Role of Commissions and Committees in the Development of Library and Information Education in India

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***Abstract*—Library and Information Science (LIS) education in India has largely developed through planned interventions by national commissions and expert committees constituted by the Government of India and the University Grants Commission (UGC). These bodies have periodically reviewed the objectives, curriculum structure, professional requirements, and infrastructural needs of LIS education to align them with changing educational priorities and technological advancements. This study examines the major commissions and committees that have influenced LIS education in India, analyzes their key recommendations, and evaluates their impact on curriculum development, professional practice, and institutional growth. The study also identifies the continuing challenges in implementation and discusses future directions in the context of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.**

***Index Terms*—Library and Information Science education, UGC, NEP 2020, Commission and Committees, LIS Rules and Regulations.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Library and Information Science education in India has evolved systematically and policy-driven rather than through spontaneous academic development. Since independence, several commissions and expert committees have been constituted to examine the status of education and recommend reforms in response to national development needs. Libraries have consistently been recognized as essential support systems for higher education and research, and library and information science (LIS) education has been shaped accordingly. The recommendations of these bodies have significantly influenced curriculum frameworks, professional standards, and infrastructural development in LIS education (University Grants Commission [UGC], 1965; Karisiddappa, 2001).

II. OBJECTIVES

- To identify the major commissions and committees related to LIS education in India.
- To summarize key recommendations.
- To analyze the impact of these recommendations on LIS education and professional practice.
- To highlight the gaps in implementation and suggest future directions for LIS education.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This study was based on a documentary research method. Primary sources include official reports of the UGC Review Committee on Library Science, the Education Commission (Kothari Commission), Curriculum Development Committees of the UGC, and the National Knowledge Commission. Secondary sources included peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, and selected university syllabi. Only authoritative and credible academic sources were used to ensure the reliability and objectivity of the study.

IV. MAJOR COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES INFLUENCING LIS EDUCATION

A. UGC Review Committee on Library Science:

One of the earliest and most significant interventions in LIS education was undertaken by the UGC through its Review Committee on Library Science, chaired by S. R. Ranganathan. The Committee emphasized the establishment of independent departments of library science in universities, improvement of library infrastructure, and the need for professionally trained library personnel. Its recommendations laid the foundation for organized LIS education and professional recognition in India (UGC 1965).

B. Education Commission (Kothari Commission, 1964–1966):

The Education Commission provided a comprehensive assessment of India's education system. Although LIS education was not its exclusive focus, the Commission strongly emphasized the role of libraries as an integral part of higher education and research in India. Its recommendations for strengthening academic infrastructure indirectly supported the development of LIS education (Education Commission, 1966).

C. UGC Curriculum Development Committees:

With the emergence of information technology and changing professional expectations, the UGC constituted Curriculum Development Committees to modernize LIS education. The Committee chaired by P. N. Kaula in the early 1990s recommended standardization of course structures, integration of information technology, and improvements in faculty strength. Subsequently, a committee chaired by C. R. Karisiddappa formulated the UGC Model Curriculum in Library and Information Science (2001), which aimed to ensure uniformity across institutions while incorporating emerging areas such as digital libraries and information retrieval (UGC, 2001; Karisiddappa 2001).

D. National Knowledge Commission:

The National Knowledge Commission marked a significant shift in policy by placing libraries and LIS education within the broader framework of the national knowledge infrastructure. The Commission recommended revamping LIS education, conducting a national census of libraries, establishing a central library fund, and modernizing library services through technology and professional training. These recommendations highlight the strategic role of libraries in knowledge creation and dissemination (National Knowledge Commission, 2007).

E. Recent Developments and NEP 2020:

Recent initiatives, such as INFLIBNET, have translated several committee recommendations into practical mechanisms, particularly in the areas of networking and access to electronic resources. The National Education Policy 2020 further emphasizes interdisciplinary, digital competencies, flexibility and outcome-based education. Many LIS departments have revised their curricula to align with the NEP 2020, reflecting continuity with earlier policy recommendations.

V. MAJOR RECOMMENDATION AND OUTCOMES OF COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES ON LIS EDUCATION

Various commissions and committees constituted from the late 1940s onwards produced a wide range of recommendations aimed at strengthening Library and Information Science (LIS) education in India. Although proposed at different points in time, these recommendations reveal strong continuity and convergence around certain core themes, including professional qualifications, curriculum reform, faculty standards, infrastructure development, technological integration, and national-level coordination. The major recommendations and their outcomes are synthesized below

Committee / Commission (Year)	Constituted By / Chairperson	Key Focus / Objective	Major Recommendations / Outcomes
University Education Commission (1948)	Govt. of India/Dr. S. Radhakrishnan	Strengthening university libraries and staff qualifications	They suggested appointing qualified librarians, stating that "Universit

			y Librarian must have doctorate-level qualification" and promoted research programs in Library Science.
Library Committee (1957) (Ranganathan Committee)	UGC/Dr. S. R. Ranganathan	Development of university and college libraries	Recommended library grants (15 per student, 200 per teacher), open-access systems, union catalogues, professional status and pay parity with faculty, and establishment of full-time LIS faculty.
Advisory Committee for Libraries (1957–58) (K.P. Sinha Committee)	Ministry of Education, Korea. P. Sinha	Library development and LIS education	Encouraged research in librarianship, proposed reorganization of syllabi, UGC funding for LIS departments, and
			equal status for LIS teachers.
Review Committee on Library Science (1961)	UGC/Dr. S. R. Ranganathan	Review of LIS teaching and research standards	The study defined the objectives of LIS education, banned certificate courses at universities, proposed B.Lib and M.Lib curricula, recommended pre-admission apprenticeship, and established a staff–student ratio of 1:10 (UG) and 1:5 (PG), with along academic parity for LIS teachers.
Education Commission (1964–66) (Kothari Commission)	Govt. of India/Prof. D. S. Kothari	Reform of education and libraries in higher education	Adequate library funding (25/student, 300/teacher) was urged; no college/university without proper library;

			separate LIS teaching faculty.
Mehrotra Committee (1983)	UGC/Prof. R. C. Mehrotra	Revision of pay scales and qualifications	Suggested revised pay scales for librarians; NET qualification for LIS teachers; and encouraged professional development through workshops and seminars.
Committee on National Network System for Universities/ Libraries (1988)	Govt. of India/Prof. Yash Pal	Creation of national library network	This led to the establishment of INFLIBNET for information sharing and research networking among academic libraries.
Curriculum Development Committee (1990–93)	UGC/Prof. P. N. Kaula	Modernization of LIS curriculum	Recommended admission criteria, faculty qualifications, department infrastructure, proposed core and optional courses, full-time faculty, 25 lakh initial grant for labs/equipment, and integration of IT in teaching.
Curriculum Development Committee (2001)	UGC/ Prof. C. R. Karisiddappa	Updated LIS education for IT era	Proposed two-year integrated MLIS; modular syllabus (seven modules including IT, management, research methods); focus on digital libraries; flexibility in course structure.
National Knowledge Commission (2005–09)	Govt. of India/Dr. Sam Pitroda	Strengthening national knowledge infrastructure	Recommended the National Census of Libraries, National Mission on Libraries, and the creation of the Indian Institute of Library & Information Science (IILIS) for

			R&D and advanced training.
National Mission on Libraries (2012)	Ministry of Culture (Govt. of India)	Implementation of NKC recommendations	The following four components were established: (a) NVLI, (b) Model Libraries, (c) Library Surveys, and (d) Capacity Building: upgrading state/district libraries and networking 600+ libraries.
National Virtual Library of India (NVLI)(2012 onwards)	Ministry of Culture with IIT Bombay, C-DAC & IGNOU	Creation of digital library infrastructure	Developed multilingual, open-access digital database; virtual learning environment; e-governance and analytics; project cost 72.34 cr.

VI. RECOMMENDATION AS THEMATIC ANALYSIS

A. Professional Qualifications and Status of Librarians: One of the earliest and most consistent recommendations across commissions was to recognize librarianship as a professional and academic discipline. The University Education Commission (1948) and subsequent UGC committees strongly emphasized appointing qualified librarians to universities and colleges. It was recommended that university librarians should possess doctoral-level qualifications comparable to senior academic staff to strengthen the research orientation of libraries. Committees also advocated for pay parity and academic status for librarians and LIS teachers, aligning them with teaching faculty to enhance professional dignity and attract competent personnel

B. Curriculum Structure and Academic Programs: Several committees have focused on restructuring LIS curricula to ensure academic rigor and relevance. The Review Committee on Library Science (1961) clearly defined the objectives of LIS education and discouraged certificate-level programs at the university level. It recommended a structured B. Lib. and M. Lib. Degree programs with a balanced emphasis on theory and practice. Later, Curriculum Development Committees (1990–93; 2001) proposed modular, flexible curricula, the introduction of electives, and the adoption of a two-year integrated MLIS program. These reforms aimed to standardize LIS education while allowing institutions to address emerging specializations, such as digital libraries and information management.

C. Research Orientation and Faculty Development: Promoting research in librarianship is a recurring recommendation. Advisory and review committees encouraged research-based teaching, dissertation work at the postgraduate level, and faculty involvement in the scholarly research. To improve teaching quality, committees prescribed minimum faculty qualifications, appropriate student–teacher ratios (1:10 at the undergraduate level and 1:5 at the postgraduate level), and pre-admission apprenticeship or practical exposure to the field. Later bodies, such as the Mehrotra Committee (1983), recommended NET qualification for LIS teachers and continuous professional development through workshops, seminars and refresher programs.

D. Infrastructure Development and Financial Support: Adequate infrastructure and funding are prerequisites for effective LIS education. Early committees recommended library grants based on

student and teacher strength (15 per student and 200 per teacher, later revised to 25 per student and 300 per teacher). The Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) (1990–93) proposed initial grants of 25 lakh to establish laboratories, equipment, and computing facilities in LIS departments. These recommendations contributed to strengthening departmental infrastructure and improving access to teaching and learning resources.

E. Technology Integration and Library Networking: With the emergence of information and communication technologies, committees have increasingly stressed the integration of IT in LIS teaching and practice. The recommendations include training in library automation, database management, digital resources, and information retrieval systems. A landmark outcome of these efforts was the establishment of INFLIBNET, which facilitated information sharing, resource networking, and access to e-resources among the academic libraries. This marked a significant shift from traditional librarianship to technology-enabled information services.

F. National Knowledge Infrastructure and Policy Initiatives: The National Knowledge Commission (2005–2009) broadened the scope of LIS education by positioning libraries as central components of India's knowledge infrastructure. It recommended a National Census of Libraries, the establishment of a National Mission on Libraries, and the creation of an Indian Institute of Library and Information Science (IILIS) for advanced research and training. These recommendations led to large-scale initiatives, such as the National Virtual Library of India (NVLI), which developed a multilingual, open-access digital knowledge platform and supported virtual learning, e-governance, and analytics.

G. Capacity Building and Digital Initiatives: Recent initiatives under the National Mission on Libraries have focused on capacity building, upgrading state and district libraries, and networking more than 600 libraries across the country. The NVLI project further strengthened the digital infrastructure by creating an integrated platform for diverse knowledge resources, supported by significant public investment. These initiatives reflect a shift towards digital-first, user-centric LIS education and services, aligned with contemporary national policies, including the NEP-2020.

VII. SUMMARY OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the recommendations of various commissions and committees have contributed to the following:

- Professionalization and academic recognition of LIS education
- Standardization and modernization of curricula.
- Strengthening faculty qualifications and research culture.
- Expansion of infrastructure and financial support is also required.
- Integration of ICT and establishment of national library networks.
- Alignment of LIS education with national knowledge and digital policies.

Despite these achievements, the effectiveness of these recommendations depends largely on consistent implementation, adequate funding, and continuous monitoring at the institutional and national levels.

VIII. IMPACT AND IMPLEMENTATION: ACHIEVEMENTS AND SHORTFALLS

The recommendations of various commissions and committees have measurably influenced the structure and delivery of Library and Information Science (LIS) education in India. However, their implementation has been inconsistent across institutions.

A. Achievements

- Standardization of curricula and CDC influence: The UGC Model Curriculum for LIS (2001) and earlier Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) reports have served as important reference frameworks for several universities. These documents contributed to greater coherence in program structure and content, particularly through the inclusion of information technology, management principles, and information retrieval systems in LIS syllabi (Karisiddappa, 2001; Biswas, 2016). Several universities have revised their curricula in line

with these recommendations, reflecting partial but significant standardization.

- Infrastructure development and library networking: The establishment and subsequent strengthening of the Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) marked a major outcome of the committee's recommendations related to automation, networking, and resource sharing. INFLIBNET has facilitated access to electronic journals, union catalogues, and inter-library cooperation, thereby improving academic library services and supporting LIS training in digital environments (UGC, 1996; Singh, 2018).
- Policy recognition of libraries: The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) elevated libraries within the national policy discourse by recognizing them as essential components of the country's knowledge infrastructure. The recommendations encouraged greater governmental attention, funding, and long-term planning for library development and LIS education (National Knowledge Commission, 2007).

B. Shortfalls and Persistent Challenges

- Uneven adoption of the recommended curricula: Despite the availability of UGC model curricula, empirical studies indicate wide variations in their adoption across universities. Differences in institutional resources, faculty preparedness, and local academic autonomy have resulted in heterogeneous curricula and uneven graduate competencies (Biswas 2016; Bhui 2021).
- Skills gap and technological preparedness: Rapid technological advancements have outpaced faculty training and infrastructural capacity in many LIS departments. Several studies have highlighted deficiencies in hands-on training related to digital librarianship, data curation, and advanced information systems, particularly in smaller or resource-constrained institutions (Kaur, 2015; ERIC-based studies).
- Fragmented policy implementation: Although committees have repeatedly recommended national-level coordination, such as a national census of libraries and central funding mechanisms, the implementation of these measures has been partial and incremental. The absence of systematic monitoring and accountability mechanisms has limited the long-term impact of several policy initiatives (National Knowledge Commission, 2007; Government of India, 2012).

IX. DISCUSSION: LESSONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

A. Strengthening the policy-to-practice linkage:

The recurring recommendations across commissions indicate a strong consensus on curriculum modernization, faculty development, and library networking. However, effective implementation requires sustained funding, institutional incentives, and mechanisms to monitor curriculum adoption and the learning outcomes. Regular evaluation of LIS programs against UGC model curriculum benchmarks would improve implementation fidelity (Karisiddappa, 2001; Biswas, 2016).

B. Need for continuous professional development:

Given the rapidly evolving information environment, the emphasis placed on continuous professional development by committees remains highly relevant. Structured CPD programs, refresher courses, and MOOCs for LIS faculty and practitioners are essential to bridge the skills gap and ensure academic relevance (Kaur, 2015).

C. Alignment with national education priorities:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 reinforces many long-standing committee recommendations, particularly those related to interdisciplinary, digital competencies, and experiential learning. The explicit integration of LIS education within NEP implementation frameworks, such as competency-based curricula and flexible learning pathways, can accelerate the modernization of LIS education in India (Government of India, 2020).

X. CONCLUSION

Commissions and committees have played a crucial role in shaping Library and Information Science education in India. From the early efforts of the UGC Review Committee on Library Science to the policy interventions of the National Knowledge

Commission and the framework provided by NEP 2020, these bodies have offered clear directions for curriculum reform, professional training, and infrastructure development. However, for LIS education to effectively respond to contemporary knowledge needs, sustained implementation, continuous faculty development, adequate funding, and coordinated national efforts are essential.

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