

Chapter 2

Pakistan Library and Information Council: A Proposal

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this chapter was to propose a Pakistan Library and Information Council (PLIC) to regulate the LIS profession and to draft the Act of the proposed PLIC. Acts of councils of other professions in Pakistan were studied for this purpose. Websites of ALA, CILIP, and ALIA were also consulted to get the idea of the working of professional bodies in the field of LIS. The proposed PLIC will be a statutory professional body set up under an Act of parliament. It will register the professionals and will establish code of conduct for their members. The council will be responsible for accreditation of professional training institutions. It will also devise and maintain standards for the professional organizations. A draft of Act of proposed PLIC is presented as an Appendix to this study for suggestions from LIS experts. It is recommended that a Committee may be formulated to review the draft before presenting it to the competent authorities.

INTRODUCTION

The history of library education in Pakistan dates back to 1915, when a training course in library science was started by Asa Don Dickinson, an American Librarian, in the University of the Pun-

jab. This was considered to be the second library school in the world, first being the “Columbia School of Library Economy” founded by Melvil Dewey in 1884. Dickinson was a student of Melvil Dewey. University of Karachi was the first, which started master level education in library science after the independence of Pakistan in 1947

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(Khurshid, 1992). Now 10 universities are offering master degree in Library and Information Science (LIS). Four universities are also offering research programs, i.e., M.Phil and PhD (Ahmed, 2007). It has been estimated that these universities are producing 300-350 graduates every year (Ameen, 2006). The total number of LIS professionals in Pakistan is not known as no such body exists to register the professionals in this field.

If Pakistani libraries are to continue to survive, grow and prosper, they must have well educated leadership. For their informational role in society, librarians must be educated in challenging and imaginative programs. Well educated librarians can be produced only by LIS departments of high quality. In order to assure that each Pakistani educational program meets modern standards of excellence, an evaluation and accreditation program must be established and carried out successfully (Harvey, 1971).

AIM

The aim of this chapter was to propose Pakistan Library and Information Council (PLIC) to regulate the Library and Information Science (LIS) profession and to present a draft Act of the proposed PLIC.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Educational accreditation is the process, which provides independent evaluation of the integrity and competence of the educational institutions according to the requirement of the applicable standards. According to Wikipedia (2009) the education accreditation “is a type of quality assurance process under which services and operations of an educational institution or program are evaluated by an external body to determine if applicable standards are met.” Accreditation is necessary to improve the quality of education, training and ser-

vices. It builds confidence of employers, enhances the credibility of the organization and promotes quality culture. It also ensures through regular surveillance the continuous improvement in the standard of education and keeps the curriculum up to date according to the needs and demands of the market. Degrees received from unaccredited organizations are not acceptable for financial aid, civil service or other employment.

In the developed countries, i.e., USA, Canada, Australia and UK following library associations are responsible for the library education standards and accreditation of LIS schools:

1. American Library Association (ALA)
2. Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA)
3. Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)

The Council of the American Library Association (ALA) has designated the Committee on Accreditation “to be responsible for the execution of the accreditation program of the ALA and to develop and formulate standards of education.” This committee has prepared standards known as “Standards for accreditation of Master’s programs in library and information studies” (ALA, 2008).

Education and Training Section of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) has formulated “Guidelines for professional library/information educational program.” These guidelines were approved by IFLA’s Professional Board in December 2000 and revised in 2003 (IFLA, 2009). To promote and improve the services provided by all kinds of library and information agencies ALIA has prepared standards “The library and information sectors: Core knowledge, skills and attributes.” CILIP does not have a separate accreditation standard, but specified the accreditation criteria in its “CILIP Accreditation instrument: Procedures for the accreditation of courses” (Enser, 2002; CILIP, 2005). Leonhardt (n.d.) mentions that American

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