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Study on library and information science research

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Abstract

The present paper has attempted to highlight published research in Library and Information Science discipline contributed by LIS researchers in India during the last four decades. Topics on this page include definitions of research, research terminology, the philosophy of research approaches, and research ethics. Links to other resources are included. Yet many of the methods, techniques, and tenets of basic research are relevant for applied research, and a person conducting applied research should benefit from a solid understanding of basic research methods. The study also deals with historical and developmental changes in the field of library and information science. It also focuses on the recent research trends due to emergence and use of Information and Communication Technology in the library as well as allied fields.

Keywords: Applied research, library and information science research, information and communication

Introduction

Library science education is professional education. The training for library and information professionals is essential for effective functioning of the libraries and information centres in a country. Library education is professional education. Its purpose is to develop manpower for running library institutions at different levels. General acceptance that research satisfies these requirements only came in the decades around 1800. Medicine is a typical example of a profession, and some of its practitioners were famous researchers long before that time. Similarly, surveying was a well-regarded profession in North America from the early days of European settlement, and some of its members contributed to early American research. However, in virtually all these cases, the research was regarded as ancillary to their work, rather than as an essential component of it. Even in the academic world, though a number of professors or fellows of colleges contributed to research, the main justification for their posts was teaching.

It is a continuous process. Research is the movement from known to unknown. Research comprises defining and redefining problems, formulating hypothesis or suggested solutions; collecting, organizing and evaluating data; making deductions and reaching conclusions; Research is an important activity of human life. It is necessary for the growth of knowledge. Development of the society takes place due to research.

Fundamental Research

Hill way defines research as “a method of study by which through the careful and exhaustive investigation of all the ascertainable evidence bearing upon the definable problem, we reach a solution to the problem” “Quantitative research methods involve a problem-solving approach that is highly structured in nature and that relies on the quantification of concepts, where possible, for purposes of measurement and evaluation.” Qualitative research methods focus on observing events from the perspective of those involved and attempt to understand why individuals behave as they do. They take a more natural approach to the resolution of research problems. Some research projects utilize both quantitative and qualitative research methods to study and report behaviors and events

Research is not merely an inquiry; it is actually a scientific inquiry. It is carried out scientifically or critically. It represents studious, exhaustive and diligent investigation. Research aims at seeking knowledge. It endeavours to discover new facts or principles.

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Research in Field of Library

According to Dr. S. R. Ranganathan “the term research represents a critical and exhaustive investigation to discover new facts to interpret them in the light of known ideas, theories in the light of the newly discovered facts to apply the conclusion to practical purpose”

Goldhor, in his text on library research, categorized library literature with regard to research as including: one, a relatively small body of published research as defined in the narrow sense; two, a larger amount of published and unpublished services studies.

Tendency of research in library

A 1984 issue of *Library Trends* was devoted to research in librarianship, and it reviewed research as related to the history of library and information science, economics of libraries, political science, sociology, psychology of information use, organization theory, public administration, and operations research. This work thus provided a categorization of library research in terms of both methodology and subject knowledge.

Information Retrieval System and ICT Era; Metadata Harvesting Techniques in Digital Repository; Metadata Harvesting/Z 39.50 in Library Software; Semantic Web; Library Technology e. g. Barcode, RFID, Smart Card etc.; Information Literacy; RTI; E-Governance; Search Engine; Intellectual Property Rights/Copyright Issues in Digital Era; Open Source Software Use and Management; Data Mining; Information needs Assessment/Information Seeking Behaviour Assessment/Community Information Service; Bibliometric/Webometric Analysis; Data Warehouse; Library Consortia for e-Resources

The librarian could elect to conduct an experiment during which a particular type of library instruction would be given, and after which the students' library skills would be post tested. Or a survey could be conducted in which students would, for example, be asked about their library use. Another characteristic of research inherent to most of the process is the necessity to deal with facts and their meanings. This activity is particularly crucial during the data collection and analysis stages. It is here that the researcher must attempt to gather information needed to solve the problem, organize it in meaningful categories, and analyze its significance. Data collected during the library instruction study could include scores on tests, attitudes toward the library, and self-perceptions of library skills.

And last, but not least, the librarian should keep in mind that this process is almost always circular in nature. The researcher's analysis and interpretation of the results of his or her study may well lead to new questions or fail to answer the original question, thereby starting the research process again. Leedy and Ormrod developed a diagram, reproduced below as Figure 1, which helps to illustrate the circular nature of research. As they state, “Every researcher soon learns that genuine research yields as many problems as it resolves”. Such is the nature of the discovery of knowledge.

Basic research of library and information science

Research in LIS in India is not deep rooted. It was Ranganathan, who lifted librarianship to the level of a science with the formulation of Five Laws of Library Science. He even graded them as Normative Principles, Fundamental Laws, Canons, Principles and Postulates.

Starting of more library schools in 1970s and 1980s resulted in the training of the students in carrying out research studies in part fulfilment of the degree of Master of Library and Information Science. According To Kunge indicates that ‘Learning to master theoretically and in practical application, the ground rules of research creates the best foundation for continuing growth in a profession.’ But perhaps even more basic to the advancement of the profession “is the need for the field to test the various myths, assumptions, rules-of-thumb, and other conventions by which it has operated for so long a time, to link concepts which have been proven through testing to be valid, and thereby establish theories indigenous to the field itself.”

Computer networks were created on national and international level for proper and effective use of information. For this, there is need of specialists and researchers who use information and communication technology. There is need of more research for growth of LIS. If we are undertaking research on large scale that will help to develop new methods, techniques, sources and new research methodologies. “Putting OUR Knowledge to Work: The Role of Research in Special Libraries, “defining library and information science research as not well developed, with fewer peer-reviewed journals and grant-funded research in comparison to other disciplines. The statement identifies ways that special librarians, researchers, and SLA can work together to contribute to the library and information profession and to build a foundation for evidence-based practice.

Future of library research

Research in LIS in India is not deep rooted. It was Ranganathan, who lifted librarianship to the level of a science with the formulation of Five Laws of Library Science. He even graded them as Normative Principles, Fundamental Laws, Canons, Principles and Postulates.

The past weaknesses of library-related research can at least partially be explained by the fact “that research in librarianship is still relatively young. Clear conceptions of the goals, objectives, and methodologies of library science research are only now beginning to be solidly formulated.”

Human Resource Management in Colleges, University, Research and Public Libraries; Total Quality Management in College, University, Research and Public Libraries; Resource Sharing among College, University, Research and Public Libraries; User's Needs/Reading Habits of Print and Non-Print Documents; Library Services to Distance Learners; Knowledge Management in Libraries; Digital Library and Virtual Library System; Institutional Repositories;

The American Library Association, a considerable number of programs and committee meetings directly deal with research and statistics. ACRL established a Research Mentoring Program to help members with various aspects of the research process. ALA's Committee on Research and Statistics is charged with promoting research to answer questions regarding library services.

The vision of the society includes: “Advancing knowledge about information, its creation, properties, and use; providing analysis of ideas, practices, and technologies; valuing theory, research, applications, and service; nurturing new perspectives, interests, and ideas; and increasing public awareness of the information sciences and technologies and their benefits to society.” It is always difficult to predict the

future, but research in LIS will probably continue to incorporate more multidisciplinary and qualitative methods.

Conclusion

Digital Library, Virtual Library, E-Library, E-databases, E-Journals etc. The concept and techniques are developed through research. Similarly in LIS research is being carried out and various concepts and ideas are being developed in LIS with the help of new trends in information and communication technology (ICT). As a result the scope for research has increased in LIS. "That the results of research in a broad spectrum of effort extending well beyond librarianship will, in large measure, determine the future directions of library services and the nature of the profession itself.

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