CAREER PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE EDUCATORS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

In India, the field of library and information science (LIS) has experienced significant expansion in terms of educational opportunities as well as the need for skilled professionals. However, the literature currently in publication does not adequately document the distinct set of career opportunities and difficulties faced by LIS educators. This study looks at the professional development opportunities, obstacles, and career prospects for LIS educators in India. Using a mixed-methods approach that includes surveys and interviews with LIS teachers from different academic institutions, the study pinpoints important problems like low pay scales, little opportunity for career progression, job instability, and a lack of institutional support for professional growth. The study also emphasizes how these difficulties affect career advancement and job satisfaction. The study also looks at ways to make LIS education better, like better training courses, more transparent career paths, and more institutional funding for faculty development. The findings ultimately seek to support the creation of tactics that can enhance the careers of LIS instructors and guarantee the ongoing expansion and pertinence of LIS education in India.

KEYWORDS: *Career Prospects , Challenges , Library and Information Science , Educators , India , Professional Development , Job Security , Career Advancement , LIS Education.*

INTRODUCTION

The future of India's information and library systems is greatly influenced by its library and information science (LIS) educators. The role of LIS educators has grown in significance in both the academic and professional spheres as the need for information professionals continues to expand across industries. However, LIS teachers in India face a range of career prospects and challenges that are frequently disregarded in academic discourse, despite the field's evolving nature and the importance of educators in developing a skilled workforce. With the growth of online learning platforms, the launch of specialized programs, and the incorporation of contemporary technologies in library administration, LIS education in India has experienced substantial changes in recent years. Although these developments have broadened the horizons of LIS educators, they have also created new difficulties, especially with regard to faculty members' professional growth and career

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1

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advancement. Among these difficulties are low pay, unstable employment, few research funding options, and unclear career progression routes within the academic system.

Furthermore, LIS teachers in India frequently struggle with a lot of teaching, little administrative help, and a lack of institutional acknowledgment for their professional service and research contributions. Furthermore, the rapidly changing information needs and rapid technological advancements in the LIS field necessitate ongoing professional development and adaptation, which the institutions hiring these educators don't always support. The purpose of this study is to investigate the difficulties and career opportunities faced by LIS teachers in India. The study will concentrate on the elements that affect LIS faculty members' professional development and retention of career satisfaction. With a focus on job security, pay structures, career advancement opportunities, and professional development, it will also look at the institutional and policy-level issues that impede the effective development of LIS educators.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:
Aims:
Examining and analyzing the career opportunities and difficulties faced by Library and Information Science (LIS) educators in India is the main goal of this study. In addition to identifying the barriers and challenges that impede their advancement, this study aims to comprehend the major elements affecting LIS teachers' career development, job satisfaction, and professional growth.

Objectives:
1. **To evaluate the career prospects for LIS educators in India:** Examine the possibilities for professional growth, such as leadership positions in academic institutions, research opportunities, and promotions.
2. **To explore the challenges faced by LIS educators in their professional lives:** Examine problems with employment contracts, pay inequalities, and job insecurity in both public and private organizations.
3. **To analyze the institutional and policy-level factors affecting LIS educators :** Examine how institutional practices, university regulations, and governmental policies influence the benefits and working conditions for LIS faculty.
4. **To assess the work-life balance of LIS educators:** Examine the challenges related to handling teaching duties, research commitments, and administrative tasks, and how these impact LIS educators' personal health.
5. **To propose recommendations for improving the career prospects and addressing the challenges faced by LIS educators:** Make recommendations for ways to improve career development opportunities, such as more accessible professional development resources, improved pay structures, and clearer promotion pathways.

LITERATURE REVIEW:
Academic literature has paid little but increasing attention to the difficulties and career opportunities faced by Library and Information Science (LIS) teachers in India. Understanding the professional difficulties faced by educators is crucial to enhancing their working conditions and advancing the field as LIS education continues to change and adapt to the shifting demands of the information landscape.

1. Career Prospects for LIS Educators in India
A number of variables, such as institutional support, research opportunities, and developments in the LIS field, affect the career prospects of LIS educators. The growth of digital libraries, information technology, and data management systems has opened up new opportunities for LIS educators, especially in the fields of knowledge management, digital information management, and information retrieval systems, claim Kumar and Prakash (2019).

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2. Challenges in Career Advancement

One of the main issues facing LIS educators in India is the absence of defined career advancement pathways.

3. Job Security and Salary Disparities

For LIS educators, especially those employed by private or non-governmental organizations, job security is a top concern. A large number of LIS educators work under contract or part-time, which provides little job security and benefits.

4. Work-Life Balance and Mental Health Concerns

Another crucial concern for Indian LIS educators is work-life balance. Teachers frequently have little time for personal or family life due to their heavy teaching loads, administrative duties, and the pressure to conduct research.

5. Professional Development and Training

For LIS educators to remain effective and relevant in a constantly evolving information environment, they must engage in continuous professional development, or CPD. However, LIS faculty members have little institutional support for continuing education and training.

6. Gender and Regional Disparities

The career prospects of LIS educators in India are also influenced by regional and gender differences. Female faculty members frequently encounter additional difficulties with regard to gender roles, work-life balance, and career advancement, particularly in rural or underdeveloped areas.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The purpose of this study's research methodology is to investigate and evaluate the difficulties and career opportunities faced by Library and Information Science (LIS) teachers in India. In order to give a thorough grasp of the problems faced by LIS educators, this study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research techniques.

1. Research Design

In order to methodically identify and examine the different career opportunities, difficulties, and professional development requirements of LIS educators in India, the study employs a descriptive and exploratory design.

2. Population and Sample

LIS educators who are currently working in academic institutions throughout India, including public and private universities, colleges, and specialized LIS institutions, make up the study's target population.

3. Data Collection Methods

To obtain thorough insights, the study will use both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. To gather quantitative information from LIS educators, a structured questionnaire will be created.

4. Data Analysis Techniques

Statistical techniques will be applied to the analysis of the quantitative data gathered from the survey. Statistical software, like Microsoft Excel or SPSS, will be used to code and analyze data.

5. Ethical Considerations

Research ethics will be followed in this study. Important ethical factors include Every participant will receive information regarding the study's objectives, the fact that participation is entirely voluntary, and their freedom to leave at any moment without facing any repercussions.

6. Limitations of the Study

There are certain limitations to take into account, even though the study attempts to offer a thorough examination of the difficulties and career opportunities faced by LIS educators in India. Because the study relies on self-reported data, participants might not fully disclose negative aspects of their careers, which could introduce bias.

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3

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

In India, the development of the nation's knowledge management frameworks and information systems depends on the profession of library and information science, or LIS. At the center of this development are LIS educators, who are essential in preparing the next generation of information professionals. The career opportunities and difficulties faced by LIS educators in India, however, are still mainly unexplored and insufficiently addressed, despite the growing significance of LIS in an information-driven society. Numerous challenges that impede their professional development and job satisfaction are faced by LIS educators in India. Inadequate career advancement opportunities, job insecurity, low pay in comparison to other academic fields, and a lack of institutional support for professional development and research are just a few of these difficulties. The introduction of new technologies has caused the LIS field to change, but LIS educators' professional development has not kept up with these developments, which has caused their careers to stagnate and their roles to leave them feeling dissatisfied.

Furthermore, little is known about how LIS educators experience career advancement, how organizations either foster or impede their professional growth, and how these elements impact their motivation and sense of fulfillment at work. Regional differences, institutional policies that frequently do not keep up with the expanding demands of the LIS profession, and the disparities in working conditions between public and private institutions all contribute to the difficulties faced by LIS educators. Investigating the career opportunities, difficulties, and general professional well-being of LIS educators in India is imperative in light of these circumstances. Gaining an understanding of these elements is crucial to creating plans that can enhance LIS educators' working conditions and career prospects, ultimately enhancing the caliber of LIS instruction and the advancement of the field overall.

DISCUSSION:

A complex issue with significant ramifications for both the educators and the future of library and information science (LIS) education in India is the career opportunities and difficulties faced by LIS educators in that nation. The role of LIS educators is more important than ever as the economy becomes more information-centric and there is a growing need for qualified information professionals.

1. Career Advancement and Promotion Opportunities

The absence of defined and organized career advancement pathways is one of the main issues facing LIS educators in India. Although academic institutions, especially those in the public sector, have clear promotion policies in place, these policies are frequently applied inconsistently within LIS departments. Because there aren't clear promotion standards or chances for professional development, faculty members at many LIS schools say their careers are stagnating.

2. Job Security and Contractual Employment

For LIS educators, especially those employed by private or non-governmental organizations, job insecurity is a major worry. A large number of LIS teachers in India work under contract or on a temporary basis, which results in little job security and few benefits. Because some faculty positions are filled on a contractual or part-time basis due to administrative policies or budgetary constraints, job security can be precarious even within government-funded institutions.

3. Salary Disparities and Low Compensation

For LIS educators in India, low pay and salary disparities continue to be some of the biggest problems. Even when LIS educators have comparable training and experience, many private institutions pay less than those in other academic fields, even though government institutions might follow the University Grants Commission's (UGC) salary guidelines.

4. Lack of Institutional Support for Professional Development

The absence of institutional support for professional development is one of the biggest issues facing LIS educators in India. Staying up to date in the quickly changing LIS field requires constant learning and skill development. Many LIS educators, however, complain about a lack of professional development opportunities, such as restricted access to conferences, training courses, and workshops

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that could help them advance their knowledge and stay current with new developments in the field of information science.

5. Work-Life Balance and Stress

Keeping a healthy work-life balance is a major challenge for LIS educators in India. Teaching, research, administrative duties, and student mentoring are just a few of the many responsibilities that LIS faculty members are expected to balance. Stress, burnout, and discontent at work can result from these demands as well as the pressure to stay up to date with academic standards and technological advancements.

6. Regional and Gender Disparities

Unfair opportunities for LIS educators in various regions of India are a result of regional differences in infrastructure, institutional policies, and resources. Accessing cutting-edge technology, research funding, and professional networks can be difficult for educators in rural or underdeveloped areas, which can make it difficult for them to keep up with international developments in LIS education.

CONCLUSION:

Both the educators and the larger field of library and information science (LIS) education are significantly impacted by the multifaceted career opportunities and difficulties faced by LIS educators in India. In India's quickly digitizing and information-driven society, the value of LIS professionals is only increasing, but there are still many obstacles in the way of LIS educators' career paths. Limited career advancement opportunities, job insecurity, low pay, a lack of institutional support for professional development, and work-life balance are just a few of the significant issues that the study has brought to light for LIS educators. Despite playing a crucial role in determining the direction of information management, LIS educators in India are frequently limited by strict and uneven career progression schemes, which impedes their ability to advance professionally. Job insecurity and a decline in long-term career prospects are caused by the prevalence of temporary and contractual employment arrangements, as well as the lack of clear promotion pathways. Additionally, LIS faculty pay is still low when compared to other academic fields, which creates financial barriers that may deter talented people from entering or remaining in the field.

In addition to these systemic issues, LIS educators' capacity to remain competitive and involved with international developments in the field is further hampered by the absence of sufficient institutional support for research, professional development, and faculty mentoring. Although teaching is still the primary duty, LIS educators frequently deal with a demanding workload and administrative responsibilities that leave little time for professional or academic growth. Maintaining a healthy work-life balance is still difficult, especially for faculty members who have a lot of teaching, research, and student mentoring responsibilities. Stress and burnout are common among LIS educators, and they can have a detrimental effect on their output and contentment at work. The difficulties faced by LIS educators are further complicated by gender biases and regional disparities. Rural educators might not have as much access to professional networks and resources, and female faculty members might face additional obstacles because of gender-based discrimination and societal expectations.

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6