

**LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE LITERATURE IN BANGLADESH:
A BIBLIOMETRIC STUDY**

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ABSTRACT:

Presents the results of a statistical analysis of the papers on various aspects of library and information science (LIS) emanated from Bangladesh during 1966-1997. The analysis is based on a list of papers compiled to show the growth and size of the LIS literature in Bangladesh, patterns of their distribution by subjects within the field of librarianship, characteristics of the contributing periodicals, language of publication, authorship patterns, and geographic distribution of the periodicals. The results of the study showed that, during 1966-1997, a total of 308 articles, authored by 116 library professionals were published in various periodicals with the highest number (256, 83.11%) in Bangladesh, followed by India (21, 6.82%). All these papers were published in some 37 periodicals originating from 14 countries. About 92% of the articles were credited to the single authorship; only 25 articles were co-authored. Problems in library research in Bangladesh have also been discussed, and some suggestions have been put forward to improve the overall situation.

Keywords: Library and information science literature; LIS; Bibliometrics; Bangladesh

INTRODUCTION

The foundation of the library practice in Bangladesh was marked with the establishment of the first non-government public library in a district of Bangladesh in 1851. Three more non-government public libraries were established in 3 districts of Bangladesh in 1854. These libraries were run and maintained by private initiatives and without any assistance from the government agencies. During 1851-1955,

a good number of private and non-government libraries were established to cater to the social needs of the people. The first government public library was established in Dhaka in 1955, although it was open to the public in March 1958. After 1955, the development of the library profession in the country has been closely linked with the efforts made by the Library Association of Bangladesh (LAB) [formerly East Pakistan Library Association (EPLA)] since its establish-

ment in 1956. Library education in Bangladesh started with the 3-month training programme (certificate course) initiated by the Dhaka University Library in 1952 (Chanda, 1958). This was followed by a more formal 6-month certificate course in library science initiated in 1958 by EPLA (Ahmad, 1987). With the success of the course, the University of Dhaka launched the one-year postgraduate diploma course in library science in 1959. Again with the success of the diploma programme, the University instituted a one-year master's degree programme in 1962 (Khan, 1997). Now several postgraduate courses in library and information science are conducted by two universities and by two non-government bodies.

The first professional periodical publication, *The Eastern Librarian*, was launched in 1966 by EPLA. Subsequently, several periodicals were brought out to supplement the publication process of professional development in the country. *The Eastern Librarian* alone published 218 papers during 1966-1994.

No efforts were made in the past to find out the extent of library and information science (LIS) literature produced in the country. No attempts have also been made to understand their characteristics, patterns, and dissemination mechanisms. The study was, therefore, undertaken to identify and determine the characteristics of the periodical articles published on various aspects of library and information science in Bangladesh during 1966-1997. For the purpose, a statistical and bibliometric analysis was made based on a list of papers compiled to show the growth and size of the LIS literature, patterns of their distribution by subjects within the

field of librarianship, characteristics of contributing periodicals, language of publication, authorship patterns, and geographic distribution of periodicals. It is expected that the results of the study will be of use to those who are interested to know the nature and characteristics of LIS publications and their dissemination patterns produced by the library professionals within and outside Bangladesh.

METHODOLOGY

The papers on library and information science published in the learned periodicals only were considered for inclusion in this analysis. Popular and newspaper articles have been excluded in the analysis. Generally, only those papers which were related particularly to Bangladesh librarianship, either in whole or in part were considered. The articles that did not deal with Bangladesh librarianship, but published in Bangladesh, were considered as well and reviewed for analysis. In addition, efforts were made to identify the published monographs and the papers published in the seminar or conference proceedings that related to the Bangladesh librarianship for the purpose of comparison.

The contents page(s) of each journal issue was(ere) checked carefully to identify those papers that were exclusively pertaining to library and information science, and they were then listed for further analysis. The references cited by the authors in their published papers were also checked and titles which have been missed by the list were subsequently included to make it as comprehensive as possible.

The following main classes of LIS topics as listed in the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) scheme were used for content analysis of the LIS articles:

- 020 Library and information sciences;
- 021 Library relationships;
- 022 Physical plant of library and information centres;
- 023 Personnel and positions;
- 024 Library operations;
- 025 Libraries devoted to various specific disciplines;
- 026 General libraries;
- 027 Reading and use of other information media.

Since each class of the scheme contains subclasses, each article in the sample was further classified into a single subclass, wherever possible.

RESULTS

The extensive literature search made resulted in the listing of 440 papers published in 37 local and foreign periodicals, monographic materials published in Bangladesh, and conference proceedings published in and outside Bangladesh. After the initial careful checking and verification, a list of the periodical articles published within and outside Bangladesh relating to Bangladesh librarianship was separately produced which is appended as part of this paper (Appendix 1). Although newspaper and popular articles were excluded, it is estimated that more than 250 articles were published in newspapers since 1950s.

Growth and size of LIS literature in Bangladesh

Of the 440 published papers and monographic materials identified, 308 (71.30%) were periodical articles (Table 1).

Table 1: Total Number of Published LIS Literature in Bangladesh

Types of publications	No. of papers (n=440)
Periodical articles	308
Monographs	50
Seminar/Conference papers	82

Table 2 presents the distribution of periodical articles to show the total number of articles generated at a five-year interval. Analysis of the list shows that more than 40.58% (125 papers) of the periodical articles were published during 1966-1970, that is the pre-liberation period, whereas 55.84% (172 papers) were published in 25 years during 1971-1993. Only 11 articles were published during 1996-1997.

Table 2: Five Yearly Distribution of Periodical Articles

Period	No. of papers (n=308)	Percentage (%)
1966-1970	125	40.58
1971-1975	30	9.74
1976-1980	27	8.77
1981-1985	38	12.33
1986-1990	41	13.31
1991-1995	36	11.69
1996-1997	11	3.57

The growth in the number of publications during the re-liberation period compared to that of the period after liberation can be attributed to the introduction of the first-only indigenous core journal “*The Eastern Librarian*”, published by the Library Association of East Pakistan which started publication in 1966. The increased number of papers published during the early years of the journal points out that the library professionals of the country were enthusiastic enough to write and publish their papers in the newly launched journal. Unfortunately the journal became irregular with the June 1969 issue (Khan, 1987-88). The last volume of the journal appeared in 1994, and the 1995-1996 issues are in press.

The slow growth of published articles during 1970-1997 indicates that the country’s library professionals were not tempted to publish professional articles for the reasons best known to them. It is beyond the scope of this article to identify the reasons of non-proliferating of the expected number of indigenous articles.

Distribution of Papers According to Topics

The distribution of the papers according to the main classes of LIS topics as shown in the DDC scheme is presented in Table 3. Table 3 mainly lists broad categories which cover over 89% of the published articles. The miscellaneous subjects group covers more than 10% of the articles. The latter group includes articles of multifarious nature that cannot be grouped under any of the 6 listed broad subject categories.

Table 3 shows that the largest number of articles (89 papers, 28.90%) was published on general libraries followed by basics of library and information science (82 papers, 26.62%) and library operations (58 papers, 18.83%). Only 7 papers (2.27%) were published on administration and personnel management (personnel and positions). The rest of the articles in the order of diminishing importance represented by the papers are: library operations, other LIS topics, and library

Table 3: Topic-wise Distribution of Periodical Articles According to DDC Scheme

Topic	Topic distribution	
	No. of papers (n=308)	Percentage (%)
Basics of library and information science	82	26.62
Library relationships	30	9.74
Personnel and positions	07	2.27
Library operations	58	18.83
Libraries devoted to various disciplines	10	3.25
General libraries	89	28.90
Other LIS topics	32	10.39

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relationships. If the universe of library and information science is taken into consideration, it appears from the tables that the LIS literature in Bangladesh is not evenly distributed.

A more detailed subject break-up of the literature is shown in Table 4. If the scope of the category of subjects is expanded to include different subtopics within the scope of librarianship as delineated in the DDC scheme (Table 4), it appears that the

highest number of papers was published on basics of library and information science (58 papers, 18.83%), followed by public libraries (27 papers, 8.77%), bibliographic analysis and control (18 papers, 5.85%), college and university libraries (18 papers, 5.85%), special libraries (15 papers, 4.87%), acquisition and collection development (14 papers, 4.55%), and national libraries (13 papers, 4.22%).

Table 4: Topic-wise Distribution of Periodical Articles by Details of Subjects According to DDC Scheme

DDC class	Topic	No. of papers	Percentage (%)
020	Library and information science	58	18.83
020.6	Organizations and management	01	0.32
020.621	International organizations	01	0.32
020.622	National	06	1.95
020.7	Study and teaching	16	5.19
021.2	Libraries and community	14	4.55
021.6	Library cooperations and networks	13	4.22
021.7	Promotion of libraries	01	0.32
021.8	Libraries and government	02	0.65
023	Personnel and positions	04	1.29
023.8	In-service training	03	0.97
025	Library operations	04	1.29
025.04	Information storage and retrieval systems	05	1.62
025.171	Manuscript, archival materials, rarities	06	1.95
025.2	Acquisitions and collection development	14	4.55
025.3	Bibliographic analysis and control	18	5.85
025.42	Classification	05	1.62
025.5	Services to users	04	1.29
025.62	Interlibrary loan	02	0.65
026	Medical libraries	10	3.25
027	General libraries	06	1.95
027.4	Public libraries	27	8.77
027.5	National libraries	13	4.22
027.6	Special libraries	15	4.87
027.7	College and university libraries	18	5.85
027.8	School libraries	10	3.25
--	Other LIS topics	32	10.39

Characteristics of contributing periodicals

Table 5 includes the list of periodicals that published the 308 articles relating to library and information science of Bangladesh in 37 journals during 1966-1997. The periodicals are ranked in decreasing order of productivity. Table 5

shows that *The Eastern Librarian* published the largest number of articles (218 papers, 70.78%) and is the first in the ranked order. The second and third in the order, respectively, are the *Herald of Library Science* and *The Dhaka University Studies*; these two journals published 10 (3.25%) and 8 (2.60%) papers respectively.

Table 5: Ranking of contributing periodicals

Sl. No.	Title of periodical (n=37)	No. of papers (n=308)	Rank
1.	<i>The Eastern Librarian</i>	218	1
2.	<i>Herald of Library Science</i>	10	2
3.	<i>The Dhaka University Studies</i>	8	3
4.	<i>The Library</i>	6	4
5.	<i>International Library Review</i>	5	5
6.	<i>Bangla Academy Patrika (Bangla)</i>	5	5
7.	<i>Boi (Bangla)</i>	5	5
8.	<i>Library Herald</i>	5	5
9.	<i>Granthagar (Bangla)</i>	4	9
10.	<i>UNESCO Bull. for Libraries/ UNESCO J. of Infor. Sci, Librarianship and Archives Admin</i>	4	9
11.	<i>Third World Libraries</i>	3	11
12.	<i>Dhaka University Patrika (Bangla)</i>	3	11
13.	<i>Journal of the Inter.Forum on Information and Documentation</i>	3	11
14.	<i>Int. Information and Library Review</i>	2	14
15.	<i>Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science</i>	2	14
16.	<i>Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh</i>	2	14
17.	<i>LIBRI</i>	2	14
18.	<i>Tathyamala (Bangla)</i>	2	14
19.	<i>Media Asia</i>	1	19
20.	<i>Development in Practice</i>	1	19
21.	<i>Pakistan Library Review</i>	1	19
22.	<i>ILA Bulletin</i>	1	19
23.	<i>Library Progress</i>	1	19
24.	<i>Journal of Library Development</i>	1	19
25.	<i>Annals of Library Science and Documentation</i>	1	19
26.	<i>Journal of Library and Information Science</i>	1	19
27.	<i>NAGA: the ICLARM Quarterly</i>	1	19
28.	<i>Journal of Rural Development</i>	1	19
29.	<i>Nibandhamala (Bangla)</i>	1	19
30.	<i>World Health Forum</i>	1	19
31.	<i>International Review of Education</i>	1	19
32.	<i>Library Acquisition: Practice and Theory</i>	1	19
33.	<i>Bulletin of the Medical Library Association</i>	1	19
34.	<i>Riverina Library Review</i>	1	19
35.	<i>Bangladesh Journal of Scientific Research</i>	1	19
36.	<i>Indian Journal of Information, Library and Society</i>	1	19

It also appears from Table 5 that the library professionals of the country considered non-LIS journals (11 of 37) as well in publishing their articles.

Geographic Distribution of Periodicals

The geographic distribution of the periodical articles is shown in Table 6. The periodicals having articles of Bangladesh librarianship were published from 14 different countries. The maximum number of articles (256, 83.11%) was published from Bangladesh, followed by India (21, 6.82%).

Language of Publication

About 90% of the articles were written in English, and the rest (10.06%) were in Bangla. Thirty-one Bangla articles (10.06%) were published in 7 periodicals (6 in Bangla).

Authorship Patterns

An analysis of the list of publications as appended to this paper shows that 116 library professionals from within and outside Bangladesh authored and published 303 of the 308 papers (98.38%). Five articles (1.62%) were found anonymous. Of the 116 authors, 83 (71.55%) were Bangladeshis who produced 259 papers and 33 (28.49%) were foreign nationals who produced 44 papers (3 with joint authorship). Most articles (91.89%) were authored by single authors. Only 25 papers (8.12%) had joint authorship, but not exceeding three authors in any case. Of the 25 co-authored articles, 18 papers (5.84%) had two authors and only 7 (2.27%) had three authors. Ninety-four articles (30.52%) were contributed by the members of the teaching staff, whereas 209 articles (67.86%) were contributed by librarians and others.

Table 6: Geographic Distribution of Periodicals and Periodical Articles

Country	No. of periodicals published	No. of articles published
Australia	1	1
Bangladesh	12	256
Denmark	1	2
France	1	4
Germany	1	1
India	8	21
Malaysia	1	2
The Netherlands	1	3
Pakistan	1	1
The Philippines	1	1
Singapore	1	1
Switzerland	1	1
UK	4	9
USA	3	5

DISCUSSION

Although no comparison was made of the number and growth of the LIS papers published in Bangladesh and by the Bangladeshi authors in outside journals with that of any SAARC or Asian countries, it still can be said that the amount of LIS literature published from Bangladesh cannot be considered satisfactory. The results of the study showed that the country's library professions published 308 periodical articles by 116 professionals in 32 years, i.e. on an average 9.62 articles per year, and 2.6 articles per author in 32 years (.08 article per person per year). A number of problems might have contributed to the lower level of LIS literary productivity in Bangladesh. Lack of planning, co-ordination, financial assistance and sponsorship, and lack of interest and encouragement among the library professionals may have been the major constraints in undertaking research activity in the country and generating LIS publications. The language barrier is another constraint in writing papers in English. One of the senior librarians, however, opined that "it appears from the available library literature of Bangladesh that unless it is a compulsion, the Bangladeshi librarians do not attempt at writing or doing serious research."

The results of the study further show that the maximum number of publications (218 papers, 70.78%) appeared in *The Eastern Librarian*, but the publication of the journal has been often irregular mainly due to the shortage of quality articles and the lower level of subscriptions received over the years. It would be

interesting to find out why the library professionals were not tempted to publish their articles in the periodicals brought out from the UK and the USA.

In spite of the fact that a professional course at the postgraduate level was launched in 1959, it is surprising to note that no articles were published in any learned journals by any library professional of the country during 1959-1965, as it appears from the list of LIS literature in Bangladesh. During this time, the persons engaged in libraries were possibly used to write articles articulating their library problems for publication in newspapers. Even after 1965, the trend of writing articles for publication in newspapers continued considerably. It may be that enough opportunities did not exist which could have encouraged them to write articles for publication in the peer-reviewed journals.

The LIS literature reviewed shows that there is an uneven distribution of the published literature among various subclasses of library and information science. Some of the LIS topics had received considerable attention, while others have hardly been touched. Such topics as information storage and retrieval systems, inter-library loan, systems development, and impact of information and communications technologies have been poorly represented.

There are not many articles which offered clear-cut solutions to the emergent problems faced by the profession of library and information science all over the world in general and in Bangladesh in particular. The published literature should

advance the knowledge in the field rather than concentrating on overviews of the situation, and also try to solve the problems of the profession.

It was observed from review of the published literature that most papers (91.89%) have been authored by single authors. This proves that teamwork is not at all popular in LIS research in Bangladesh.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Since this study is mainly based on the secondary sources, there is a strong need to undertake more basic research to find out appropriate reasons and barriers for the slow growth in the number of LIS publications in the country. It would be good to see which age-group of the library professionals produced more compared to other age-groups. In the absence of a comprehensive list of the published materials and their non-availability in one particular place, it has also been difficult to undertake a comprehensive bibliometric study as we did in this case. The comprehensive list, covering all LIS publications, should be compiled and published for wider dissemination. Besides, proper records on journal articles and their storage for easier retrieval also need to be arranged.

Access from Bangladesh to international professional journals is very limited, since only a few professional journals are received by some libraries. Frantic efforts are, thus, needed to get a good number of learned journals on the subject covered by the international indexing and abstracting journals and bodies. Some international journals are specially meant for develop-

ing countries. Researchers in Bangladesh may communicate their research findings to the peer-reviewed journals for possible publication and for wider dissemination of their publications to the international community.

The results of our study show that the largest study areas, in order of popularity, were the basics of library and information science, public libraries, and other LIS topics. Review of the LIS literature produced in Bangladesh and the findings of the study point out that the major focus of our study and research is relatively and considerably different from those currently undertaken by professionals of the developed world, particularly those produced in the UK or the USA. This means that LIS study and research in Bangladesh focuses more on overview of the situation than basic studies and applications, whereas throughout the world the focus is on practice. The focus of LIS study and research in Bangladesh should indeed move from overviews to practice, particularly in relation to the use, applications and impact of information and communications technologies, as well as how the professionals can orient to the new environment when the environment is gradually changing fast and is almost beyond their control.

In Bangladesh, the library professionals do not get enough opportunities to undertake basic and applied research due to the shortage of facilities and funds. To deliver high-quality research output and to investigate the problem areas and the new environment, it is essential that the government and higher educational and research organizations make available the

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required facilities and allocate some funds for the library professionals of the country. Research projects on emergent issues may be identified and assigned to the experts in the field. The Government of Bangladesh, the Library Association of Bangladesh, and the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC) can play an important role in the findings, promotion and co-ordination of LIS research-related activities in the country. They may also assist in the organization of intensive training programmes on research methodologies and of refresher courses which may, in the long run, exhibit better and visible results in the promotion of research undertakings and in the growth of original research publications.

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Sciences Institute (ILSI), National Institutes of Health (NIH), Rhône Poulenc Rorer, and Thrasher Research Fund; Universities: Johns Hopkins University, New England Medical Center, and London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, and University of Alabama at Birmingham; and others.

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Appendix 1

List of LIS periodical articles in Bangladesh (1966-1997)

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