

EDITORIAL

I was invited to the national conference of IATLIS (Indian Association of Teachers of Library & Information Science) organised in collaboration with Documentation Research and Training Centres (DRTC) held in Bangalore, 20-22 March 2013 on the theme “LIS Education and Research: Contemplating Persistent and Debatable Issues”. It was DRTC Golden Jubilee Celebrations and this conference was organised to commemorate 50 years of DRTC existence. It was realised that with the changes taking place around the world particularly with regard to the communication media, information handling techniques, electronic documents, paradigm shift from document management to information management in libraries, the adjustment required of LIS education has been spectacular in the last 20 years in India.

We might become so focussed on immediate and pressing issues that we would be in danger of losing sight of our larger professional goals and missions. The time has changed and the emergence of electronic documents have opened up new avenues and have also made to rethink on manpower development programmes which is a direct concern of LIS education. The retrospection of LIS education in India since W.A. Borden initiated training in Librarianship in this country in 1911 at Baroda makes us realise that the field of Library & Information Science is a dynamic and interdisciplinary area of study involving many subjects such as management studies, computer science, psychology, statistics, linguistic etc.

Increasing use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and keeping up with its obsolescence provides challenges especially as most ICT already has more utility than we need and we need to learn how to use properly what is already there.

The changing dimension of LIS profession clearly reflects the new roles and responsibilities among the LIS professionals to contribute to build vibrant knowledge society. Therefore, the LIS schools should assume the role of leadership and responsibility to build competent manpower for the present and future needs.

Competence and adaptability in managing information and in advancing technologies ought to be the key aims of the LIS curriculum. Modular/credit based curriculum may be introduced so that it not only matches the specific interests and attitudes of students but also meets the manpower needs of different kinds of libraries /information systems.

We should adopt a holistic view of the LIS education and training. Though just by updating alone the LIS curriculum, we shall not be able to produce competent professionals. What is required is adequate/competent faculty, proper infrastructure, suitable space, and continuing education for the teaching faculty, internet access etc.

There are number of issues which need to be seriously deliberated upon like: Quality of LIS education and research, outdated syllabus, unplanned proliferation of LIS schools, inadequate faculty strength, lack of infrastructure etc. It is high time, an agency be created to monitor the quality of LIS education in India.

(Prof. H. N. Prasad)
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF