Chapter 13
Is the Indian Library and Information Science Research Interdisciplinary?
A Case Study Based on the Indian Citation Index Database

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ABSTRACT

This chapter is an attempt to map the interdisciplinary nature of Indian library and information science (LIS) research. For this purpose, citation information of 28 Indian LIS journals is considered from Indian Citation Index (ICI) database. ICI is a bibliographic and citation database of research journals published from India. In order to understand the anatomical pattern of citations, social networking software UCINET is used to map the citation network. The result shows that self-citations (about 23%) are the prevalent pattern of citations among Indian LIS journals. Beside this, citation pattern at large is confined to the subject of LIS (about 93%) area. Further, the analysis also shows that about 7% of articles are cited from non-LIS journals. However, citations of non-LIS fields are from a closely related field, for example, general science and technology, computer science, and so on. Thus, it can be concluded that Indian LIS research does not show true interdisciplinary nature.

INTRODUCTION

Library and Information Science (LIS) as a subject is highly interdisciplinary in nature. Since the institutionalization of the subject as a scholarly field, it has undergone many changes in its comparatively short history (Prebor 2010). It has evolved dynamically and does not confine only to traditional aspects of LIS, like the collection, storage, retrieval, transmission, use and diffusion of information (Palmer 2010).. The area has grown tremendously, encompassing many other subject areas of Science, Social Science and even Humanities (Aharony 2011). Saracevic, (1999) defines information science as "...is a field devoted to scientific inquiry and professional practice addressing the problems of effective communication of knowledge and knowledge records among humans in the context of social, institutional and individual uses of and needs for information. in addressing these problems of particular interest is taking as much advantage as possible of the modern information technology". Further, Saracevic (1999) categorize the subject with three general but distinct characteristics. Firstly, the LIS is interdisciplinary in nature. The field has very dynamic relations with another universe of knowledge, and this relation is gradually but steadily changing. Secondly, the information science field is closely associated with information technology (IT). With the evolution of IT, particularly the Web technologies have a tremendous consequence on the various aspects of the LIS field. Thirdly, this field is an active ingredient in the onset of the information. Further, Information science has a strong social and human dimension, which is above and beyond technology (Saracevic 1999). With these unique characteristics, Information science of today is not only of the 'explicit paradigm' of the study of the selecting, gathering, organizing, accessing and retrieving information that is the usual description of the field but also has many 'unarticulated, but important, elements' which are "below the water line" (Bates 1999).

With this brief background, this study attempts to gauge the interdisciplinary nature of the LIS research in India. The interdisciplinary nature of the LIS research is captured in this study through examining the citations received by the Indian LIS journals for a period 2004 to 2018 (15 years) from Indian Citation Index (ICI) database. The chapter is divided into the following sections. Section 1 deal with the introduction of this study. Section 2 is the background literature review section discusses the interdisciplinary nature of the LIS field in the international context. Section 3 is research questions; Section 4 is objectives of the study; Section 5 discusses the methodology and limitations of the study. Section 6 deals with the major findings. Section 7 deals with the results along with the major findings of the study. Finally, concluding remarks, discusses policy issues and further research.

BACKGROUND

Abundant literatures are available which deals with the interdisciplinary nature of the LIS subject. Many studies have defined the field and inspect the links, relations of the subject with the other universe of knowledge. Empirical observations tried to map other fields' influence on library science. Some scholars have defined overlapping boundaries between the information science with that of other scholarly fields. However, there are two contrasting views on the nature of the subject. Many of them had contested the interdisciplinary nature of the LIS filed. The empirical observations of 1970's to 1990s; for example, Broadus (1971) found that library science theses and dissertations had a general tendency to cite more within their own discipline rather than to other disciplines (Peritz 1981). Scholarly literature in the field had a similar experience. Earle and Vickery (1969) defined this citing phenomenon as "self-citation"(Earle

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