS Schools in West Bengal*

**Scope and Coverage:** *The research restricted to a limited number of institutions in West Bengal. The universities are considered here in those post graduate courses in LIS done in regular mode. Like- University of Calcutta, Jadavpur University, University of Burdwan, Vidyasagar University, Rabindra Bharati University, University of Kalyani and North Bengal University.*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The first review committee was held in 1960 known as Ranganathan Committee on library science education entitled “Library science in Indian Universities”. And again in 1980’s a remarkable change in LIS education and need of ICT, as a result next alternative revision was initiated by UGC in the early 1990’s. The UGC constituted CDC(Curriculum Development Committee) on LIS education under the chairmanship of Prof. P N Kaula (1990). The report of the committee was published as “Report of the Curriculum Development Committee on Library & Information science.” And after that C R Karisiddippa committee (2001) report was published under the title “UGC model curriculum, Library & Information science.” This report basically emphasis on the course duration of the subject Library and Information Science. This committee suggested that there must be integrated two years MLIS course. The entry level is Honors graduate and completed two year integrated MLIS are eligible for NET & SET exam. But most of the universities in the country still now have not introduced integrated courses. In West Bengal Burdwan University and Kalyani university have started two year integrated MLISc course. In 2003 as per UGC notification, for appearing NET & SET, students must have completed two years Master degree course with honors degree at the same subject. UGC’s Notification No F.5-1/13(CPP-II), dated 21 August 2014, and it’s Gazette Notification, dated 5 July 2014, specifying the nomenclatures of the degrees to be offered by the universities mentioned that the course duration may be one year BLISc and one year MLISc or two year integrated MLISc.

#### **Levels of LIS Education in West Bengal**

These Seven Universities are providing library and information science education at different levels in this state. These are

- Bachelor of Library and Information Science (B.L.I.Sc)
- Master of Library and Information Science (M.L.I.Sc)
- Five year Integrated M.L.I.Sc
- M.L.I.Sc(Digital Library)
- M Phil
- Ph D

As far as employability is concerned, these degrees are considered as required qualifications for different level of library workers. D. Lit program has not been yet started by any of these universities. Another two levels also seen like Certificate in Library and Information Science (C.L.I.Sc), and Post Graduate Diploma In Library Automation and Networking (PGDLAN). The former one is practiced

at Bengal Library Association (BLA) and the later one is a course offered by IGNOU. But here I have only considered the said seven universities those rendering LIS courses in regular mode.

University profile offering LIS courses:

Name of the University	Courses offered	Course duration
University of Calcutta	B.L.I.Sc	1 yr (Evening)
	M.L.I.Sc	2 yrs
	Integrated M.L.I.Sc	5 yrs
	M.Phil	1 yrs
	Ph.D	As per UGC norms
	Post Doctoral	
Jadavpur University	B.L.I.Sc	1 yr
	M.L.I.Sc	1yr
	M.L.I.Sc ( D.L)	2 yr (part time)
	M. Phil	2 yrs
	Ph.D	As per UGC norms
University of Burdwan	Integrated M.L.I.Sc	2 yrs
	M.Phil	2 yrs
	Ph.D	As per UGC norms
Vidyasagar University	B.L.I.Sc	1 yr
	M.L.I.Sc	1 yr
	Ph.D	As per UGC norms
Rabindra Bharati University	B.L.I.Sc	1 yr
	M.L.I.Sc	1 yr
Kalyani University	MLISc	2 yr integrated
	Ph.D	
North Bengal University	B.L.I.Sc	1 yr
	M.L.I.Sc	1 yr
	Ph.D	As per UGC norms

The duration of the courses shows heterogeneity among different Universities mainly in three aspects i.e. one year B.L.I.Sc+ one year M.L.I.Sc, two years integrated M.L.I.Sc and five years integrated M.L.I.Sc. Beside these also we can see self-against courses running side by side at University of Calcutta like one year B.L.I.Sc+ two years M.L.I.Sc and five years M.L.I.Sc. Here I have discussed different pros and cons of these kinds of courses.

## **II. MOVEMENTS OPPOSING FIVE YEARS INTEGRATED LIS COURSES**

1. In IASLIC Newsletter, April 2015 published the letter titled “Plea to Abolish 5-Year MLIS Course”. It was a joint deputation of IASLIC and BLA, comprising of Dr. Barun Mukherji, President, IASLIC; Dr. Shyamal Roychoudhury, President, Bengal Library Association; Prof. S B Banerjee, Vice-President, IASLIC; Dr. J N Satpathi, former President of IASLIC, Shri R K Saha, former President of BLA; and Prof. Arjun Dasgupta, former Vice-President of IASLIC, waited upon the honorable Vice-chancellor, University of Calcutta, Kolkata, on March 9, 2015, representation requesting him to take necessary steps to do away with the unspecified and irrational 5-year integrated MLIS course being run by the university, immediately.
2. In IASLIC Newsletter, April 2015 published another letter to the Vice chancellor, Calcutta University on the Subject: 5-Year integrated MLIS degree course at Calcutta University. In this letter attention had been made on that the UGC’s Notification No F.5-1/13(CPP-II), dated 21 August 2014, and it’s Gazette Notification, dated 5 July 2014, specifying the nomenclatures of the degrees to be offered by the universities. And attention is also invited to the letter No 844-Edn(U)/1U(C)-65/2011, dated 24 October, 2011 from the Department of Higher Education, Government of West Bengal, seeking some information from the university with regard to the introduction of the 5-year integrated MLIS course only in the University of Calcutta despite the fact that the course was not within the specified courses of the UGC. This Association, IASLIC, the national professional society in the field of Library and Information Science and Services and a representative organization in the country reiterate that: The National Conferences of the IASLIC held in different parts of the country have been raising protest against this unspecified MLIS course introduced in the University of Calcutta. Besides, the convention organized by this Association and the BLA (Bengal Library Association), the representative bodies in the field of LIS profession, in 2010, also protested against this irrational course.
3. National Convention on LIS Education in India IASLIC, in collaboration with the Central Library, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, held on July 31, 2015, to commemorate the centenary of the university level LIS education in the Indian sub-continent. The following resolutions were adopted

unanimously:

- The UGC be requested to ensure adherence to the provisions contained in its Notification No F.5-1/13(CPP-II), dated 21 August 2014, and Gazette Notification, dated 5 July 2014 by the universities/institutions conducting LIS courses and not to allow any university/institution to conduct any course not specified by it, such as Honours course or Advanced Bachelor's Degree course in LIS, 5-year integrated MLIS course, or any of its segmented components.
  - For ensuring minimum standard of LIS education, the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, be requested to urgently set up a suitable mechanism for evaluation and accreditation of LIS departments and/or courses in the line of Medical Council of India, National Council for Teacher Education, etc.
  - The UGC be requested to set up without any further delay a new curriculum development committee for framing model syllabi of LIS courses of different levels so that the institutions conducting LIS courses can modify their curricula accordingly to meet the manpower needs of the new generation libraries and information centres.
  - The UGC be requested to conduct a survey, through an appropriate agency, of the LIS education being imparted in the country and also the need for LIS professionals of different categories, as suggested by UGC Review Committee (1961), so that a realistic policy and programme for LIS manpower development can be formulated for the country.
  - The Ministry of Culture, Government of India, be requested to fully implement the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission for revamping of LIS education, including setting up of a permanent National Mission /Commission on Libraries and the Indian Institute of Library and Information Science, without further delay.
  - A committee is to be formed by IASLIC under the chairmanship of Dr. R C Gaur, Vice-President, IASLIC, Zone-4, and University Librarian, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for keeping liaison with the concerned authorities for implementation of the resolutions adopted in the National Convention on LIS Education in India held on 31 July 2015.
4. IASLIC Delegation Meets UGC Secretary regarding conducting of unspecified courses in LIS by some universities : A delegation from IASLIC, comprising of Shri S B Banerjee, Vice-President, IASLIC; Dr. R C Gaur, Vice President, IASLIC, Zone-4; Prof. Amitabha Chatterjee, Member, Governing Body of IASLIC; and Dr. J N Satpathi, former President of IASLIC; called on Prof. Dr. Jaspal Singh, Secretary, UGC, at his office on August 3, 2015, and apprised him of the developments in the field of LIS education in the country, specially about the conducting of unspecified courses in LIS by some universities. Prof. Singh assured the delegation that appropriate action would be taken in the matter.
5. In IASLIC Newsletter September, 2015 published a letter of Dr.Urmila A. Thaker, Professor & Head (Retd.)DLIS, Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidya Nagar, Gujarat as representation against unspecified BLISc degrees on the subject "5-year MLIS course opposed". She expressed her support on the movement to stop five-years integrated MLISC degree course being offered by University of Calcutta, Kolkata; Guru Ghasidas Viswavidyalaya, Bilaspur; and Annamalai University, Annamalainagar as it is not specified by the UGC.
6. In IASLIC Newsletter, June 2015 the introduction of unspecified 5-year integrated MLISc course by the University of Calcutta has been opposed by IASLIC as well as Bengal Library Association. The report shows that the university seems to be not very sure about the future of the course which is evident from the fact that it has tried to segment the course again and again by issuing notifications at different points of time. Initially the university had decided to offer the "BLIS (Honours) degree" after completion of 8th semester. Subsequently the university issued a notification stating that after successful completion of 6th semester of the 5-year integrated MLISc course, all candidates would be awarded "BLIS (Honours)" degree and after completion of 8th semester the "Advanced BLIS" degree. Since these are also unspecified degrees, awarding of such degrees would create confusion and cause damage to LIS education system of the country. Therefore, IASLIC has again sent a representation to the Vice-chancellor of the university pleading stoppage of the course leading to segmented unspecified degrees and seeking an appointment from him for discussing the matter.

### **III. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES IN DIFFERENT LEVELS OF L.I.SC COURSES:**

#### **Five years integrated MLISC course:**

- As the entry level is 10+2 Students can accommodate the LIS subject as their first choice. Unless candidates with good academic background and aptitude are admitted, the quality of the course cannot be maintained at a higher level. As they don't have any depth knowledge in any one specialized basic subject so by default we can assume it that LIS is their first choice.
- As the entry level is higher secondary then new or fresh blood can be incorporated in our subject. And the best thing is that young blood is much more enthusiastic and active to cope up the subject.
- As Library & Information science course is structured as 3+2 years in five years integrated M.L.I.Sc courses then the WBCSC (West Bengal College Service Commission) would have no objection for SET & service sectors.
- If we see from the teaching point of view one can fulfill the high level of teaching from basic level to advance level
- Students may apply in various competitive examination arranged by Government bodies as they are getting B.L.I.Sc honours and M.L.I.Sc degree like any other general courses.
- As the basic qualification for pursuing the course is 10+2 so comparing with others parallel courses structure it will save three to five years to complete the M.L.I.Sc degree. As in case of two years integrated M.L.I.Sc or one year B.L.I.Sc +one year M.L.I.Sc in both the cases basic qualification for admission to the courses is either honours graduate or masters in any subjects that will take another three to five years. In many cases age becoming a bar for Govt. jobs and also we know that for UGC NET JRF exam the maximum age is 27years.
- Job opportunities will decrease
- Social values will increase with young blood.
- As the course runs as 3+2 years pattern the intensive knowledge can be gathered and there have no obstacle for research because in five years students can learn thoroughly and in depth.
- Job opportunity is not up to the mark as in practical environment hardly any advertisement is showing the provision for five years integrated M.L.I.Sc for applying to Public Service Commission, School Service Commission (state and central), Staff Selection Commission (State and Central), WBCS, Union Public Service Commission, private institutions, public institutions, Universities and Bank etc.
- Promotion of the subject is not up to the mark. Still now a big part of our population is not aware of the subject LIS.
- If the course is five years integrated M.L.I.Sc there have question of lower grade service like schools, Small Public libraries, technical and junior assistant posts in universities etc.
- The five years integrated M.L.I.Sc is only pursuing by a single University in West Bengal and the number is not also very large in Indian context too. So it is hampering the uniformity in regard to the duration of the courses.
- There are thus at present separate one-year bachelor's degree course and one-year master's degree course as well as two-year integrated master's degree courses,
- Not only that a few universities like Calcutta University has started a post-higher secondary 5-year integrated master's degree course, again without seriously assessing its consequences.
- After 12th Std. students are not able to understand the whole Universe of Knowledge, because they do not have the background of any basic subject. Before introducing Five-Year Course, one should assess the job opportunities also. This practice is not in favor of students and LIS profession too. It should be stopped immediately for the sake of knowledge society.
- After 12<sup>th</sup> Std. students are unable to understand basic concepts of Library & Information Science due to lack of subject background and maturity.
- They are unable to assess user needs.
- LIS Profession is a noble profession with motto to help information seekers. LIS professionals help various information user groups such as academicians, researchers, scientists, technocrats, doctors, engineers, administrators, managers, policy makers, decision makers, etc. in providing required information at right time in right way. Hence, in-depth knowledge of any one discipline (UG & PG degree) is essential, so that they can perform their work efficiently and effectively and fulfill user needs.
- LIS profession cannot be compared with other professions (such as Legal and Medical), because job opportunities are merely based on libraries and information centers. There is no scope for private practice in this discipline.

**Two year integrated MLISc, or in case of one year BLISc and one year MLISc:**

- As most of the institutions in India follow these structure of course duration so this 5-year integrated MLIS course will complicate the present LIS education in West Bengal in particular and in the country in general;
- As in case of the later structure minimum qualification required is a honours graduate or masters in a basic subject automatically they have much more job opportunity.
- This 5-year integrated MLIS course will aggravate already existing unemployment in the field;
- Five years integrated course in LIS is not considered as the prescribed qualification for employment in any sector and as such employment opportunity for the new degree holders will be negligible;
- Since LIS is unlike other professional subjects like medical, engineering, accountancy, legal, etc. there is no scope for it's practicing independently. Since LIS is a supporting subject to aid and assist the academicians, scholars, researchers, doctors, engineers, technologists, administrators, planners, decision makers, corporate managers, etc. relevant and compatible knowledge of the basic subjects, at least at the level of the Honours/Masters degree, if not more, is a must for any LIS professional to assist any user of a library qualitatively. Entry of any person in the 5-year integrated MLIS course, just after passing 10+2 course, will make one ineffective.
- The UGC's Notification cited above also clearly indicates that at the entry of B Lib Sc/B Lib I Sc, Bachelor's degree is the minimum eligible qualification and B Lib Sc or B Lib I Sc is the minimum eligibility qualification for M.Lib.Sc/M.Lib.I.Sc degree. The UGC has clearly stated in its notification cited above that "Universities awarding unspecified degrees will attract appropriate stringent action."
- The Curriculum Development Committee of the UGC has also not recommended introduction of 5-year integrated MLIS course.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Librarianship is a profession so the course does not equal to any other general academic courses. It is obviously true that professional ethics must be kept and the course must be run in the universities not in college level. If we let this course to the colleges the nature of the course diminished and it results into mushrooming the students that against the professional course. In college level the infrastructure facilities are very poor in different levels (aids and teaching) so the course should be restricted within the universities. And tools used by these courses are really highly priced. In future if sufficient infrastructural facilities arise then only it can be possible to let BLIS in colleges. From the study it can be pointed out that five years integrated MLISc course is an unspecified one and a complete departure from the LIS courses notified in the UGC's Gazette Notification dated 5<sup>th</sup> July 2014. The Calcutta University CSR notification (Amended Notification no. CSR/29/13 dated 30.9.2013) showing that after successful completion of 6<sup>th</sup> semester, all candidates will be awarded the degree in the nomenclature of "BLIS (Honors)" and after completion of 8<sup>th</sup> semester the "Advanced BLIS" degree are complete departure from the nomenclature specified by the UGC and would further break the anonymity of LIS education and the profession. LIS professionals need to be well equipped, firstly, with the knowledge of an academic discipline at least of honours level, to be able to perform the job effectively as in many cases professionals need to serve the scholars of other trades. Then they have to acquire thorough LIS Education and knowledge and skills in handling LIS tools and techniques for identifying, locating, culling, organizing and presenting information to fulfill the user need.

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