

DOCTORAL RESEARCH IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE: A CASE STUDY OF PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

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Research is a more efficient and effective approach to expand knowledge. It is the conduct of special, planned and structured investigations. In its largest context research is a "systematic quest for knowledge" (Busha, 1978). However, defining research in professional context is difficult as it is characteristic of academic as well as professional activities. In an attempt to define research in Library and Information Science (LIS), Shaffer opined that some individuals may consider the building of a new piece of library equipment, or the designing of a new system, as being research. Such developments are inventions, not research even though they may be based on findings of research. Locating facts is not research but reference work, the formulation of a questionnaire and the tabulation of its answers are not research, although they may be a part of research process. Research is known, first, by the materials it works upon, second, by the methods it employs, and third, by the ends it seeks. It is governed by the principle of objectivity and rejects all authority except that of valid evidence (Best & Kahn, 1986).

History of Research

The roots of research in our profession are not very deep. Research in library science is a twentieth century occurrence ushered in by the library school of the University of Chicago in mid-1920s. The visionary efforts of the Chicago School bore abundant fruit and offered leadership to the world in library science research (Shera 1976, 145). The pace of library research is picking up everywhere today due to social pressure as well as inspiration. In justifying the Ph.D. programme in our profession, it has been urged that "if librarianship aspires to become a profession, it should depend upon

research to develop its knowledge base and its theoretical framework” (Wilkinson 1983, 39).

India in particular has half a century history starting from 1950's. The credit for the formal institution of doctoral degree program in LIS in India goes undeniably to Dr. S.R. Ranganathan. In 1951 he started doctoral program at the University of Delhi surmounting too many difficulties. The first Ph.D. degree was awarded in 1957 to Dr. D.B Krishna Rao for his work on Faceted Classification for Agriculture under the supervision of Dr. S.R. Ranganathan. In 1962 S.R. Ranganathan started Documentation Research and Training Center at ISI, Bangalore, and Ph.D. program was not started due to technical reasons. The second Ph.D degree in LIS was awarded in 1977 under the supervision of J.S Sharma, at Chandigarh after a gap of two decades. Thereafter there was no looking back. Many universities started Ph.D. programs mostly with individual efforts and enthusiasm (Aswath, 2009).

Punjabi University, Patiala

Punjabi University, Patiala (India) is the second university of the world to be named after language, the first being the Hebrew University, Israel. Majority of the students obtaining admission to various courses being offered by this university are from rural areas. The university campus is spread over 600 acres of land, it has a faculty of 500 teachers imparting instruction and guidance to more than 9,000 students in a multi-faceted, multi-pronged and multi-faculty environment comprising 65 Teaching and Research Departments on its Campus, five Regional Centres, six Neighbourhood Campuses and more than 175 Colleges affiliated to it. (<http://www.punjabiversity.ac.in>)

Department of Library and Information Science

The department started in 1969 with Bachelor of Library Science (BLS) course. Master of Library & Information Science (MLIS) course began w.e.f. 1986-87 sessions. It renamed BLS to BLIS course in 1986-87 sessions. Besides BLIS and MLIS the department is offering Ph. D. For Ph.D. degree department is following the UGC Rules and Regulations for minimum standards, including an entrance test, interview and a six month course work of

how to do research? Nowadays, the department has two professors, one Associate professor and three Assistant Professors.

Table 1: Faculty members of the department

Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor
1. Dr. Jagtar Singh 2. Dr. Trishanjit Kaur	1. Dr. H. P. S. Kalra	1. Dr. Kiran Kathuria 2. Ms.Navkiran Kaur 3. Dr. Baljinder Kaur

Review of Related Literature

Kumar (1998) provides statistics of doctoral research in India. The data of the doctoral research in India has been analysed chronologically, subject wise, guide wise, and university wise

Satija (1999) gives annual data on the quantitative output of LIS Ph.D. theses and ranks major Indian universities by their output. The study includes lists of the major areas of research and identifies some minor areas. The author laments the irrelevance and lack of use of research results in library schools and libraries. The study attributes this to a low quality of research work because of a mindless proliferation of programmes and a lack of co-operation and resources for research.

Satija (2010) discusses research in library and information science in India. It delves into the history of library and information science research crediting the institutionalisation of research to Ranganathan. While presenting the growth of the research, he discusses the factors responsible for poor standards.

Objectives of the study

- To find out quantum of Ph. D. Research in the department
- To check the Placement of Researchers
- To categorize all Ph. D. Research work by gender, geographic coverage and subject analysis.
- To find out the research output of research supervisor.
- To study the trends in LIS research.

Scope and Methodology of the study

The Present study deals only with the doctoral research of department of library and information science. It does not cover the MLIS dissertations of the department.

Keeping in view the above mentioned objectives, the record of the department has been consulted. Information is also obtained from university library OPAC and departmental library record. Few researchers are contacted via telephone. The data was analyzed, tabulated, interpreted and graphically presented in this paper.

Data analysis

Table 2: Total Number of Researchers (Gender wise)

Gender	Completed	Pursuing	Total	Percentage
Male	07	08	15	56
Female	06	06	12	44
Total	13	14	28	100

There are total 27 candidates who have either completed or pursuing their doctoral research from the department. Out of the total 27 researchers 13 have been awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and same number of researchers is pursuing their research on the leading edge areas of LIS. There are total 56 percent male candidates and 44 female candidates, which shows that there is not any significant difference in number of candidates on the basis of gender.

Placement of Researchers

The placement of candidates during the research period or after completing their research work. By now 81 percent of the total candidates are working in the government sector and 15 percent candidates are in private sector. In private sector also, they are doing permanent jobs on prestigious positions and are paid on par with the government sector. One candidate is working as full time researcher on Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) awarded by University Grants Commission (UGC). (Fig. 1)

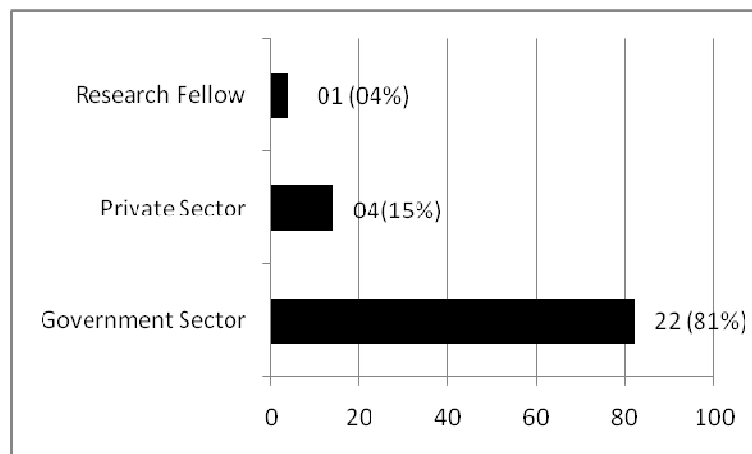


Fig 1: Placement of Researchers

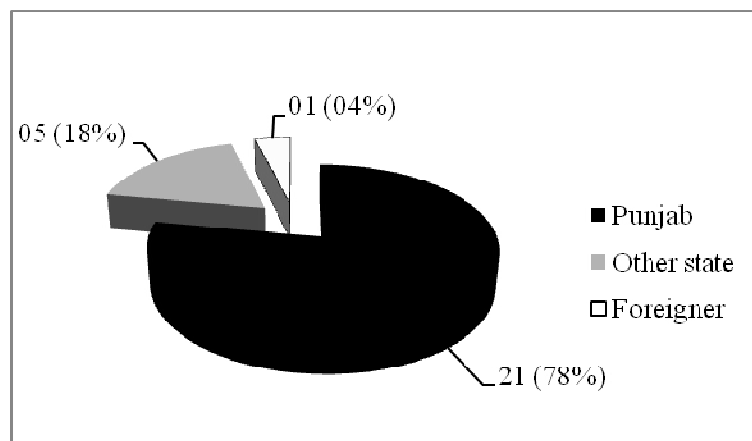
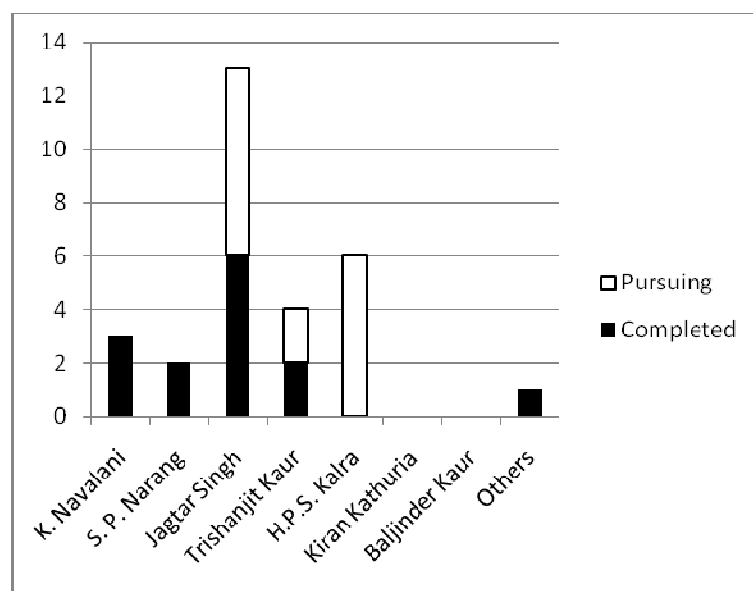


Fig. 2: Region to which Researchers belong

Majority of the doctoral researchers (78%) belong to the different districts of Punjab. Few researchers (18%) belong to other states and are working in Punjab or belong to nearby areas of Punjab state. A foreign researcher from Dhaka (Bangladesh) is also registered in the department.

Research Output of Supervisors

The diagram (Fig. 3) reveals that nearly half (46%) of the department's research contribution is under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Jagtar Singh. He is having the highest number of candidates, who have either completed or are pursuing their research work under his supervision, followed by Dr. Harinder Pal Singh Kalra having 21 percent. Dr. K. Navlani and Dr. Trishanjit Kaur with 11%. One candidate completed her Ph.D under the guidance of an Allied Faculty member. Dr. Kiran Kathuria and Dr. Baljinder Kaur are not having any candidate registered with them. Dr. Baljinder Kaur joined the Department in August 2011 so she is not supervising any research yet.



* Dr. K. Navalani guided a student, who registered at Guru Nank Dev University, Amritsar

Fig. 3 Research Output of Supervisors

Categorization of Research work

The Table 3 depicts that the maximum candidates i.e. 19% selected Information Technology and related topics for research, 15% selected Academic Libraries and management followed by Information Literacy and use of library resources i.e. 11%. 7% of the

total number selected Resource sharing & networking and Bibliometrics and 4% have taken up LIS Education, preservation & conservation, Public libraries and Knowledge Management.

Table 3: Broader Categories of topics

Topic	Completed	Pursuing	Total	Percentage
Information Technology	—	05	05	19
Academic Libraries	03	01	04	15
Management	01	03	04	15
Information Literacy	—	03	03	11
Use of Library Resources	03	--	03	11
Resource Sharing and Networking	02	--	02	07
Bibliometrics	—	02	02	07
LIS Education	01	--	01	04
Preservation and conservation	01	--	01	04
Public Libraries	01	--	01	04
Knowledge Management	01	--	01	04

Geographical coverage of research work

Table 4: Region covered in study

Region	Completed	Pursuing	Total	Percentage
Punjab	04	02	06	22.2
North India	05	01	06	22.2
India	02	04	06	22.2
No geographic coverage	01	02	03	11.12
Others	01	05	06	22.1

The table 4 shows that the department is covering almost all the geographic areas under study. Equal work has done on the geographic areas of Punjab, North India and India i.e. 22.2%. Research of three researchers (11.12%) is not confined to any particular area. One candidate each has selected Chandigarh, Delhi, Bangladesh, South Asia, UK and USA for the research work. One candidate is pursuing his research on Dr. Ganda Singh Punjabi Reference Library (part of Main Library, Punjabi University, Patiala).

Conclusion

The Department has good number of researchers who have completed and are pursuing their doctoral research. Barring one, all other researchers are from native and nearby states and well staled on prominent positions. A large number of researchers are pursuing their research work on leading-edge topics of LIS covering versatile geographic area.

Suggestions

According to Dr. Jagtar Singh

- Very few researchers continued with their research work after being awarded PhD degree. They have not written or published any papers. There must be some way out to motivate such students to continue with their research work.
- A comprehensive and updated database of Ph. D. Research work (completed and in progress) should be created to avoid any duplication in research.
- Research agenda should be designed for the near future.
- Case studies of PhD research in other LIS departments should be undertaken.
- The workshops on research methodology and report writing should be organized to equip the potential researchers with pertinent skills and methods for undertaking research.

Besides the above mentioned suggestions the authors made the following suggestions

- Number of regular and full time researchers should be increased to promote research in diverse areas.
- Numbers of research funding should be increased to the researchers by University, UGC, AIU, MHRD, and other professional bodies. Researchers should be made aware of all these types of funding which already exist.
- Research work at Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) course should be started so that the research skills of the students can be further developed. Master of Philosophy (M. Phil.) can also be introduced in the department.
- Most of the candidates join the Ph. D course to full fill the UGC minimum standards for recruitment and promotion. But only those candidates should be selected for doing research which has the research aptitude and the spirit to

pursue research work even after they are awarded with the degree.

- The minimum passing marks in Ph. D. entrance exam should be standardized and strictly followed.
- Since the Academic Performance Indicator (API) score has become a pre-requisite for recruitment and promotions of academicians hence some such type of score or indicators can also be prescribed to ascertain the annual performance of researchers.

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