Emerging Research Trends in Library Science in Indian Academic Institutions

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ABSTRACT

Library and Information Science (LIS) in the Indian scenario is witnessing a dramatic shift, in view of the evolution of digital technologies, the changing trend in scholarship communication, and developments in the information needs of the research community. Research institutions have emerged as an important sector in the research and development of LIS, focusing on digital innovation, research assessment, user-focused services, and modern knowledge management techniques. This paper critically reviews recent scholarly literature to systematically identify the emerging research trends in the area of Library Science within Indian academic institutions. The study identifies key thematic areas of digital libraries, institutional repositories, open access initiatives, bibliometric and scientometric studies, artificial intelligence applications, information literacy programmes, and research support services. By reviewing the existing literature, the paper highlights prevailing research gaps, challenges, and future directions offering a comprehensive overview of the current LIS research landscape in India.

KEYWORDS: Library and Information Science, Emerging Trends, Academic Libraries, India, Digital Libraries, Bibliometrics.

1. INTRODUCTION

The profession of Library and Information Science has transformed itself from the traditional responsibility of handling print resources to a technology-driven field that assists in learning and research activities. In the context of the Indian higher education scenario, there is a growing need for the handling of digital resources in educational libraries. As a result, research in the field of Library and Information Science in India has diversified into new research areas that are associated with information technology, data science, and education. It is an important task to identify the emerging research areas.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A study of related literature establishes a basis for understanding the development, extent, and trend in the studies in the discipline of Library and Information Science (LIS), especially in the environment of an educational institution.

Related studies reveal that the trend in the studies in LIS is slowly moving from the traditional scope of library activities towards technology and user-oriented studies.

Borgman argues that digital technologies "have changed the way scholarly communication is conducted, thus altering the role of academic libraries" (Borgman, 2007). Lynch's view of institutional repositories, as discussed in Lynch's article "Institutional Repository" published in 2003, is that it is an important part of an academic library because it provides open access to scholarly literature.

Some Indian publications have dealt with trends in LIS research by using bibliometric and scientometric analysis. Gupta and Dhawan (2018) have studied trends in Indian LIS publications and found that Indian LIS publications have shown steady progress with a greater focus on bibliometrics, digital libraries, and information technology applications. Similar observations have been made by Devi and Ramesh (2020), which reported that productiveness of research work in LIS has become more interdisciplinary as well as scientometric.

User studies represent an important trend in Madhusudhan (2010) examined the usage of electronic resources among research scholars studying in Indian universities and concluded the increasing dependence upon electronic information sources. Tenopir et al. (2012) pointed out the ongoing significance of academic library collections and the new reading behavior of researchers while working electronically.

OA and scholarly communication are prominent areas of discussion in LIS literature. A study by Pujar et al. (2015) focused on the present scenario regarding institutional repositories in the Indian context to gauge the issues associated with it. Finally, the IFLA Trend Report (2015) reinforced the emergence of trends like OA, digital preservation, and data-intensive services that have a major impact on LIS research trends.

Currently, the literature also reveals a focus on innovative or emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and data analytics. This is evident in a discussion by Khan & Bhatti (2017) who reviewed the applications of artificial intelligence in libraries. They concluded that there exists potential for improvement in libraries based on artificial intelligence applications. Rao (2018) stressed the importance of academic libraries in promoting information literacy skills among students as well as faculties.

It appears from the literature reviewed that the LIS research in Indian academia is also closely linked to the global developments, which include digital transformation, research evaluation, user behavior, and innovative libraries. There is a gap in the literature related to the empirical analysis of the effect of developments in emerging areas and library initiatives on academic performances.

3. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The rapid growth of higher education institutions, research output, and digital initiatives in India has generated new challenges and opportunities for academic libraries. A systematic understanding of emerging LIS research trends is necessary to:

1. Align library practices with institutional research and learning objectives.
2. Support evidence-based decision-making in library management.
3. Identify research gaps and priority areas for future investigations.
4. Strengthen LIS education and professional development in India.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the emerging research trends in Library Science in Indian academic institutions.
2. Analyse the influence of digital technologies on LIS research.
3. Identify dominant thematic areas in contemporary Indian LIS research.
4. Highlight challenges and future research directions in the discipline.

5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on research trends in Library and Information Science related to Indian universities and colleges. It covers scholarly literature published in LIS journals, conference proceedings, theses, and institutional publications, with emphasis on recent developments in academic library environments.

6. EMERGING RESEARCH TRENDS IN LIBRARY SCIENCE

6.1 Digital Libraries and Institutional Repositories

Research on digital libraries and institutional repositories focuses on digitisation initiatives, metadata standards, interoperability, digital preservation, and long-term access to scholarly resources. Indian academic institutions increasingly view repositories as tools for enhancing research visibility and compliance with open access mandates.

6.2 Open Access and Scholarly Communication

Open access publishing, open educational resources, copyright management, and research visibility constitute a significant area of LIS research. Studies assess awareness, attitudes, and adoption of open access among faculty members and researchers in Indian universities.

6.3 Bibliometrics and Scientometrics

Bibliometric and scientometric analyses are widely used to evaluate research productivity, citation impact, collaboration patterns, and institutional performance. These studies support research assessment, ranking exercises, and science policy formulation in India.

6.4 Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies

The application of artificial intelligence, machine learning, big data analytics, and automation in libraries has emerged as a prominent research trend. Studies explore smart libraries, recommender systems, chatbots, and intelligent information retrieval mechanisms.

6.5 User Studies and Information-Seeking Behaviour

Contemporary user studies focus on digital information behaviour, use of electronic resources, social media platforms, and user satisfaction with online library services. These studies emphasise evidence-based service design in academic libraries.

6.6 Information Literacy and Research Support Services

Information literacy, digital literacy, and research support services such as plagiarism detection, reference management, and research data management are gaining scholarly attention. It has increasingly been recognized that academic libraries are partners in teaching and research.

7. ROLE OF INDIAN ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS IN LIS RESEARCH

Indian universities and colleges contribute to the LIS research through its doctoral programmes, funded research projects, professional associations, and collaborative initiatives. Backed by national-level digital and research policies, academic libraries have been further strengthened in their roles as centers of innovation and scholarly communication.

8. CHALLENGES IN LIBRARY SCIENCE RESEARCH IN INDIA

Despite progress in the area of LIS research in India, some challenges are being encountered, and these are lack of research funds, imbalance in infrastructural availability, lack of interdisciplinary teamwork, and requirements for advanced research skill levels. These are critical in order to increase its quality and international visibility.

9. FUTURE RESEARCH

Other areas of concentration in future studies may involve research data management, digital preservation strategies, ethics and responsibility in AI use, library impact assessment on learning and research outcomes, and sustainable library practices aligned with national development goals.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that the academic environment of India is   development and expansion of research in Library Science. The future trends reveal the transformation of the academic library from a passive dissemination of information to an active participant in the learning process. The process of constant research assessment and development of technological infrastructure and skills seems essential for developing the impact of research related to Library and information Science in the knowledge landscape of India.

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