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Perception Analysis on Employability Skills of LIS Graduates: An Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the result of a study carried out to know the student's perception about their skill acquisition during their Master of Library and Information Science at Maharshi Dayanand University (MDU), Rohtak, Haryana. The study is being conducted as a pilot project for a major research work. To collect the data, questionnaire method containing structured as well as open ended questions was used and an academic batch of 2011-2013 at MDU Rohtak consisting of 30 students was evaluated, and it was found that majority of them are employed in different sector libraries such as public, private and special libraries associated with different institutions in the country. It was further supported by the results of the survey that majority of the student are satisfied with the skills and knowledge they obtained from the Library and Information Science (LIS) curriculum of MDU Rohtak. However, few of them were unsatisfied with the curriculum itself, often for contradictory reasons.

Keywords: - Employability, Skill, LIS Graduates

INTRODUCTION

Education is considered as the most important investments for every country, because, today's student is the future policy maker/stakeholder who is eventually going to be the building block for the national development in future. Therefore, every effort is being made by the respective authorities to make a child more productive and skillful so as ascertain the efficient workforce in future. This makes it prime duty of every educational institution in the country to get their students trained in such a way that they can cope up with upcoming changes in the society. It is required to equip them to handle multidisciplinary changes in the society instead of just getting professional competencies (Warraich, 2008). Therefore, the different educational institutions are getting involved in offering skill specific courses as per the market requirement, such as website designing, business administration, content management, leadership, etc. Library and Information Science (LIS) is also one of the skill specific professional course which are aimed to develop information workforce. At the time, when India got independence, only few universities were offering certificate in LIS. Later on Bachelor of Library & Information Science (B.Lib.I.Sc.), Master of Library & Information Science (M.Lib.I.Sc.)

courses were also introduced by some universities. But today 181 universities are offering LIS degree at various levels and multidisciplinary research has also started taking roots in LIS schools. In such a scenario where completely new breed of LIS professionals is being required by the current job market as quoted by various authorities in literature there is a need for analyzing the requirements of the present job market. And consequently, many studies have been carried out on analyzing the employers and course curriculum, but few efforts have been made at analyzing the student's perception towards their course curriculum in India. On the contraries International LIS Schools or institutions have surveyed their alumni and recent graduates, and gathered data on their employment experience, knowledge, and skills (Yadav & Singh, 2012). So as to be more effective and know their current satisfaction level. Therefore, this study is being carried out to know the perception of students regarding their course content and skill acquisition at Department of Library and Information Science at Maharshi Dayanand University (MDU), Rohtak, Haryana during their masters. As no such study was conducted previously to now the status quo. The Department of Library and Information Science, at MDU Rohtak in the year 2010 and since than 11 batches have passed out with approximately more than 50% placement as analyzed with the help of official records of the Department. This Paper aims to analyses the alumni of batch 2011-2013 as a pilot project by including 30 students.

LIS EDUCATION IN INDIA: A SCENARIO

India is one of the largest educational systems in the world and Library and Information Science is also one of the oldest Profession in India. But for understanding the clear picture of Library Profession in India, a summary of major developments as described and discussed by various eminent authors is given in tabular form below in Table 1 (such as Singh & Babbar, 2014; Garg, 2015; Debbarma, 2019; Nayak, 2016 ; Shivaraja & Suresha, 2017; Pradhan, 2015; Kumar & Sharma, 2010; Yadav & Singh, 2012).

Table 1: Historical Development of LIS Profession in India

Year	Pre-Independence Era
1911/12	First training course in Library Science was introduced by Baroda central Library by W.A Borden.
1915	In this year other student of Dewey Asa Don Dickinson (Librarian of Punjab University, Lahore Now in Pakistan) Started a three-month Training Programme for Working Librarians.
1929	In this year MALA Started a three-month duration course and Dr.S.R.Ranganathan acted as the honorary Director of this school.
1935	In this year started a certificate course by Bengal Library Association. Diploma course in library science for the first time introduced by Andhra University.
1938	University of Madras started the post graduate diploma course in Library Science in 1938.
1941	Subsequently, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) started a postgraduate diploma course in 1941.
1943	Bombay University started a part time evening course leading to Diploma in Librarianship. It was the post-graduation diploma course of two terms duration.
1945	University of Calcutta started a one-year Diploma course in librarianship and it was converted to a degree course during the latter part of 1960s.
1946/47	Delhi library school was established in this year under the faculty of arts.
Year	Post-Independence Era

1947	The Department started one-year post-graduate diploma in library science.
1948	First Diploma is awarded in library Science
1949	Master Degree Course in Library Science was Started.
1956/60	In this Year Aligarh Muslim University, M.S.University of Baroda, Nagpur University, Osmania University, Pune University and Vikram University established new library science Departments
1957	Dr.D.B. Krishna Rao awarded the Doctorate degree under the Prof. S. R. Ranganathan
1978	M.Phil. Course was started in university of Delhi
1970	“Library Science” Started getting replaced by “Library & Information Science”.
1980	Distance Education was started in many universities.
1985	Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi was established.
1990	CDS/ISIS Software Package was Launched.
1993	Curriculum Development committee was constituted under the chairmanship of Prof. P.N.Kaula
1997	79 Universities were offering bachelor degree, 67 were offering M.Lib.Sc,4 (M.Phil), 39 universities were PhD degree.

At present Library and Information Science education in India is developed as a full-fledged discipline in India. And almost all major universities are providing Bachelor's (60 State & 9 Central universities) and Master's (53 State & 8 Central universities) in Library and Information Science and most of them are also offering M.Phil (53 State & 6 Central) and Ph.D.(46 State & 14 Central universities).However only 4 university are offering D.Lib in the subject. Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, Sambalpur University, Odisha are offering D.Litt. in Library and information science field. Out of these 39 state & 10 central universities are offering 2-year integrated course in Lib. & Inf. Science Popularly known as M.Lib.Sc. And 2(Annamalai University, Annamalainagar, Calcutta University, Kolkata) State universities providing 5-year integrated M.Lib.I.Sc. Some of the statistics given below regarding universities provided LIS courses(Debbarma, 2019,Jain,2011).

Table 2: Universities Offering LIS Course in Haryana

University Name	Course Offered
Central Universities	
Central University of Haryana, Jant-Pali Villages, Mahendergarh,	M.Lib.I.Sc.(Two-year Integrated Course)
State Universities	
MDU University, Rohtak	M.Lib.I.Sc.(Two-year Integrated Course), Ph.D
KUK University, Kurukshetra	B.Lib.I.Sc, M.Lib.I.Sc, M.Phil, Ph.D
Private Universities	
Baba Mast Nath University, Rohtak	B.Lib.I.Sc, M.Lib.I.Sc, M.Phil, Ph.D.
G.D. Goenka University, Sohna Road, Gurgaon	B.Lib.I.Sc (3 year), M.Lib.I.Sc (2 year)
Om Sterling Global University, NH-52, Hisar-Chandigarh Road, Hisar	6 Month Certificate Course, B.Lib.I.Sc, M.Lib.I.Sc
SRM University, Rajiv Gandhi Education City, Sonapat	Ph.D.
Colleges	
DPG Degree College (MDU,Rohtak)	B.Lib.I.Sc
Manohar Memorial P.G College (Chaudhary Devi Lal University)	B.Lib.I.Sc

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS?

As the name implies employability is about being capable of getting and keeping the employment in a continuous way(Ali, 2016) . Although this concept is in discussion since last many year but it is still difficult to define it in a single sentence. Every student longs for it,

every educational institution strives for it, and every employer waits for it(Gerolimos, 2009).“The term employability is a set of achievements that comprise skills, understanding, attributes that make a person successful in his chosen occupation to the benefit of the workforce, the community, and the economy (Wickramasinghe & Perera, 2010).In simpler words employability is the basic skill essential for getting any type of job and doing well in workplace. According to Ameen & Warraich, (2011), It can be taught in many ways and can be divided into three broad categories, i.e., basic academic skills, higher-order thinking, and personal qualities (Andrews & Russell, 2012). According to Singh & Pinki (2009), Skill is the ability of doing any particular type of Job in a precise and qualitative way.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study is being carried out with the following objective in mind:

- to find out the status of employability of LIS Student for the Department of Library and Information Science (DLIS), Maharshi Dayanand University (MDU), Rohtak;
- to identify the skill gaps of LIS students of DLIS, MDU Rohtak;
- to analyze the perception of selected students about M. Lib.I.sc. course curriculum in terms of meeting market requirement;
- to see the relevance of course curriculum of DLIS, MDU Rohtak in the current job market;
- to suggest the possible ways to enhances student employability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies have been conducted on student’s perception about their employability skills and in majority of them employer perception has also been included to have a broader view. Some of them have studied the employability skills and course content as done by **Shivaraja & Suresha (2017)**.Where, they have analyzed the relevance of course curriculum of Karnataka University, India, in the contemporary job market. Results shows, that the LIS curriculum is up to date but it's not fulfilling the requirement of the market. Students need to develop some more skills according to the market demand. **Baruah & Hansing (2012)** also tried to find out the gap b/w the job requirements and LIS course curriculum by analyzing the revision in course curriculum of 45 different LIS departments in the country. And it seems that there is a huge gap between the LIS curriculum and the market demand in India. He also suggests the various ways to fill up this gap. These results are also supported by a study conducted by **Yadav and Singh (2012)** who commented that LIS schools are not able to provide competent workforce to the employers as indicated with results of a study carried out by them on LIS graduates of 9 different departments of central universities in India. **Pradhan (2015)** examined the employability of LIS graduates of Maharaja Sayajirao University, Vadodara where she studied the students of 10 academic years. And stressed that LIS schools should have a placement and

career counseling cells to orient the students towards contemporary needs. In her study, she concluded that employability of LIS graduates is properly depends upon good communication skill and Market oriented skills. So, LIS professionals must revamp their curriculum in such a way that it creates liaisoning between industry and LIS schools. A Study carried out by **Singh and Babber in 2014** discusses about the LIS education in India, and emphasized the importance of research skills because good research lies in quality, not in quantity and there must be one national committee or policy for maintaining the standard of research. **Singh (2013)** also suggested ways to solve the uniformity related problems in LIS and to prepare the LIS professionals to face the growing challenges of the job market. **Kumar and Sharma (2010)** discussed about the historical perspective of Library and Information Science education in India and also point out about the growth and development of the subject. They defined various phases of LIS education in India. **Varalakshmi (2007)** Presented the growth of LIS education in India and highlighted some emerging trends and market requirements. And finding of this study shows that there is a need to strengthen and rejuvenate the level of the LIS profession to adopt new strategies to improve the status of LIS education in India. **Jain, Kaur and Babbar (2007)** examined that the library schools of India have failed to develop the required knowledge and skills relating to the use of information technology among students. As a result, the graduates from the LIS departments have little competitive potential in the information Market. **Varalakshami (2006)** conducted a survey of alumni and senior LIS Professionals and analyzed employment advertisements to know the opinion and expectations of both groups. Finding shows that nowadays all the information professionals must possess survival skills. **Ali (2016)** Conducted a study about employability skills of business student at Ishik University, Iraq. For analyzing their employability skills, he used three sets of employability skills such as basic academic skill, high order thinking, and personal qualities. The finding of this study reveals that the student are adequately trained for the job market but due to the ongoing political and regional imbalance and jihad movements in the country organizations are forced to downsize. Therefore, the young people are losing their job even when they are adequately equipped. However, Ali highlighted that there is a requirement of personal integrity, initiation, and self-motivation to sustain and to gain competitive advantage over others in present scenario over and above the existing skill base. On the other hand, the adequacy of skills was rejected by the employers as they stressed for more motivated task force. **Perara and Wickramasingha (2010)** explored the Graduate, University Lecturers, and Employers in Srilanka towards LIS student's employability by an exploratory study. They defined employability from the point of view of employer's, university lecturers and graduates of the computer science field separately. Further finding of this study revealed that employability skills are influenced by the nature of respondent, i.e., gender, professions, etc. However, all the groups marked teamwork, problem-solving and self-confidence to be the most

significant skills in getting job. **Warraich and Ameen (2011)** studied the opinion of LIS Professionals in Pakistan in relation to the LIS curricula and its relevance to market needs. The finding shows that technical skills, Analytical, Capabilities, decision-making Skills, and other technologies are essential skills to enhance the employability of LIS Professionals. **Gerolimos (2009)** conducted a review study way back in 2009 where he/she illustrated 59 different skills, LIS graduates must have when they passed out by analyzing the curriculum of 49 institutions offering LIS Programme of three countries. **Singh & Pinki (2008)** analyzed that in today's environment it is necessary to learn new technologies to meet the new demands of users. Nowday's everyone has to improve their existence knowledge base according to market demand.

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of conducting this study a batch (2011-13) of 31 students from Department of Library & Information Science, MDU Rohtak was taken. Out of these 31 students 27 (87.09 %) responded. To collect the data from the students a semi-structured questionnaire consisting close as well as open ended questions was developed with the help of Google forms and the same was circulated during January 2020 to February 2020 via e-mail or WhatsApp. Various factors like demographic information along with occupational details and students perception towards their skill acquisition during M.Lib.I.Sc Programme were included in the questionnaire. The section-wise responses received are given below in the subsequent sections.

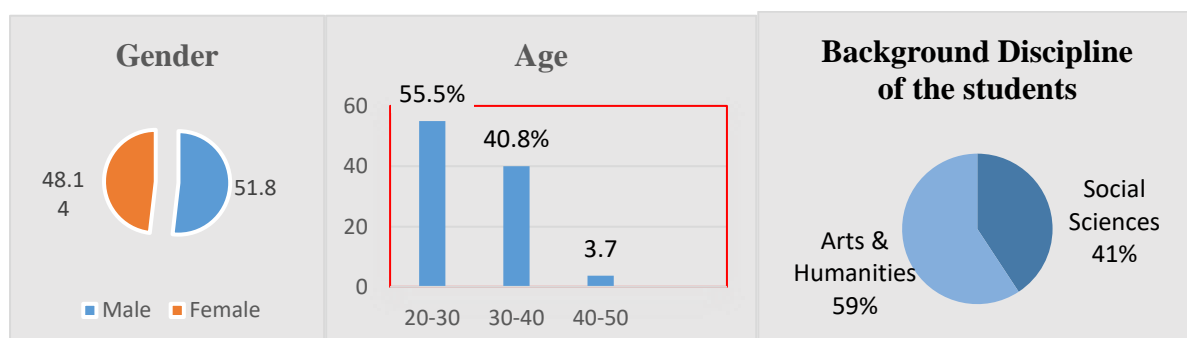
DATA ANALYSIS

The questionnaire consists two parts where part I deals with *Demographic Information* and Part II deals with *Employability Skills*. The demographic details of the user who filled up the questionnaire are as given below.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE USERS

General profile of the respondents reveals that there is no big difference between the male (51.8 %) and female (48.14 %) respondents. And majority (55.5%) of them falls under the age group of 20-30, followed by 30-40. The least (3.70%) number of respondents are from the age group of 40-50. The background discipline of 59% users remained Arts & Humanities and for rest 41 % were from Social Sciences.

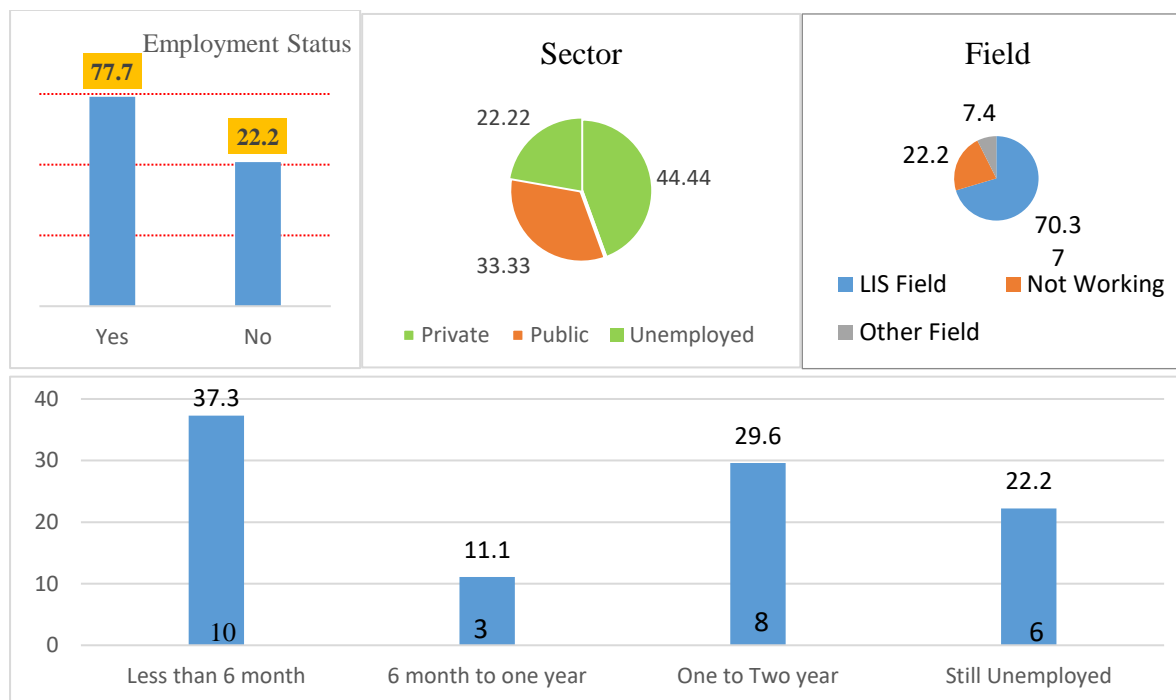
Figure 1: Demographic Information of the Respondents



EMPLOYMENT STATUS

To know the status of employment of the selected participants, a question was to know their current job status, nature of job sector and time of unemployment after doing M.Lib.I.Sc .The data received is given below :

Figure 2: Employment Status



The results reveals, that out of 27 students, 21(77.7%) were in the job and the rest of 6(22.2%) are unemployed. Further, out of 21 student, 12 (44.44 %) are working in private sector and 9(33.33%) are doing job in public sector. The analysis further reveals that 19(70.37%) students are working in the same field i.e Library and Inf. Science and 2(7.40%) are working in other fields such as Corporate jobs and clerical jobs. To further know the marketability of the course, the question arises regarding job status and results shows that 10(37.03%) students remained unemployed for less than 6 months after completing M.Lib.I.Sc. Three (11.1%) students were unemployed for 6 month to one year and 8(29.6%) took two years to get a job. Which can be considered as a mixed response.

The Second part of the questionnaire contained data about the various type of skills and the perception of the students regarding the same. For this purpose, Certain statements regarding *Professional Skills*, *Technical Skill*, *Managerial Skill* were given in the questionnaire and students were asked to give their level of agreement on five point Liker scale i.e. Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree.

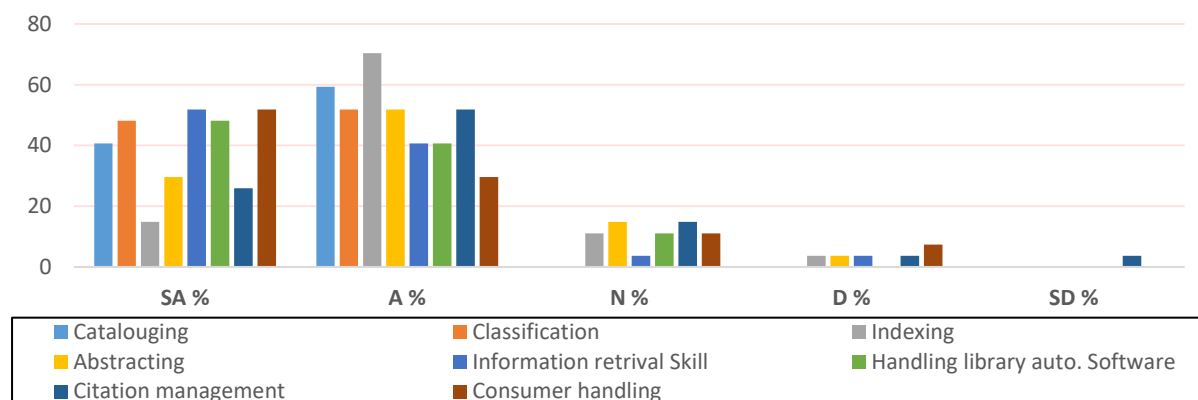
PROFESSIONAL SKILL

Professional skills are the abilities of an individual to perform their workload in an efficient way. To know the perception about professional skill acquired during their master Programme,

eleven statements were given in the questionnaire and students were asked to give their level of agreement for each statement. The data is given below in Table 3.

Table 3: Perception Regarding Professional Skill

<i>Professional Skill</i>	<i>SA%</i>	<i>A%</i>	<i>N%</i>	<i>D%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
Cataloguing	40.7	59.3	0	0	0
Classification	48.1	51.8	0	0	0
Indexing	14.8	70.4	11.1	3.7	0
Abstracting	29.6	51.8	14.8	3.7	0
Information Retrieval Skill	51.8	40.7	3.7	3.7	0
Handling Library Automation Software	48.1	40.7	11.1	0	0
Citation Management	25.9	51.8	14.8	3.7	3.7
Consumer Handling	51.8	29.6	11.1	7.4	0
Knowledge management	44.4	37	11.1	3.7	3.7
Intranet Skill	59.3	37	3.7	0	0
Digital Information Management	55.5	25.9	7.4	11.1	0



The analysis reveals that 16(59.3%) students are strongly agreed with acquisition one of the most important professional skill i.e. *Intranet Skill*. and 14(51.8%) students are strongly agree with *Consumer Handling & Information Retrieval* skills. However, 1(3.7%) remained Strongly Disagree with acquisition of *Knowledge Management and Citation Management Skills*. On the contrary 19(70.4%) were agreed with acquisition *Indexing Skill* during their M.Lib.I.sc Programme. This shows, that almost all are in agreement (either, agree or strongly agree) for majority of the professional skills during their M.Lib.I.Sc Programme.

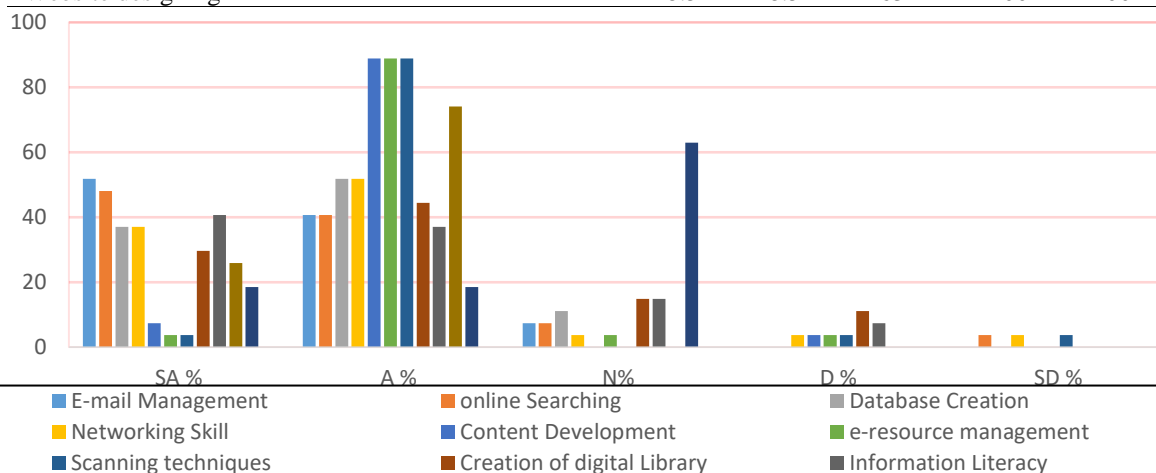
TECHNICAL SKILL

Technical skills are the abilities and knowledge needed to perform a specific task which includes specialized knowledge. To know the perception of students regarding technical skills acquired during their M.Lib.I.Sc. Programme, eleven statements were given in the questionnaire and students were asked to give their level of agreement on five point likert scale. The responses are tabulated in Table 4.

Table 4: Perception Regarding Technical Skill

<i>Technical Skills</i>	<i>SA%</i>	<i>A%</i>	<i>N%</i>	<i>D%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
E-mail management	51.8	40.7	7.4	00	00
Online Searching	48.1	40.7	7.4	00	3.7
Database Creation	37	51.8	11.1	00	00
Networking skill	37	51.8	3.7	3.7	3.7
Content development	7.4	88.9	0	3.7	00
e-resource Management	3.7	88.9	3.7	3.7	00
Scanning technique	3.7	88.9	0	3.7	3.7

Creation of digital library	29.6	44.4	14.8	11.1	00
Information literacy	40.7	37	14.8	7.4	00
Using office like word excel etc.	25.9	74.1	00	00	00
Website designing	18.5	18.5	63	00	00



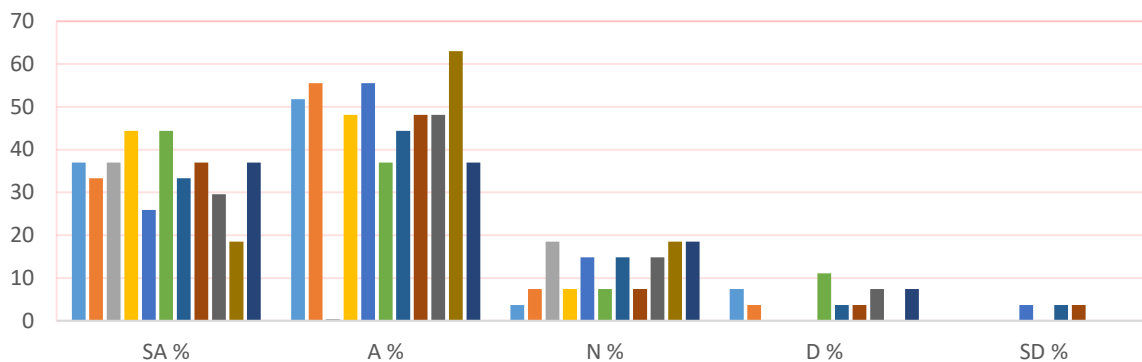
The analysis on the above Table 4, reveals that 14(51.8%) students in strong agreement with acquisition of *E-mail Management Skills* during their master’s degree programme, followed by 11 (40.7%) who are strongly agree with *information Literacy Skills*. However, 1(3.7%) student remained Strongly Disagree with *Online Searching, Scanning Techniques* and majority of other skill too. Which may be treated as a biased decision as majority either marked Agree or Strongly Agree for all the statements in this section. However, only one is giving Strongly Disagree Statement. The findings further reveals that the majority of the students, i.e., 24 (88.9%) are agreed to *Content Development-Resource Management and Scanning Techniques*..

MANAGERIAL SKILLS

Managerial skill can be defined as certain attributes or abilities that an executive should possess in order to fulfill specific tasks in an organization. Some selected statements were given to students to know their level of perception about managerial skills. Responses on the same are presented below in Table 5.

Table 5: Perception Regarding Managerial Skill

Managerial Skills	SA%	A%	N%	D%	SD%
Planning and organizational skills	37	51.8	3.7	7.4	00
Anal, Prob. Solving	33.3	55.5	7.4	3.7	00
Ability to work well	37	0.4	18.5	00	00
Ability to act in difficult situation	44.4	48.1	7.4	00	00
Strategic thinking	25.9	55.5	14.8	00	3.7
Leadership skills	44.4	37	7.4	11.1	00
Local and global thinking	33.3	44.4	14.8	3.7	3.7
Resource management	37	48.1	7.4	3.7	3.7
Negotiation skills	29.6	48.1	14.8	7.4	00
Accounting	18.5	63	18.5	00	00
Auditing	37	37	18.5	7.4	00



The analysis reveals that 12(44.4%) students are strongly agree with *Leadership Skills and Ability to Act in Situation* and 1(3.7%) students remained strongly disagree with *Strategic Thinking and Resources Management Skills*. Many of the students are either agree or disagree with many statements. However majority 15(55.5%) students are in agreement with *Analytical and Problem Solving Skills*.

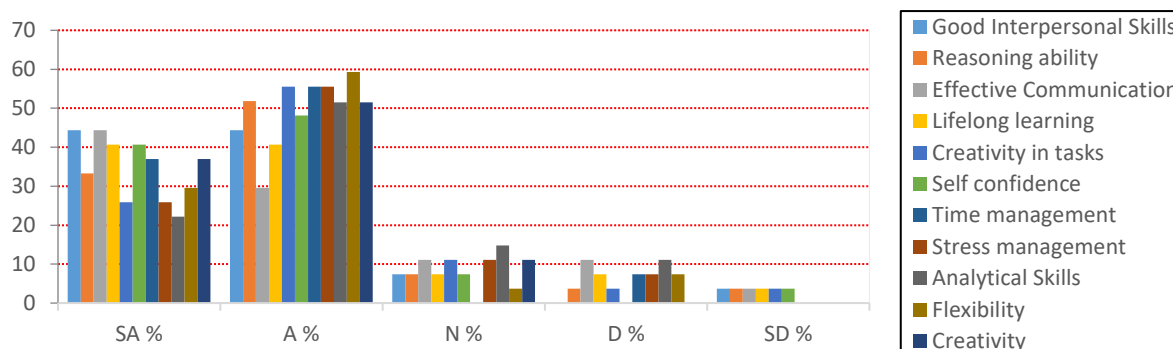
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GENERIC SKILL

As the name implies generic skills are those skills which are general in nature and fits for any type of profession whether belong to librarianship or management skills that apply to every field of profession/Knowledge.

Table 6: Perception Regarding Generic Skills

General skills	SA%	A%	N%	D%	SD%
Good interpersonal skills	44.4	44.4	7.4	00	3.7
Reasoning ability	33.3	51.8	7.4	3.7	3.7
Effective comm.	44.4	29.6	11.1	11.1	3.7
Lifelong learning	40.7	40.7	7.4	7.4	3.7
Creativity in tasks	25.9	55.5	11.1	3.7	3.7
Self confidence	40.7	48.1	7.4	0.0	3.7
Time management	37	55.5	0.0	7.4	-
Stress management	25.9	55.5	11.1	7.4	-
Analytical skills	22.2	51.5	14.8	11.1	-
Flexibility	29.6	59.3	3.7	7.4	-
Creativity	37	51.5	11.1	00	-



The analysis on the responses received shows that 44.4% students are strongly agree with *Effective Communication and Good Interpersonal Skills* followed by *Lifelong learning & Self confidence* (40.7%), *Management Creativity & Time Skill* And least 1(3.7%) of respondents are strongly disagree with *Lifelong Learning, Self Confidence, Reasoning ability* etc. Majority 16(59.3%) student are agreed with the Flexibility Skills.

COURSE CONTENT AND FACILITIES

To know about the content of the course curriculum , a set of questions was added to the questionnaire which involves questions like *Course Material, Class Environment, Adequacy of Teachers, Availability of Internship*, etc. The responses received are given below in Table 7.

Table 7: Level of Agreement of Students

<i>Level of Agreement</i>	<i>SA%</i>	<i>A%</i>	<i>N%</i>	<i>D%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
Teaching Methodology	51.8	40.7	3.7	3.7	0
No of Teachers	59.3	3.7	3.7	0	0
Class environment	63	25.9	11.1	0	0
Course Material	63	29.6	7.4	0	0
Optional course are offered	25.9	44.4	18.5	11.1	0
Status of Internet and Facilities	63	29.6	7.4	0	0
Course Content are sufficient	40.7	44.4	3.7	11.1	0
Availability of Internship	29.6	48.1	7.4	1.1	3.7

The finding on the above table reveals that the *Class Environment, Course Material and Status of Internet Facilities* are very good as indicated by majority (63%) of the students for all. However, availability of *Optional Course and Internship Availability* are the area of concern as they are agreed upon by less than 30% of students. *Sufficiency of the Course* content is also required concern as responded by only 40% of the students.

STUDENT PERCEPTION ABOUT SKILLS

At the end, open ended question was asked from the students to know the skills which they feel are very essential for survival in the current scenario. From the student's response it was found that it would have been better if *Communication Skill, Good ICT Knowledge, Stress Management and Managerial Skills* were taught during M.Lib.I.Sc course as they feel these could have increased their employability in the market.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION & SUGGESTATIONS

Library and Information Science graduates have to compete with other professionals to survive in the market. As we all know that market demand is continuously changed and in today's era, only theoretical knowledge is not enough to get a suitable job. Library and Information Science students must be aware of the latest trend to get a suitable job. From this study, we found that The Employability Skill and LIS curriculum offered at the State University of Haryana, is well-designed and up to date but it is not fully meeting the needs of LIS. LIS graduates were dissatisfied with employability skills due to a lack of implementation of Suitable employability skills in LIS curricula. The Alumni complained of weak communication, practical, and

presentation skills. Alumni say that when they go for the job they face the various problems related to their employability skills. Recruiters expect from graduates with more multidimensional and market-oriented skills. They will have to improve their communication skills, problem-solving attitude, Indexing, Classification, Cataloguing good knowledge of IT, presentation skills, etc. The data from this study provide a useful picture of the perception of students on employability skills. The results of this study show that the LIS curriculum must be well design and fulfill the market demand and include all the essential employability skills.

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