

# M. Phil. Programmes in Library and Information Science: A Status Report and Proposal for Specialised Programmes

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## Abstract

*The paper surveys M. Phil., programmes in library and information science offered by different universities of India along with the curriculum followed by some of them. The paper stresses the need for revamped M. Phil. curriculum on the lines of similar programmes offered in few other disciplines in the country. It voices concern for specialised M.Phil. programmes and presents an outline for the same. The curriculum development exercises in the country largely still concentrate on BLIS and MLIS leaving very few sources regarding M. Phil., which a researcher can bank on. The data pertaining to the study was collected from various sites on the Internet, though relied to a large extent on the official website of the institution concerned when it is available. The study also attempted to compare the curriculum adopted by these universities. Based on this, the study suggests specialised programmes to undertake an effective M. Phil. programme which shall prepare LIS professionals abreast of the recent developments in frontier areas. Ph.D. degree is out of bounds for many professionals due to the large number of aspirants, limited number of guides, lack of on the job options for undertaking the course, longer time involved coupled with unpredictability of progress and completion. Hence, the authors from their experience and knowledge recommends that, M.Phil. programmes need a makeover in a developing country like ours to train library and information professionals in research and data analysis skills in less time which may turn out to be future investments for their career with advanced theoretical as well as practical state of the art in a professional field of current active interest. Moreover, the authors suggest that, there, there may also be options for evening programmes, part time programmes and distance learning programmes to target the vast number of working professionals. This is better done than said by more studies in this much neglected area of library science education in the country for its revamped adaptation by our universities with strong interest and active departments in library science.*

**Keywords:** Library Science Education, M.Phil. Programme, Curriculum Design, Specialised course

## **Introduction**

Though India has a long and rich tradition of imparting education, yet the very concept of M. Phil. programme is comparatively a new entrant in the arena of higher education. The credit to start M. Phil. programme goes to the pioneering initiative of Dr. R. K. Singh, the first Vice-Chancellor of Meerut University, when in 1969 he introduced M. Phil. programmes in Education, Psychology, Agriculture Botany, Sociology, Mathematics, Botany and Physics in the Institute of Advanced Studies of the University<sup>1</sup>. The programme was primarily meant for professing prospective college teachers. Himachal Pradesh University started M. Phil. programme in Education in 1972 on trial basis. The very next year (1973) M.

Phil. programme was launched in the Faculties of Science, Arts, Commerce and Business Administration. In those days there was no provision for dissertation work; rather the students of M. Phil. programme were to develop a 'research proposal'. During the period from 1976 to 1980, research proposal was replaced by a full-fledged Dissertation work.

Published sources fall short to ascertain the genesis of M. Phil. programme. It appears that this programme has found adoption from the success of such short research programme in countries like UK. In the beginning of expansion of higher education in the post independence era in the country, there was a difficulty for finding research guides as well as research students and hence M.Phil., provided the right demand-supply mix to provide persons with some research exposure quickly to fill up the vast number of teaching positions in universities and colleges.

The University Grants Commission (UGC), the apex regulator for university and higher education in the country holds a National Eligibility Test (NET) for Junior Research Fellowship and eligibility for Lectureship. This test also standardised the quality of graduates who

pursued the same course in the different universities. Due to the seriousness of the questions and intensity of evaluation procedure, it has been found that few aspirants clear this test. The typical higher education students who are comfortable with passing university examinations found this eliminating sort of competitive test of utmost difficulty. Few years back due to the huge backlog of vacant teaching positions in universities and colleges, UGC declared exemption from NET for M. Phil. holders. Many candidates thus opted for this route of pursuing M. Phil., to land in a teaching job or other positions seeking NET as the minimum criterion. Seeing the huge market, some universities started offering M. Phil., through the distance mode. They have also sensed the huge demand for the programme in Library and Information Science (LIS) and it was reported in newspaper that one university collected more fees for the programme in LIS than the programme in all other disciplines combined. One university then told "the most-sought-after course in our university is the one-year Master of Philosophy in Library and Information Science" (The Hindu, 2002) and the Directorate of Distant Education's (DDE's) 'M.Phil. programme in Library and Information Science is in big demand' (Subramanian, 2004). Due to the prompt action taken by the state government, the programme is now discontinued. Though this short period of activity was a disaster and not very academic; no doubt, it has provided many professionals with one more degree, that of M. Phil., in LIS.

Since Ph. D. programme is time taking and require research guides who are available in limited number with further restrictions on the number of candidates a person can guide at one time, enrolment rate at Ph. D. programme in different universities was not significant. Moreover to get oneself absorbed in different libraries, bachelor or master degree in Library and Information Science (LIS) was sufficient. So a glaring gap was visible between master degree and Ph. D. in LIS. As new opportunities are

emerging, the criteria for selecting Library & Information Science professionals are getting tough and in this respect having some advanced degree, if not Ph. D., seem to be advantageous. This has recently encouraged LIS students to give a second thought to pursue a programme like M. Phil. in LIS. Moreover, sanctioning of two advance increments for entry level academic positions in universities resulting in a pay hike is obviously another boost. Currently the popularity of the programme is varied with only very few universities offering the same. The second part of the paper surveys the different M. Phil. programmes offered by different universities in the country. The third part illustrates the curriculum followed by some of these universities. The next part discusses the need for M. Phil. Programmes with specialisation in frontier areas to improve its utility and functionality for library professionals.

### **M. Phil. programme in LIS in India**

Department of Library and Information Science, University of Delhi is the first university to start M.Phil. Programme in Library and Information Science in the year 1978<sup>4</sup>. M. Phil. in Library and Information Science programme seems to be a country specific post-masters programme. A number of universities throughout the country offer this programme to the LIS professionals who have completed their Master of Library and Information Science (M. LISc.) programme successfully. But it was not a popular course in comparison to one year Bachelor of Library and Information Science (B. LISc.) after graduation in any subject or one/two year M. LISc. Respectively after B. LISc./graduation in any subject. In order to investigate the India specific nature of M. Phil. in LIS, T. D. Wilson's exhaustive World list of schools and departments of information science, information management and related disciplines was consulted<sup>1</sup>. Since the list is so exhaustive, it is beyond the scope of this study to visit every country and browse through various LIS programmes offered by

different universities in the respective country. Traditionally, Indian education system has always been more influenced by the British and North American system of education. So, it is prudent to compare post-masters programme in LIS in Britain and USA with M. Phil. in LIS in India. It has been noticed that not a single US university is offering M. Phil. programme in LIS. The type of programmes being offered by the US universities are like Master of Library and Information Studies, Master's Degree in Information Resources and Library Science, Master of Science in Library Science, Doctoral and Post- Doctoral programme<sup>2</sup> but no MPhil programme. While browsing through LIS Programmes offered at different British Universities, it was found that only five British Universities are offering M. Phil. programme in LIS—University of Wales, Aberystwyth<sup>4</sup>, University of Sheffield<sup>5</sup>, London Metropolitan University<sup>6</sup> and University of Salford<sup>7</sup>, and London School of Economics<sup>8</sup>.

Table 1 presents an overview of the M. Phil. programmes in LIS offered by different universities of India. The data pertaining to this table was collected from various sites on the Internet, though relied to a large extent on the official website of the institution concerned when one is available. Though every effort was made to collect the current data, it is not clear whether the programmes are only at the proposal stage or still operational or discontinued at least in some cases due to the absence of sufficient information on the website. Out of 31 universities, 9 universities started M. Phil. programme in 90s and 8 universities in 2000s. Admission procedures also are not uniform in all the universities: learners are selected through entrance test by 13 universities, through entrance test and viva by 5 universities and on the basis of merit by 6 universities.

MPhil programme duration varies from university to university. Out of 31 universities, 13 universities are offering the programme with

one year duration. Six universities are offering the programme either full time for one year or part time for two years duration. Further, only three universities are offering 1 ½ year MPhil programme and four universities are offering this programme with two years' duration.

There are only two universities offering the programme in the distance mode: B. R. Ambedkar Open University, the first Open University in India which played the pioneering

role in spreading distance education in the country. Kalyani University is also conducting the programme in open and distance mode.

The recent trend after explosive growth of LIS education through distance mode is the start of LIS department and programmes by private deemed to be universities. Swami Vivekananda Subharti University, Meerut is one of the private universities offering MPhil programme in LIS.

Table 1. Universities offering M. Phil. programme in LIS  
(FT= Full Time; PT= Part Time; NA= Not Available)

SL. No.	Name & address of the University	Duration	Mode of admission	Year of establishment of LIS School	Inaugural year of MPhil Programme	Intake capacity
1	Aligarh Muslim University, Department of Library & Information Science, Aligarh 202002	1 year	entrance test	1950-51	1990-91	NA
2	Andhra University, College of Arts & Commerce. Department of Library & Information Science, Visakhapatnam 530003	1 year	entrance test	1935	1990	Depends on vacancy position
3	College of Arts & Social Sciences, Department of Library & Information Science, Osmania University Campus. Hyderabad 500007	1 year	entrance test	1959	1993-94	NA
4	Department of Library & Information Science, Gujarat Vidyapith Library, Gujarat Vidyapith, PO Navjivan, Ashram Road, Ahmedabad 380014	1 year/ 2 year	entrance test	1965	NA	NA
5	Department of PG Studies and Research in Library and Information Science. Gulbarga University. Gulbarga, Karnataka-585106	1 year FT 2 year PT	On the basis of merit	1979-80	NA	1FT+1PT per guide
6	Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Department of Library and Information Science. Anantapur. Andhra Pradesh-515003	1 ½ year	entrance test	1982	1990s	NA
7	Sri Venkateswara University. Tirupati-517502	1 year	entrance test	1974	1996-97	NA

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8	University of Calcutta., Kolkata-700073	1 year	entrance test and viva	1945	2003	15
9	University of Delhi. South campus, Benito Juarez Marg, New Delhi-110007	1year	interview	1946	1978	12
10	University of Kashmir. University campus, Hazratbal, Srinagar-190006	1 year-FT 2 year-PT	entrance test	NA	NA	NA
11	University of Kerala. Thiruvananthapuram. Kerala	NA	On the basis of merit	1961	1998	NA
12	Vikram University. Ujjain-456010	NA	On the basis of merit	1957	NA	10
13	Burdwan University. Rajbati, Bardhaman - 713 104, West Bengal	2 year	entrance test and viva	NA	2007-08	15
14	Kalyani University. Kalyani, Nadia, West Bengal-741235	2years	Distance mode	1992	2008	NA
15	Sambalpur University. Jyoti Vihar, Orissa-768019	1year	entrance test and viva	1976	1994	5
16	Mizoram University. Aizawl - 796009	2 year	entrance test and viva	2002-03	2007	5
17	B.R.Ambedkar Open University. Road No:46-Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad-500033	1 ½ year	NA	NA	NA	NA
18	Dravidian University,Kuppam KUPPAM - 517 425	Regular/ Part time	entrance test	NA	NA	15
19	Swami Vivekananda Subharti University. Meerut	1 year	entrance test	2002	NA	NA
20	Department of Library and Information Science. Jayakar Library, University of Pune, Pune 411007	NA	entrance test and viva	1978	NA	NA
21	Bundelkhand University, Kanpur Road , Jhansi 284 128, Uttar Pradesh	1 year	Direct admission	NA	NA	24
22	Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Indore	1 ½ year	entrance test	1964	2009-10	20
23	Mother Teresa Women's University. Kodaikanal-624102	1year	NA	NA	NA	NA

24	Sardar Patel University. Vallabh Vidyanagar - 388 120Gujarat.	2 years	On the basis of merit	1982	1991-92	20
25	Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University,.Raipur- 492010 (Chhatisgarh)	1year	On the basis of merit	1971	2003-04	10
26	Yashawantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University. Nashik. (Rajarshi Shahu Mahavidyalaya, Latur)	NA	NA	NA	2006-07	30
27	Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli	1 year FT 2	entrance test and viva-	2007	NA	NA
28	Karnataka University, Dharwad-580003	1year	entrance test	1962	NA	20
29	Kuvempu University. Gnana Sahyadri, Shankaraghatta - 577 451, Shimoga Distt. Karnataka	1year FT 2 year PT	entrance test	1993	1993	On the basis of vacancy notification
30	University of Calicut. Calicut University P.O., Kerala- 673 635	1year	entrance test	1985	2004-05	5
31	Solapur University, Maharashtra	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

### Curriculum structure of M. Phil. programme of different Universities

The study attempted to compare the curriculum (refer Table 2) followed by these universities. But there was difficulty in collecting this information from Internet. It is evident from the table that only thirteen universities have posted curriculum details of M. Phil. Programme in Library and Information Science on their respective websites. Only five universities are offering the programme in semester mode. Eight universities evaluate student's performance on the basis of marks obtained and three universities follow the

grading system. Delhi University and Sardar Patel University have not mentioned student's performance parameters.

A close study of table 2 shows that there are some common papers such as a paper on 'research methodology' and the components of dissertation and viva in M. Phil. curriculum in almost all the universities. Eight universities have adopted marks system in their evaluation strategy while one university follows credit system and another one follows grade system. Five universities are offering the programme in semester mode. Distribution of marks, grades or credits are also not uniform.

Table 2. Comparative study of MPhil curriculum of selected Universities

Sl. No.	Name of the University	Part/Group/Component/Course/Semester	Papers/Courses	Marks/Grade / Credit
1	Delhi University	Part-I	Course-I: Research Methods Course-II: Library Planning and Management Course-III: University and College Library System or Research and Technical Library System or Public Library System or Information Processing and Organisation or Information Transfer and Dissemination or Comparative Librarianship or Education for Library and Information Science	NA
		Part-II	Dissertation	
2	Kashmir University	Component A	1. Research Methodology 2. Specialization Course related to the area of research	200 marks
		Component B	1. Dissertation 2. Viva-Voce	200 marks
3	Pune University	Group-I	Paper-I : Research Methodology Paper-II : Advances in Library Management Paper-III: Currents Trends in Library & Information Science	36 Grade
		Group-II	Dissertation Seminar Viva-Voce	24 Grade 6 Grade 6 Grade
4	Sardar Patel University	Semester	Paper-I: Information Sources Services and Management of Information System	NA
			Paper-II : Information Technology Application	
			Paper-III: Research Methodology	
			Paper-IV: Dissertation	
5	Burdwan University	Semester-I	Paper-I Group-A: Research Methodology Group-B: Digital Information Resources on Library and Information Science Term end paper + Seminar	150 marks
		Semester-II	Paper-II Optional-I: Digital Library System Optional-II: Information Management and Knowledge Management Term end paper + Seminar	150 marks
		Semester-III	Paper-III: Dissertation + Viva	200 marks
6	Solapur University, Maharashtra	-----	Paper-I Research Methodology	100 marks
			Paper-II Advances in Library Management	100 marks
			Paper-III Recent Trends in Library and Information Science	100 marks
			Paper-IV Dissertation and Viva-Voce	100 marks
7	Aligarh Muslim University	-----	Paper-I	100 marks
			Paper-II	100 marks
			Dissertation	200 marks
			Viva-Voce	100 marks
8	Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University	-----	1. Research techniques 2. Management and Planning 3. Information Technology Practical 4. Project Report	NA
9	Karnataka University	Part-I	Paper-I Research Methodology	100 marks
			Paper-II Area of Study of the candidate	100 marks
		Part-II	Dissertation + Viva-voce	200 marks

Sl. No.	Name of the University	Part/Group/Component/Course/Semester	Papers/Courses	Marks/Grade / Credit
10	Kuvempu University	Course-I	Research Methodology	100 marks
		Course-II	Cognate Subject	100 marks
		Course-III	Field of specialisation	100 marks
			Dissertation + Viva Voce	300 marks
11	Devi Ahilya University	Semester-I	1.Library & Information Centres: Current Management Practices 2.Research Methodology: theory 3.Library Automation and Networking Elective Paper A: Information Transfer and Dissemination B: Public Library System C:Agricultural Library and Information System Comprehensive Viva	22 Credit
		Semester-II	Information Technology: Application Research Methodology: Techniques Information Technology Practices Comprehensive viva	21 Credit
		Semester-III	Seminar and Assignments Dissertation Comprehensive viva	17 Credit
12	Bharathidasan University	Semester-I	Course-I(Research Methodology) Course-II(Related to the area of Research) Course-III(Topic of Research) Course-IV(Elective) (Continuous Internal Assessment + Final Examination)	400 marks/16 credit
		Semester-II	Dissertation(Thesis + Viva-voce)	200 marks/8 credit
13	Bundelkhand University	Semester-I	1.Recent trends in Library and Information Science 2.Research methods in Library and Information Science	200 marks
		Semester-II	Dissertation work	200 marks

It is thus clear that wide variation exist among course structure which calls for the need of a common curriculum as is practiced for BLIS and MLIS by different universities. There should be more emphasis on information technology components as libraries are increasingly dependent on these technologies for effective library organisation and efficient information services and those areas which have practical implications in library work. The programme may also equip the learners with research as well as statistical and data analysis skills.

#### **A proposed model for specialisation in M. Phil. in library and information science**

It is very much evident from table 1 and 2 that the M. Phil. curriculum in Library and Information Science of different Indian

universities are much diverse. There seems to be no uniform and effective guidelines regarding the syllabus. Though there is a national level accreditation body, National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) functions under the UGC, there is no controlling parent body like CILIP in the United Kingdom or ALA in the United States which maintains uniformity and healthy practices in issues pertaining to LIS education in India. So this effort to demonstrate a model would ease the confusion of students as well as the authorities in different universities to undertake an effective M. Phil. programme which will keep LIS professionals abreast of the recent developments in their field and related areas. Based on this model, instead of starting from the scratch, necessary changes required locally can be brought into practice from time to time to

respond to the rapidly changing needs of the profession.

The discussion so far is pointing towards an immediate need of having a uniform model curriculum for M. Phil. Programme in Library and Information Science which will be comprehensive and up-to-date enough to touch upon traditional and modern areas. This would facilitate those universities which are already offering M. Phil. Programme to compare their existing curriculum

and bring about necessary changes if required and plan specialisations in other required areas. Those universities which are thinking to start M. Phil. Programme can have a ready reference of a model for specialised curriculum.

Basing M. Phil. programme offered by premier institutions in the country, not necessarily in LIS, it is proposed here the following two core papers and two electives apart from a comprehensive viva and dissertation work:

Course Code	Course Title	Credits
PLIS-001	Research Methodology	4
PLIS -002	Analytical Skills for Research	6
PLIS-003	Elective Paper Theory	6
PLIS -004	Elective Paper Practice	4
PLIS-005	Comprehensive viva for all theory	3
PLIS -006	Dissertation	12
	Total Credits	35

The purpose of the first paper “Research Methodology” is to introduce the process of research and its different manifestations so that the learner is in a position to judge to what sort of research techniques and tools may be adopted to resolve a problem in hand. The paper also familiarizes the learner with other important aspects such as data collection methods and data analysis. The learner may also get an opportunity to learn how to report about research in the form of reports, articles, reviews etc.

The objective of the second paper is to acquaint the learners to the different qualitative and quantitative tools which better assist them in analysing and interpreting data.

Third and fourth papers deal with specialisation. Here an attempt is made to introduce advances not covered in MLIS in a specialised area of current interest theoretically as well as giving sufficient practical exposure

on the same. Some of the proposed electives or special papers are library automation and database development, ICT applications in libraries, Web based library systems and services, digital libraries, e-resource management and library consortia, open access and institutional repositories, application of cloud computing in libraries, etc

. Any university, so interested, can add more electives on these lines. It is advisable to stick to just one or a minimum number of specialisations in a particular university to give better justice to the courses selected. The third paper attempts to introduce the learner to the state of art in this area.

The fourth paper seeks to provide as much hands on and practical exposure to the learners on theoretical aspects detailed in the third paper. Some hands-on experience of use of any one or two of statistical software

packages such as SPSS, Statgraphics, STATISTICA, PSPP, SOFA Statistics, WinIDAMS may also be provided as practical component of the second paper also as part of this paper.

There may be a comprehensive viva based on all the theoretical papers as is practiced by the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) for their M. Tech. course as the fifth paper.

The sixth paper is the dissertation work based on theoretical or practical research work on a chosen subject, preferably different facets of papers 3 and 4, undertaken by the learner as per the guidance of a specialist in the field. Dissertation report must be submitted in both hard as well as soft copy so that these can be electronically archived in the Institutional Repositories for the benefit of research scholars and library professionals of India and abroad.

The electronic archiving also helps to comprehensively review the dissertation topics time to time to ascertain new areas for dissertation which could be assigned to the future batches of M. Phil. students. The dissertation report shall be evaluated followed by a viva-voce.

**Programme delivery:** As far as programme delivery is concerned, the pedagogy and instruction won't take place only in the classroom but also through study, examination and observation added with visits to large academic and research libraries with digital facilities. Apart from regular teachers attached to the University Departments of Library & Information Science, practitioners, librarians and experts in related areas may also be involved with the teaching and research activities related to the programme.

**Programme evaluation:** All the courses may not rely only on the term end examination whether adopted semester wise or annual plan as 20% of weightage would be given to class participation and interactivity, 20% for

assignments and the remaining 60% for the term end examination. This would help to assess the learners on a continuous basis.

## **Conclusion**

A need was felt by the LIS community with the progress of computer and communication technology in ever increasing pace to introduce LIS students to these technologies through an advanced programme. M. Phil. Programmes must dynamically emerge to effectively fill into this. It is true that the exemption granted to M. Phil., holders from UGC NET for recruitment to Lecturer (or Assistant Professor) and Assistant Librarian/ College Librarian positions in universities/ colleges was withdrawn, but the programme of M.Phil., still offers certain benefits to library professionals. Though there may be aberrations in implementation, there is no doubt that a one year M. Phil. programme definitely offers certain virtues to developing countries with limited research infrastructure. It acquaints learners with data analysis skills and helps them to acquire a research bent of mind in less time. If the specialised courses as visualised in the paper gets implemented, they may also get a chance to learn the state of the art in frontier areas of the discipline, both theoretically and with sufficient hands on practice. This may no doubt instil in them the self learning attitude very much required in a service oriented discipline continuously challenged by new technologies. They may also receive few additional increments in pay on acquiring the M. Phil. degree when joining a job as per the existing rules. Many library professionals cannot afford the luxury to complete research degree and join the profession. For those who take up a job after MLIS, if M. Phil. programmes are available in many universities, they can opt for this programme which helps them to learn research and data analysis in less time which may turn out to be future investments for their career. All teaching departments of LIS

may hence initiate steps for both Full Time and Part Time programmes in M. Phil. There shall be at least one university in each State of India offering this programme for the benefit of interested professionals in the region. There may also be options for evening programmes or part time programmes so that working professionals can join the programme without jeopardising their job. Universities like IGNOU have successfully demonstrated that professional programmes can be successfully offered through distance mode without sacrificing quality. There is no doubt that to reach out to a large number of working professionals spread over a vast geographical area with uneven infrastructure and diverse development paradigms, credible programmes for M. Phil. in library and information science through distance education would always help.

**Notes :**

1. <http://dlis.du.ac.in/landmarks.html>
2. <http://informationr.net/wl/>

3. <http://informationr.net/wl/USA.html>
4. <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/postgrad/postgraduate-courses/researchcourses/infostudies/mphil-phd/#d.en.51704>
5. [http://www.shef.ac.uk/is/research/phd\\_mphil/index.html](http://www.shef.ac.uk/is/research/phd_mphil/index.html)
6. <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/pgprospectus/research/study.cfm>
7. <http://www.iris.salford.ac.uk/iris/m/?s=7>
8. <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/informationSystems/PhDProgramme/Default.htm>

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