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Kaustuv Chakrabarti

University of Calcutta, kaustuvculis@gmail.com

Dhiman Mondal

Ananda Mohan College, dhiman.bon@gmail.com

Arabinda Maity Dr.

University of Calcutta, maityarabindacu@gmail.com

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A Trend Analysis of the Doctoral Dissertations in LIS Research in West Bengal, India during 1979-2018

Kaustuv Chakrabarti

Research Scholar

Dept. of Library and Information Science

University of Calcutta

87/1, College Street

Kolkata-700073 (India)

E-mail: kaustuvculis@gmail.com

Dhiman Mondal *

Librarian

Ananda Mohan College

102/1, Raja Rammohan Sarani

Kolkata-700009 (India)

E-mail: dhiman.bon@gmail.com

Dr. Arabinda Maity

Professor

Dept. of Library and Information Science

University of Calcutta

87/1, College Street

Kolkata-700073 (India)

E-mail: maityarabindacu@gmail.com

* Corresponding author: Dhiman Mondal, E-mail: dhiman.bon@gmail.com.

Abstract: The present analytical study demonstrates the present status and trend of doctoral research in Library and Information science (LIS) discipline in the Universities of West Bengal. For this purpose, the primary data have been collected from the Central Library and LIS Schools of the respective Universities. Total 230 Ph.D. theses have been awarded in LIS discipline from West Bengal for 40 years period from 1979 to 2018. The bibliographical details of the theses have been interpreted using different parameters like university, year, researcher's gender, supervisor's gender, supervision pattern, active supervisor, language and subject. A steady development has been observed till 2000 and since then the growth of LIS research is increasing significantly. The result shows that Jadavpur University produces maximum theses and the topics like '*Users' study*', '*Information seeking behaviour*' and '*Information Sources & Services*' are the apparent focus area among the scholars.

Keywords: Library and Information Science; Research; Doctoral Dissertations; Theses; West Bengal.

1. Introduction

Library and Information Science (LIS) education in India has completed 100 years in 2011. Starting with short-term trainings run for librarians to cope up with library practices, it has now become a full-fledged discipline having courses at all levels, starting from Certificate, Diploma, Bachelor, PG Diploma (PGDLAN, PGDLIM), Master, M.Phil. and Ph.D. Only two universities introduced D.Litt. Degree in LIS (Maity & Hatua, 2015) and few post-doctoral studies have also been done in the country (Sharma, 2010). Generally, the research in any domain is carried out to validate existing notions, discover new ideas and to augment the knowledge base for further expansion of a discipline (Shivalingaiah, Sheshadri & Manjunatha, 2009). According to Mittal (2011), research means of continuously developing a discipline.

The history of LIS research in India is about six decades old and in 1957 the University of Delhi awarded the first Doctoral Degree in librarianship to D. B. Krishna Rao for his work on "*Facet analysis and depth classification of Agriculture*" under the guidance of Dr. S. R. Ranganathan (Satija, 1999). Furthermore, J.S. Sharma was the first Indian to obtain doctorate from the Michigan University, USA for his thesis '*Mahatma Gandhi: A Descriptive Bibliography*' (Kumar, 1998). Presently, LIS professionals in India have concentrated on conducting research work at doctoral level in order to develop a knowledge base and theoretical framework for the profession mainly for different motivating factors like recognition, salary scale, UGC norms for career promotion etc (Mondal & Maity, 2013).

West Bengal state has the credit of launching LIS education for the first time among Eastern and North-Eastern states of India (Panigrahi, 2010). Presently, 9 universities of West Bengal have already introduced the LIS discipline to offer different level courses. Out of them, six universities have awarded 230 theses during 1979- 2018. Further, University of Gour Banga (UGB) and University of North Bengal (NBU) have recently introduced Ph.D. programme in LIS and remaining one University i.e. Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) earlier started to offer Ph.D. programme but due to UGC restriction now offers BLIS and MLIS courses only. The present study has undertaken to identify the development and trend of LIS research at doctoral level in the Universities of West Bengal. The study addresses the following research questions:

- i. How do the Ph.D. theses produce in LIS discipline over the years in West Bengal, India?
- ii. What are the most productive LIS schools in West Bengal, India?
- iii. What are the research focus areas?
- iv. Who are the leading supervisors in promoting research?
- v. What are the participation patterns of researchers?

2. Early LIS research in West Bengal

The genesis and development of LIS research in West Bengal was started from the University of Calcutta in 1979 when the first doctoral degree awarded in librarianship to Dr. Tarun Kumar Mitra for his work on "*Contribution of Rajsekhar to the development of subject classification*" (Mondal

& Maity, 2013). Later on, in 1980 the University of Calcutta also awarded the second doctoral degree to Dr. Indranaryan Sengupta for his thesis on “*Recent directions of growth of biomedical knowledge: an analytical study based on observed changes in the scientific impact of serial publications*” (Mondal & Maity, 2013).

However, during 1950s to 1980s, due to non-availability of research supervisors, some doctorate degrees on library related topics were earned by West Bengal library professionals under the guidance of faculties belonging to the social science disciplines and the like. They are:

- i. Munindranath Basu: Museum method and the process of cleaning and preservation, Department of Science, University of Calcutta, Kolkata, 1950 (Kumar, 1998).
- ii. Bimal Kumar Datta: Libraries and Librarianship in ancient and medieval India, Department of History, University of Calcutta, Kolkata, 1963 (Mondal & Maity, 2013).
- iii. Pulinbihari Barua: Monastic libraries in Ancient India (as depicted in Buddhist and Jaina texts), Department of Pali, University of Calcutta, Kolkata, 1983 (Mondal & Maity, 2013).

Besides, Prof. Subal Chandra Biswas obtained his Ph.D. degree in LIS from abroad in 1989 and other LIS teachers like Prof. Bhubaneswar Chakrabarti and Prof. Pijush Kanti Mahapatra gained their doctoral degree on non-LIS topics in history and Bengali subjects respectively.

3. Literature Review

The present review of literature highlights the trend of research work in the LIS domain in India with special reference to West Bengal state. For instance,

Mahapatra & Sahoo (2004) examined 164 doctoral dissertations awarded by Indian universities during 1997-2003 and stated that the southern region states shared largest number of doctoral degrees. Further, the broad subject area, ‘*User Study*’ produced highest number of theses.

In another study, Raju (2008) analysed 633 doctoral dissertations in LIS field during 1985-2005 and stated that *Karnataka University* contributed majority of the 59 theses (20%) whereas *Jadavpur University* from West Bengal placed 10th rank with 18 theses (6.1%). Further, *Prof. C. R. Karisiddappa* supervised highest number of 30 theses.

Kumbar & Raju (2008) in a similar attempt, assessed 590 doctoral theses in LIS domain submitted to different Indian universities during 1957 to 2006 and depicted that *Karnataka* state produced maximum of 149 Ph.D. theses (25%) while *West Bengal* secured 12th position by sharing 17 theses. In addition, ‘*bibliometrics/ scientometrics*’ were the apparent area for research.

Chandrashekara & Ramasesh (2009) did an effort to quantify the research output and analyse 802 doctoral dissertations starting from the year 1957 to 2008 according to chronological growth, state wise, university-wise, topic-wise and supervisor-wise.

Madasamy & Alwarammal (2009) made an assessment of 171 Ph.D. theses in LIS discipline in India during 2003-2008 and narrated that *Andhra Pradesh* state contributed majority of the theses (15.9%) and the *Andhra University* outputted highest number (8%) of doctoral dissertations.

Singh & Babbar (2014) did a study on the growth and development of LIS research in India during 1950-2012 and pointed out that the Jiwaji University awarded majority of 97 Ph.D. theses. Besides, Karnataka state produced highest number of 224 theses (12.77%) while West Bengal occupied the 7th position with 120 theses.

Partap (2015) assessed the current research trends in library and information science (LIS) in Indian universities during 2008- 2013 in terms of the growth pattern, productivity of the universities, guideship pattern, focus research areas and zonal status etc.

Pandita & Singh (2017) evaluated 177 doctoral dissertations in the field of LIS during 2010-2014 and pointed out that *Gujarat* was the most productive state with 29 theses while *West Bengal* ranked 5th place with 12 theses. In addition, *Dr. Baba Sahib Ambedkar University, Maharashtra* awarded maximum of 17 (9.60%) doctoral degrees in LIS.

In two papers, Mondal & Maity (2013), Sarkar, Maity & Majumder (2013) explored the LIS research in West Bengal during 1979-2012 and analysed the data in terms of chronologically, university, supervision pattern and subject. Both the study confirmed that Jadavpur University awarded majority of Ph.D. theses.

In another study, Mondal & Roy (2017) depicted total 33 Ph.D. theses in LIS subject awarded from the *University of Burdwan (BU)*, West Bengal during 1984-2015 and depicted that *Prof. P.B. Barua* and *Prof. S.C. Biswas* guided highest number of 9 theses each. Furthermore, '*Mathematical analysis*' and '*Library automation*' were the favoured area for doing research.

According to Maity & Hatua (2015), LIS education in India is facing a serious threat from Computer Science and Inf. Technology and the academic interest moves from core LIS subject to IT and computer application. The study also analysed 1058 doctoral theses which were submitted in various universities in India during 1950–2012. Dora and Kumar (2019) in their study reviewed the trends of LIS research in various countries and reported that there is a similarity in LIS research trends among various countries.

The present review indicates that many bibliometric studies have been done for mapping the research trend in LIS discipline in India on the basis of secondary sources like *University News*, *Bibliography of Doctoral Dissertations*, *IndCat database*, *Shodganga* etc. But secondary sources lack authenticity and always miss significant data as this information are highly scattered in nature

spread over wide geographical areas. Hence, in this context state wise research attempt is needed to depict more complete and precise data. Keeping in mind the above fact and also to address the research gap, the present study vividly explores the state-of-the-art report of LIS research in West Bengal by using primary data to exhibit profound and comprehensive research scenario.

4. Objectives of the study

The present study highlights the trend and development of doctoral research works in LIS discipline of West Bengal. The other objectives are to

- i. ascertain university wise distribution of theses,
- ii. illustrate decade wise distribution of theses,
- iii. discover gender wise distribution of doctoral researchers and supervisors,
- iv. determine the supervision works and pattern in doctoral research,
- v. reveal most active Ph.D. supervisor,
- vi. depict language wise distribution of theses and
- vii. demonstrate subject wise distribution of Ph.D. theses

5. Methodology

The scope of the present study is restricted to the 230 Ph.D. theses awarded from the Department of Library and Information Science (DLIS) of six universities of West Bengal during the period from 1979 to 2018. The Universities are:

- i. Jadavpur University (JU)
- ii. Rabindra Bharati University (RBU)
- iii. The University of Burdwan (BU)
- iv. University of Calcutta (CU)
- v. University of Kalyani (KU) and
- vi. Vidyasagar University (VU)

The bibliographical details of the Ph.D. theses are collected from the Central Library of the six Universities of West Bengal. Later on, consultation with the faculty members and personal phone call to the research scholars/ professional colleagues of various LIS departments of the universities have also been made for authentication, cross-checking and further clarification. Furthermore, the Shodganga database of INFLIBNET has also been browsed to find out the availability of the full-text theses.

The obtained data from the above sources are recorded separately and then use MS-Excel for organization and analyse purposes to fulfill the objectives of the study.

6. Results

The bibliographical details of 230 Ph.D. theses have been categorized and interpreted in the following sections.

6.1 University wise distribution of awarded Ph. D. theses

Table 1 depicts the distribution of Ph.D. theses according to university wise. During 1979 to 2018, total 66 supervisors were involved in LIS research activities of 6 universities of West Bengal. Some of the supervisors had guided Ph.D. theses associating with more than one University and hence, their names come in more than one University category. Out of total 230 theses, maximum 18 supervisors from JU contributed highest number of 77 theses (33.48%) followed by CU with 53 theses (23%) and BU with 39 theses (17%). However, only 98 full-text theses have been available in the Shodganga database at the time of access and BU uploaded majority of 34 full text theses.

Table 1: University wise distribution of Ph.D. theses in LIS during 1979-2018

Sl. No.	University	No of Ph.D. Supervisor	No. of Theses	Percentage	Availability in Shodganga database (Aug., 2019)
1.	Jadavpur University (JU)	18	77	33.48	26
2.	Rabindra Bharati University (RBU)	02	08	3.48	05
3.	The University of Burdwan (BU)	10	39	17	34
4.	University of Calcutta (CU)	14	53	23	19
5.	University of Kalyani (KU)	08	25	11	14
6.	Vidyasagar University (VU)	14	28	12.17	00
Total =		66	230	100	98

6.2 Chronological growth of awarded Ph. D. theses

Decade-wise distribution of awarded Ph.D. theses by West Bengal Universities has been illustrated in the table 2. During 1970-79, the first Ph.D. thesis appeared from the Library Science department of CU. The current decade i.e. 2010 to 2018 produced maximum of 137 theses (59.56%) followed by the previous decade i.e. 2000-2009 with 61 theses (26.52%). The figure-1 indicates that an extreme sharp increasing trend in terms of Ph.D. theses growth has been seen in the present decade.

Table 2: Decade-wise break up of awarded Ph.D. theses in the Universities of West Bengal

Decade	Universities of West Bengal						Total Theses	Percentage
	BU	CU	JU	KU	RBU	VU		
1970-1979	-	01	-	-	-	-	01	0.43
1980-1989	02	01	-	-	-	-	03	1.30
1990-1999	08	03	12	-	-	05	28	12.17
2000-2009	09	13	24	02	02	11	61	26.52
2010-2018	20	35	41	23	06	12	137	59.56
Total=	39	53	77	25	08	28	230	100

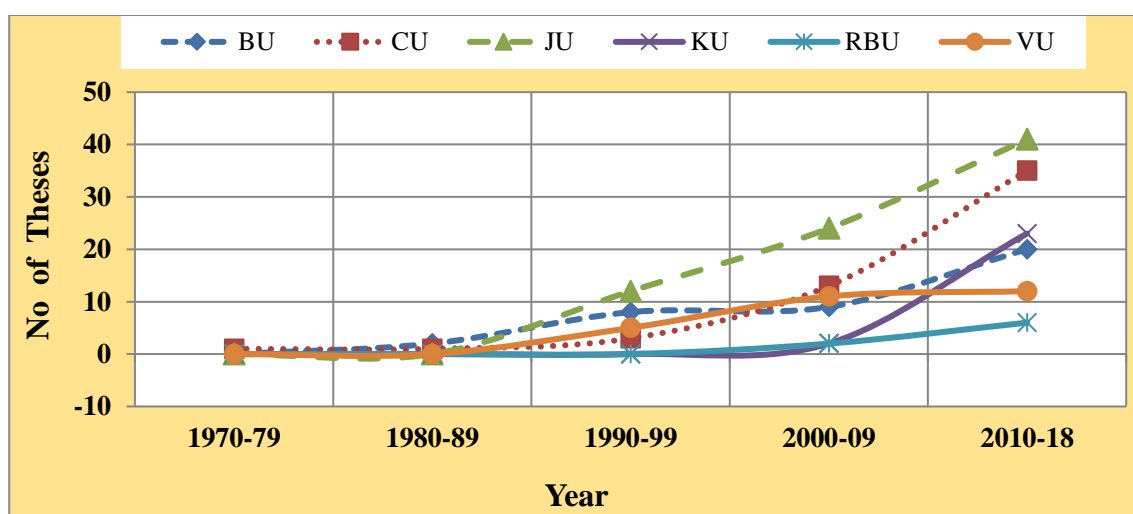


Figure 1: Growth of Ph.D. theses submitted to the Universities of West Bengal

6.3 Gender wise distribution of doctoral degree awarded researchers

Table 3 depicts the distribution of doctoral degree awarded researchers according to gender. Out of total 230 doctoral researchers, 168 (73.04%) researchers were in the male category while rest 62 (26.96%) researchers were female. Maximum proportion of 40% i.e. 10 female researchers received doctoral awards from KU followed by CU with 35.85 % share. On the other hand, highest proportion of 89.74% i.e. 35 male researchers had received doctoral award from BU followed by VU with 82.14% share.

Table 3: Distribution of doctoral researchers by gender

University	Female Researcher	%Female	Male Researcher	%Male	Total Researcher
BU	04	10.26	35	89.74	39
CU	19	35.85	34	64.15	53
JU	22	28.57	55	71.43	77
KU	10	40	15	60	25
RBU	02	25	06	75	08
VU	05	17.86	23	82.14	28
Total=	62	26.96	168	73.04	230

6.4 Gender wise contribution of research supervisors:

Table 4 presents the contribution of research supervisors according to gender. During the period from 1979 to 2018, female supervisors produced 22 theses (9.32%) while male supervisors produced 212 theses (89.83%) in doctoral research activities of LIS discipline of West Bengal. Further, JU produced majority of 70 theses by male supervisors and 10 theses by female supervisors. This is followed by CU with 44 theses by male supervisors and 7 theses by female supervisors. Few theses have been considered in both the category due to joint guideship of male and female supervisors.

Table 4: Contribution of research supervisors by gender

University	Female Supervisor	Male Supervisor	Not mentioned	Total	%
BU	00	39	-	39	16.52
CU	07	44	02	53	22.46
JU	10	70	-	80	33.9
KU	01	25	-	26	11.02
RBU	00	08	-	08	3.39
VU	04	26	-	30	12.71
Total=	22 (9.32%)	212 (89.83%)	02 (0.85%)	236 (100%)	100

6.5 Distribution of research supervisor contributing to Ph.D. work

Table 5 examines the research pattern of supervisors. Considering both principal and joint guide, total 54 supervisors were involved in guiding doctoral theses in LIS discipline in West Bengal. Of these, maximum 25 supervisors (46.3%) produced 41 theses (15.35%) in the range of 1-3 doctoral theses each followed by 15 supervisors (27.78%) with highest contribution of 71 theses (26.6%) having in the range of 4-6 theses each. It is interesting to note that only 3 supervisors (5.55%)

produced 52 theses (19.47%) having more than 12 doctoral theses each and two (02) researchers conducted their research work without any guidance from the supervisors.

Table 5: Research pattern of supervisors

No of research works	No of supervisor	%supervisor	Total no. of theses	%theses
More than 12	03	5.55	52	19.47
10-12	04	7.41	44	16.48
7-9	07	13	57	21.35
4-6	15	27.78	71	26.6
1-3	25	46.3	41	15.35
No Name	-	-	2	0.75
Total=	54	100	267	100

6.6 Supervision pattern of research works

Table 6 shows the supervision pattern of Ph.D. theses. Out of total 230 theses, 191 theses (83.04%) were supervised by single guide whereas 37 theses (16.09%) were supervised by joint guides. Apart from these, JU and VU awarded maximum number of 11 Ph.D. theses under joint supervisor followed by BU with 8 theses. The joint guideship trend encourages more interdisciplinary research works in LIS disciplines.

Table 6: Supervision pattern of theses

Supervision Pattern	West Bengal Universities						Total Ph.D. Theses	%
	BU	CU	JU	KU	RBU	VU		
Single	31	47	66	22	08	17	191	83.04
Joint	08	04	11	03	00	11	37	16.09
Not mentioned	-	02	-	-	-	-	02	0.87
Total=	39	53	77	25	08	28	230	100

6.7 Most productive supervisor

Table 7 demonstrates the leading supervisors who have guided at least 9 theses. *Prof. Biplab Chakrabarti* of University of Calcutta supervised maximum of 21 doctoral theses which include 7 female and 14 male students. This is followed by *Prof. Juran Krishna Sarkhel* of University of Kalyani with 17 theses and *Prof. Prabir Roy Choudhury* of Jadavpur University with 14 theses. The distribution of Ph.D. theses in terms of gender indicates that few most productive supervisors had maintained balance in their research supervision otherwise maximum supervisors favoured male scholars over female.

Table 7: Top 10 most productive supervisors

Sl. No.	Name of the supervisor	No. of theses		Total theses	Gender wise distribution of theses
		Supervisor	Joint-Supervisor		
1.	Dr. Biplab Chakrabarti	19	02	21	7 Female; 14 Male
2.	Dr. Juran Krishna Sarkhel	13	04	17	8 Female; 9 Male
3.	Prof. Prabir Roy Choudhury	13	01	14	3 Female; 11 Male
4.	Dr. Tridib Tripathi	10	02	12	12 Male
5.	Dr. Krishnapada Majumder	11	01	12	4 Female; 8 Male
6.	Dr. Subal Chandra Biswas	10	-	10	1 Female; 9 Male
7.	Dr. Udayan Bhattacharya	10	-	10	2 Female; 8 Male
8.	Dr. Pulin Behari Barua	08	01	09	2 Female; 7 Male
9.	Dr. Chaitali Dutta	09	-	09	5 Female; 4 Male
10.	Shri Sabuj Dasgupta	09	-	09	2 Female; 7 Male

6.8 Language wise distribution of theses

Table 8 examines the language wise distribution of Ph.D. theses. Majority of the theses i.e. 205 which account 89.13% were in English language and 25 theses (10.87%) were in Bengali language. Out of total Bengali theses, highest number of 14 theses awarded from JU followed by BU and RBU with 4 theses each. It is seen from the table that regional language is not favourable for doctoral research activities.

Table 8: Distribution of theses according to language

Sl. No.	Language	West Bengal Universities						Total theses	%theses
		BU	CU	JU	KU	RBU	VU		
1.	Bengali	04	-	14	03	04	00	25	10.87
2.	English	35	53	63	22	04	28	205	89.13
Total=		39	53	77	25	08	28	230	100

6.9 Subject wise distribution of Ph.D. theses in LIS

Table 9 sketches the top 10 most preferred topics in terms of Ph.D. theses output. The top 10 most popular topics share 174 theses (75.65%) and many theses come in more than one topic. Majority of 30 theses (13.04%) are produced in the sub-theme of 'Users' Study & Information Seeking Behaviour' followed by 'Information Sources & Services' with 27 theses (11.74%) and 'Bibliometrics/ Scientometrics/ Webometrics' with 25 theses (10.87%).

Table 9: Major topic wise distribution of theses

Sl. No.	Topics	Number of theses	Percentage
1.	Users' Study & Information Seeking Behaviour	30	13.04
2.	Information Sources & Services	27	11.74
3.	Bibliometrics/ Scientometrics/ Webometrics	25	10.87
4.	Information Storage & Retrieval Systems	19	8.26
5.	Public Library System & Legislation	16	6.95
6.	Library & Knowledge Management	15	6.52
7.	University Library	14	6.08
8.	Documentation & Bibliographical Control	10	4.35
9.	IT Application, Library Automation & Digitization	09	3.91
10.	Literature Analysis	09	3.91
Total =		174	75.65

7. Findings:

The important findings are summarized below:

- i. Six Universities of West Bengal awarded doctoral degree to 230 Ph.D. scholars in LIS discipline during 1979-2018 and Jadavpur University (JU) shared majority of 33.48% theses. The Shodhganga database is not comprehensive in coverage, as only 98 Ph.D. theses in LIS are found listed from the Universities of West Bengal.
- ii. Highest numbers of 59.56% doctoral theses were produced in the present decade of 2010-2018 followed by the previous decade i.e. 2000-2009 with 26.52% theses.
- iii. Maximum 168 researchers (73.04%) were in the male category whereas remaining 62 (26.96%) researchers were female. The University of Kalyani (KU) promotes maximum ratio of 40% female researchers while highest proportion of 89.74% male researchers received doctoral award from the University of Burdwan (BU).
- iv. Female supervisors contributed 9.32% theses whereas male supervisors produced 89.83% theses.

- v. Out of total 54 supervisors, majority of the supervisors (46.3%) guided 15.35% theses having in the range of 1-3 doctoral theses each and only 3 supervisors (5.55%) contributed more than 12 doctoral theses.
- vi. Single guide supervised maximum (83.04%) doctoral theses, while only 16.09% theses were supervised by joint guides.
- vii. *Prof. Biplab Chakrabarti* of University of Calcutta guided highest number of 21 doctoral theses followed by *Prof. Juran Krishna Sarkhel* of University of Kalyani.
- viii. Highest numbers of theses i.e. 89.13% were written in English language and only 10.87% theses were in Bengali language.
- ix. Majority of theses i.e. 13.04% produced in the area of '*Users' Study & Information Seeking Behaviour*' followed by '*Information Sources & Services*' with 11.74%.

8. Conclusion:

The research activity carried out in LIS discipline in West Bengal during the early days (1979-2000) was very dismal but after that the LIS research gains momentum and increases every year significantly. The increasing interest of research deserves direction, financial assistance and co-ordination between LIS schools and working librarians (Sarkar, Maity & Majumder, 2013). LIS schools should have always good understanding and co-operation with the central library and time to time LIS Schools should do research on a practical problem confronting to working professionals. Otherwise, research in LIS will become divorce from reality and will remain a theoretical exercise at best (Satija, 1999). Researchers are responsible for future of the profession and this is the right time to redirect their efforts towards the untouched as well as emerging problems in the field (Kannappanavar & Vijayakumar, 2000). In this perspective, the LIS schools may enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with foreign universities for exchanging ideas, enhancing skills and foster collaborative research.

Further, this accelerated growth in research scenario demands strong bibliographical control of theses to avoid duplication and also needs creation of full text databases of Ph.D. theses by the universities through cooperative efforts. It should be available in '*Shodganga*' repository of INFLIBNET, so that the remote scholars can access the research works. This will increase quality of research, stop plagiarism and avoid overlapping of research. Besides in LIS, there is the dearth of post doctoral research facility that should be provided to scholars for gaining boost in LIS research activities.

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APPENDIX

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