Trending Library Job Market in India: A Case Study of LIS Education and Employability

N. K. Pachauri

Abstract

Unemployment in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS) in India is a serious issue, as highlighted in this research paper. With approximately 18,000 students enrolled in LIS courses annually, only a small percentage (less than 5%) are able to secure jobs in the public sector. The study analysed 6,094 advertised jobs over the past five years and found that school education (43.93%) and higher education (34.28%) were the main sectors offering job opportunities to fresh LIS professionals. Despite over 80 government universities, more than 40 private universities and 15 open universities offering bachelor's, master's and Ph.D. degrees in LIS, the employability of LIS graduates remains low. Only around 189 students (15.75%) who qualify UGC NET (National Eligibility Test) in LIS are successful in getting jobs in higher education per year. This indicates a significant gap between the number of LIS graduates and available job opportunities, with a ratio of 19:1 (approx.) between degree holders and their employability. Based on the study, recommendations and suggestions are provided to improve employability and job opportunities for LIS professionals in India. This research sheds light on the core job areas, sectors, skills, and cadre related to LIS as a career option. It calls for further research to comprehensively address the issue of employability and job prospects for LIS graduates in India.

Keywords: Jobs, LIS, LIS Education, Employment, Unemployment, Distance Education, Open University

Introduction

Unemployment is the condition of being capable of working, actively seeking work, but unable to find any work. Generally, data on the employment rate is collected and analysed in most countries, and it is considered a chief indicator of the economic health of that country. Unemployment in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS) is a big issue, just like an elephant. We are more focused on unimportant and irrelevant issues, but we are not paying attention on increasing unemployment growth rate in LIS. The fact is that there are very few opportunities available in the field of LIS. We may simply imagine the drastic situation by a simple calculation that if we have only 100 vacancies or jobs in our country and more than 20 times, that is, 2,000 students are enrolled in LIS courses. We assume that all the positions are filled, so when these 100 people retire, only new ones may get the job opportunity. Too many librarians, too few positions; the supply outweighs the demand.

So the question arises why are the job opportunities and demand not coming in the field of LIS? For the following reasons, we may answer the above questions:

- Shrinking budgets for education and libraries.
- Government is not focusing on library services and development.
- No planning for new job openings in school libraries.
- Library legislation is a victim of red tapism culture.
- Library professionals are categorised as non-teaching staff so there is no regulatory/affiliating body focusing on the importance of LIS professionals in the academic institutes while affiliating the organisation.
- Worthless Library Professional Associations.
- There is no recruitment in degree colleges since last 30 years in some big states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Odisha.
- Rapid growth of distance education in LIS.
- Failure of public library movement in our country.

* TGT - Library, Kendriya Vidyalaya OEF, Hazratpur, Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh, India. Email: nkpagra@gmail.com

- Government is recruiting library personnel on contract and part-time basis.

Review of Related Literature

As per the article published by Andy (2011) over his library blog, "if we observe that there's a very simple explanation as to why use of ICT, Open Source Software, e-publishing and metadata get more blog space as opposed to the issue of high unemployment within the profession: the former is a bit more interesting than the latter. In fact, I would say that the latter is actually a boring topic. It is boring in the unique way that mathematical facts can be boring for it boils down to an elementary matter of supply and demand".

Kumar Bharat (2010), has undertaken a research work on *Employability of Library and Information Science Graduates: Competencies Expected Versus Taught - ACase Study*. "The paper discusses the employability of LIS students and competencies expected versus those taught. The scholar recommends the necessity for communication skills and library software skills in LIS education in India."

Another research work has been carried out by Jeevan (2003) on *Job Prospects in Library & Information Science: A Study of Vacancies Notified in the Employment News from 1998 to 2001*. "He traces the various jobs posted/advertised by the major employers - the central/state government and/or its allied institutions and private sectors and nature of jobs such as the required entry levels for career development, required experience, age, skill, etc."

As per the study by Tadasad, PG (2015), indicates that "LIS job market has numerous opportunity of jobs. There are number of new designation are also emerging in LIS field. Further he said that LIS schools have to design programs to enhance the employability of these professionals, in the light of brightening the image of the profession, and the present LIS education offered. Issues like curriculum, job market, employer's expectations, infrastructure, input characteristics, choice based credit system, faculty, collaboration, learning outcomes, career and counselling guidance cells have been examined to enhance the employability of LIS professional."

Asundi, A Y and Karisiddappa, C R (2007) studied that "it is suggested that India has the best suited curriculum with orientation to technology applications but curriculum in LIS field must be revised as per the need of the job and skills of the related field from time to time."

Kundu, Dipak Kumar (2015), "investigates the LIS field is more focusing towards ICT applications and all job aspirants must equip those ICT skills. The nature of the LIS profession is changing rapidly as technologies emerge and as information becomes more of a marketable commodity."

As per the study conducted by Yadav (2021), "he analysed the data of vacancies published in Employment News for LIS professional from 2016 to 2020. He analysed that in public sector academic and school libraries are the top employers of library science professionals. One of the most frequent demands of employers is profession-related work experience. Author analysed the various post like permanent vacancies, deputation, temporary in various institutions."

According to an article published by Micheal Hoon (2017) in 'USA Today' on the Topic '8 Jobs that would not exist in 2030', "the article discusses that due to emergence of www and e-publications, the librarianship is a dying breed and it will no longer have its significance in next ten years. LIS field is transforming rapidly and Librarians and library students are leading this transformation."

As per the study notes of NIOS (2020), "the library is considered as core department of any academic institutes. When most of the users of libraries are asked, 'What does the job of a librarian involve?' The probable answer would be finding or issuing library books or locating information on request. This is because many people's experience of librarians is of the frontline user service staff. Behind the scenes there are teams of library professionals working to make this happen."

Faulkner, Ash E (2018), investigates that "the change is the law of nature and there is no industry in the world which in not changing according the need and challenges and libraries and librarianship are no exception. All the library professionals should know latest trends and keep updated themselves in the subject to grab more job opportunity in near future".

Objective of the Study

The objective of the present study is to find out the latest trends in jobs, job opportunities and the LIS course's output. There are main objectives of the present study as under:

- To assess intake capacity of LIS courses in India at various levels like certificate, diploma, bachelor, masters and research.

- To know unemployment ratio in the field of LIS in India.

- Find out number of universities and institutions offering LIS education in India.

- The study aims to create the statistics of the job on various aspects and asses the demand for the library professionals in recent times.

- To assess and examine the demand of government jobs opportunities.

- To study year wise available job opportunities in various sectors of LIS field.

- To know the sector wise and post wise fresh job openings per year for LIS students.

- To know the availability of deputation and temporary vacancies advertised in the specified period.

- To study the changing trends of government employment opportunities for LIS Professionals on most diversified technological environment.

- To promote and conduct research into the causes of unemployment, strategies for employment and re-composition of the workforce.

Need of the Study

Employment is very important part of economic, social and environmental development processes of any country, and it is a very serious topic of concern now for thinkers. Employment enables people to improve their living standards; it also makes constructive use of human resources. An employed person not only plays a significant role in financial support and development of his or her family members but also contributes to the nation-building process.

Unemployment always leaves its mark on people. This affects both the well-being and the health of those who are affected. In the growing environment of information, the role of LIS professionals is changing day by day, but job opportunities are not increasing in this field. Though there are various job opportunities in this field, it is not possible for all LIS students to get a job in this sector. There is an urgent need to know the job requirements in the field of LIS to attract young and energetic professionals in the field.

Methodology

The required data for present study is taken from the following authentic sources:

- Data about number of jobs or vacancies is retrieved from weekly "Employment News" and "LIS Portal". These two are the most prominent and leading sources of job information and advertisement.

- All the advertisements are scanned for library position requirements, cadre, sector and job descriptions are studied, and analysis is made accordingly.

- The present study focuses on the government job published at national and state level for the period from January 2018 to December 2022.

- Data about UGC NET qualified candidates in LIS subject is obtained from UGC office from 2012 to 2021.

- Data about the LIS courses and universities/institutes/colleges is taken from number of authentic websites and research articles.

- Temporary vacancies, ad-hoc appointment, contractual post and daily wages post are categorised under temporary vacancies. To avoid duplication and any unidentified error in data collection, the data tabulated with the help of MS Excel. The data collected, tabulated and represented through tables and charts in a meaningful order.

Library Science Education in India

The development of subjects is not static. Development is found in almost every subject. In LIS, there is no such exception. Expansion and development of the subject depend on the course of study and research on the subject. Initially, the course of the study started with the need to

help the library system. The first school for library science was founded by Melvil Dewey at Columbia University in 1887. In India, the most significant achievement in the library movement was in 1911 in Baroda. Sir Sayaji Rao - III, the enlightened ruler of the state had visited UK and USA. He was struck by the social good flowing from their nationwide public library system. As a result, he established a grid of public library systems in his state. He availed himself of the services of US born library expert W. A. Borden and the first training course in library science in India was established at the Central Library, Baroda in 1911 by W. A. Borden. After this, Punjab University in 1915 by A. D. Dickinson started a certificate course in library science. But the first systematic training programme started in India was at Madras University in 1931, under the leadership of Dr SR Ranganathan. Later on, this course was upgraded to a full-fledged one-year postgraduate diploma course in 1937. Gradually, other universities and library associations started setting up library schools. At present, there are a number of universities offering LIS courses.

Universities Offering Regular LIS Courses in India

There are over 80 government university departments in India that offer regular/full-time LIS courses, including C.Lib, D.Lib, B.Lib.I.Sc, M.Lib.I.Sc, M.Phil., and Ph.D. In addition, there are two Sanskrit universities, namely KS Darbhanga Sanskrit University in Darbhanga and Sampuranand Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya in Banaras,

that offer Pustakalaya Vigyan Shastri (nine months) and Granthalaya Vigyan Shastri (One-year) courses, respectively.

Apart from government institutions, there are approximately 17 institutions that offer LIS courses in open and distant modes, such as Indira Gandhi National Open University in New Delhi. Additionally, there are more than 45 private universities and institutions in India that also offer LIS courses.

Study of Total Output of LIS Students

It is clearly observed that numerous institutes and organisations are offering LIS education in regular and distance modes. It is found that more than 80 government institutions, 45 private universities and 15 open universities are conducting bachelor, masters and Ph.D. courses in LIS. In addition to that there are approximately 65 institutes and LIS associations offering regular courses in LIS of 3–6 month durations known as C. Lib (Certificate in Library). More than 60 institutes, polytechnics and degree colleges are also offering regular D.Lib. & I.Sc. (diploma) courses of one-year duration after 12th class.

It is observed that approximately 18,000 students usually enrolled themselves in LIS courses at different levels per year. The total output of students passing data from these universities and institutions and numbers of UGC NET qualified candidates in a year may be observe as per following tables (Table 1 and 2):

Table 1: **LIS Courses Offered by Various Academic Institutions**

Sr. No.	Type of Institutes	Library and Information Science Courses						Total Number of Students Passing per Year
		Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor	Master	Ph.D.	PGDLN and Other Courses	
1	Government Universities	0	15	80	74	47	2	
2	Private Universities	5	18	40	40	30	3	
3	Open & Distance Learning	2	5	15	15	5	1	
4	Polytechnics & Others	65	60	2	2	0	0	
Total Institutes		72	98	137	131	82	6	
4	Average Intake (Admissions) per institute in One Year	40	40	50	30	5	20	
Output or Passing Out Youth from LIS Schools		2880	3920	6850	3930	410	120	18110
Percentage (%)		15.90	21.64	37.82	21.70	2.260	00.68	100

It is observed that 6,850 (37.82%) students passing bachelor's degree, 3,930 (21.70%) students passing master's degree followed by diploma students 3,920 (21.64%) per year. A total of 2,880 (15.90%) students are registering themselves in certificate courses while only 120 (0.68%) candidates doing online and advance courses in LIS. A significant number of candidates (410 i.e., 2.26%) also registered for Ph.D. degree in LIS per year.

Data reveals that average 1,233 students are qualifying UGC NET in LIS every year.

Table 2: **UGC NET Qualified Candidates in Library and Information Science Per Year**

Sr. No.	Year	UGC NET Qualified Students
1	2012	2279
2	2013	848
3	2014	1362
4	2015	1177
5	2016	507
6	2017	1021
7	2018	1848
8	2019	2114
9	2020	642
10	2021	540
Total		12338

Source: UGC.

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Advertised Employment

Data collected from various source publishing employment information viz "Employment News and LIS Portal". Information collected tabulated and presented in meaningful order.

Period and Size of Data Used for Study

After scanning all the published advertisements, it is observed that there a total of 7,197 jobs advertised in the field of LIS. Data tabulated in Table 3 clearly indicates that 1,792 (24.90%) jobs were created in 2019, followed by 1,712 (23.79%) jobs in 2022. Total of 1,605 (22.30%), 1,155 (16.05%) and 933 (12.96%) jobs advertised in 2021, 2018 and 2020, respectively.

A total of 591 deputation vacancies and 512 temporary vacancies were also advertised during the period from 2018 to 2022, but these vacancies are not open to fresh recruiters. The present study focuses only permanent vacancies available as fresh job opportunities for youth. only permanent vacancies were also available as fresh job opportunities for youth.

The growth rate trend shows that total job opportunity has increased up to 64.63% since 2018 in 2022, but the impact of COVID and Lockdown on vacancies clearly observed in the year 2020 because Table 3 indicates the sharp -19.23% downfall noticed in 2020. The year 2018, assumed as the foundation hence, the percentage of growth this year was assumed as zero, compared to the next five years' time span in the research.

Table 3: **Vacancies Advertised during 2018 – 2022**

Sr. No.	Year	Breakup of Vacancies As Per Different Types					
		Permanent	%	Deputation	%	Temporary	%
1	2018	919	15.08	90	15.23	146	28.52
2	2019	1507	24.73	169	28.60	116	22.66
3	2020	663	10.88	137	23.18	133	25.98
4	2021	1386	22.74	124	20.98	95	18.55
5	2022	1619	26.57	71	12.01	22	4.30
Total		6094	100.00	591	100.00	512	100.00

A significant eight year study (2012–2019) conducted by Prof. M.P. Singh and O.P. Saini (2020) about the job opportunities in Indian Academic Libraries found that total 2,048 vacancies were advertised for recruitment between 2013 and 2017. If we compare all the vacancies available from recruitment from 2013 to 2022 with the

total output of students passing from LIS institutes, it is found that only 5.05% of students have job opportunities in public sector (Table 4). It is found that the ratio of students acquiring library and information degrees to their employability is 19:1 (approx.). Therefore, the ratio indicates a huge gap between the entities.

Table 4: Employability in LIS Field

Sr. No.	Tentative Output from LIS Institutes (2013 – 2022)	Tentative Number of Vacancies Available for Fresh Recruitments (2013 – 2022)	Percentage (%)
1.	161200	8142	5.05

Sector Wise Vacancy Details

As per the content analysis (Table 5), it is found that school education is the major area of job creation in the LIS field. Total 2,677 (43.93%) vacancies were advertised in the school education, followed by vacancies in higher education 2,089 (34.28%). Technical education has 386 (6.33%), public libraries 155 (2.54%), R & D 128 (2.10%), medical and health sector has 100 (1.64%) and courts (Supreme Court, High Courts and District Courts) have 36 (0.59%) vacancies during five-year duration. UPSC, SSC and various state agencies recruited 442 (7.25%) fresh LIS professionals for various posts. Loksabha, Rajyasabha, State Assemblies, Banks, PSUs and other public sectors and departments have scarcely any vacancies for fresh LIS professionals.

Table 5: Sector Wise Vacancies Advertised

Type of Institute	Year					Total Vacancies	Percentage (%)
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022		
School Education	65	779	197	751	885	2677	43.93
Higher Education	504	457	194	490	444	2089	34.28
Technical Education	67	86	74	90	69	386	6.33
Research & Development	19	27	16	26	40	128	2.10
Medical	29	30	19	5	17	100	1.64
Public Serving Departments	17	5	3	2	9	36	0.59
UPSC/SSC	154	83	81	13	111	442	7.25
Public Libraries	19	29	71	1	35	155	2.54
Courts	19	6	2	6	3	36	0.59
Secretariat	18	2	3	0	5	28	0.46
Banks/PSU/Others	8	3	3	2	1	17	0.28
Total	919	1507	663	1386	1619	6094	100.00

Minimum Qualification for LIS Job's

After analysing the data in Table 6 clearly indicates that 3,374 (55.37%) jobs advertised for B.Lib. & I.Sc. qualified candidates and 947 (15.54%) vacancies required NET/Ph.D. as minimum qualification for the recruitment. The certificate and diploma level of qualifications demanded in 1,038 (17.03%) vacancies, however, the PG level qualification required for just 237 (3.89%) vacant positions.

A total of 498 (8.17%) vacancies found advertised for the recruitment of university librarian, deputy librarian, professor, associate professor, directors, chief librarian, library manager, assistant registrar (library), etc. could not be considered fresh recruitment because these are promotional and departmental avenues that are not open to fresh LIS job aspirants.

Table 6: **Qualification Wise Breakup of Vacancies**

| Sr. No. | Year | Minimum Qualification for Recruitment Demanded | | | | | Total |
		C. Lib/ D. Lib	B. Lib & I. Sc.	M. Lib & I. Sc.	UGC NET/ Ph. D.	Promotion/ Departmental	
1	2018	288	139	38	353	101	919
2	2019	240	968	59	116	124	1507
3	2020	159	336	40	55	73	663
4	2021	181	922	69	103	111	1386
5	2022	170	1009	31	320	89	1619
Total		1038	3374	237	947	498	6094
Percentage		17.03	55.37	3.89	15.54	8.17	100.00

Findings and Suggestions

- According to available data for intake capacity at various levels, viz. certificate, diploma, UG, PG, research and number of students who are passing out, it is found that the number of jobs advertised in LIS is very low when compared with the availability of job opportunities in LIS profession.

- It is observed in the study that out of 28 states and 8 union territories, only three states, namely Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Punjab is recruiting library professionals in degree colleges, while other states are not advertising fresh vacancies in higher education in their concerned states.

- All the distance courses in LIS profession offered by various open universities and colleges are diluting the LIS profession and big cause of increasing a huge crowd of unemployment. Most of the students are joining these courses to make a shortcut path for getting jobs, but unfortunately end up unemployed or paid very low salary.

- LIS courses should be banned through distance education similar to B.Ed., B.P. Ed, M.Ed. and M.P.Ed. courses to improve the quality of the profession.

- We should consider the fact that the open and distance learning of LIS courses are meant for working LIS professionals to get promotion and career advancement and not for direct recruitments.

- It is the duty of library associations and senior LIS professional who are representing in various national level committees that open and distance courses should be restricted, so that crowd of unemployed youth may be restricted and the exploitation of LIS professional may be stopped.

- In the present ICT era young LIS professionals should sharpen their skills and they should be acquainting themselves with the recent trends in the LIS field to grab the job opportunities.

- Our professional unions should raise our voice at the national and state level platform and should make dialogue and communication with the government representatives by fixing meetings, sending demands and the reminders.

- Trained LIS professionals are not getting the job. Government is not planning for the development of the libraries so the job opportunities are reducing day by day.

- Private universities are offering the LIS courses at large scales which have surely diluted the reputation of the professionals' because they are distributing degrees in very lenient manner for earning money.

- It is highly shocking that approximately 1,650 students qualifying NET and Ph.D. per year but only 5.07% of them are able to get jobs in higher, technical and other research institutes. It is suggested that numbers of posts should be increased in teaching positions so that fresh NET and Ph.D. degree holders may get job opportunity in LIS.

- At present 19 Indian states have been passed the library legislation in their states, but the conditions of the public libraries are more pitiable than earlier. Only 155 vacancies advertised in all over India during last five years, it is high time and alarming bell for policymakers, senior LIS professionals and all national & state level library professional associations. It is also observed that majority of the

vacancies in public libraries appeared only from two states viz. Kerala and West Bengal.

- In school education only, Punjab State School Board, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Navodaya Vidyalaya, Rajasthan State and Delhi State Education Boards are the major recruiters for the fresh appointments in the school segment.

- It is a serious matter of concern that no librarian post is sanctioned in all over the country except above-mentioned five states/organisations. It is very shocking fact that majority states do not have libraries in the schools and exaggerated to implement NEP 2020. There is also no assistant/MTS post is sanctioned in School libraries.

- Professional associations in India like ILA, IASLIC, SLA and State Library Associations should maintain a record of library jobs generated in the country and number of qualified unemployed youth in LIS. This is the high time for professional bodies to take unemployment issue very seriously.

Limitations

There are some limitations of the present study enumerated as follows:

- M.Phil. is not included in this study because it was introduced in 1977 and this degree was considered as entry-level qualification for the appointment of professor and librarians in the colleges and universities but now UGC is going to scrap the degree very soon and it will not be taken into consideration for appointments, so it has no relevance.

- The study is only based on the advertisement published in employment sources, and there is no assurance that the post for which the recruitment notice was published, has also been filled. There are more than 2% of vacancies whose advertisements have been published so many times, but no recruitment is made for those vacancies.

- In present study, an average 16,120 students, measured as total students passing per year from LIS institutes are used.

- In the study, an average students passing from various institutes and universities per year is taken as identical for each institution.

- Details of candidates who qualified State level Eligibility Tests (SLET/ SET) could not be included due to non-availability of required data.

- The advertisement published in local/regional newspapers may not be included due to non-accessibly of information.

- Library Attendant, Book Lifer, Book Binder, Shelving Assistant, Book Keeper and Group D posts of library profession is counted under the category 'MTS' and C. Lib. considered the minimum qualification for fresh appointment.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that unemployment rate is very low in the LIS subject compared to other teaching posts like health and physical education, music painting and languages. Present study observed that the growth in LIS jobs is not very significant. The growth of jobs is very slow and steady during last decade. All the distance courses in LIS profession are getting diluted the LIS profession and big cause of increasing a huge crowd of unemployment. Some problems may be solved by making a regulatory body that can monitor the syllabus, intake capacity, infrastructure for existing and emerging institutions offering LIS courses. Deep sleep and bow down policy of LIS professional association is also responsible for increasing crowd of unemployed youth in the profession. The future trends are also indicating for the continuation decline of the job opportunities in the library sector in India. It is assumed that the achieving a job in LIS field in Indian scenario is going to be very tough and more challenging for the job seekers in near future.

Therefore, the ratio indicates a huge gap between course intake and job vacancies. The study may be an eye opener for the policymaker to take necessary steps for betterment of LIS profession.

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