

## **Assessment of Library and Information Science Syllabus of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad**

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***Abstract** - The present study deals with the assessment of library and information science (LIS) syllabus based on the theory of Benjamin Bloom. The six levels of Taxonomy of learning given by Bloom are: 1. Knowledge, 2. Comprehension, 3. Application, 4. Analysis, 5. Synthesis, 6. Evaluation. Based on these levels, the courses in BLS and MLS are assessed. The study discusses the importance of LIS as a professional carrier. The paper also discusses the LIS department of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University, the designing of the syllabus of LIS and its relevance in today's job market.*

**Keywords:** Library and Information Science Education, Assessment, Professional Education.

### **Introduction**

Education helps to enhance the skills of a person and enable him to live with dignity in the society. LIS Education imparts the basic skills necessary to earn employment or involve in income generating activities. Over a period of time, LIS has grown and developed into a full-fledged discipline. Courses are being imparted by university departments, institutions, library associations and specialized institutions. The LIS education aims at providing trained manpower to manage different types of libraries, information and documentation centers which, over a period of time have undergone changes in terms of needs, functions, types and range of services offered, as well as tools and techniques being used when offering the services.

### **LIS Education as a Professional Education**

LIS education is becoming a fast developing subject with a multidisciplinary approach. Librarianship is treated as full-fledged profession. It is different from Law, medicine, education, or Accountancy. It contains both theoretical and practical aspects. The LIS education is not just library specific but it has extended to other disciplines like computer application, statistics, information science, management studies and operations research, which are essential in order to provide multidimensional services. The application of ICT has transformed the traditional libraries and the librarians into digital libraries and Information managers. The inter-disciplinary nature of the subject has transformed the libraries and librarians to collect, process, organize and retrieve the right information to the right reader in right time through right way. Because of its inter-disciplinary nature, the profession has given scope to many professional from Computer science, Management, Statistics, Mathematics, etc. to choose Library and Information science as their option for further and higher studies.

## **LIS Education in Dr.B.R.A.O.U.**

The department of Library and Information science comes under faculty of Social Sciences. The department started offering Bachelor's Degree in Library and Information Science (BLISc) in 1985 and Master's Degree in Library and Information Science in 1998 both in English medium. In 2003 the department has introduced B.L.I.Sc in Telugu medium and M.Phil and Ph.D. in Library and Information Science in 2008. The department currently has two faculty members, a Professor and an Assistant professor.

The introduction of the Bachelor's degree in Library and Information Science (BLISc) is in pursuance of the University's policy of offering such courses of study/training as are job-oriented or vocationally relevant. There are a large number of persons working in Public, School, and College libraries in the districts who in order to improve their professional skills and qualifications have to forego their leave or go on leave on loss of pay to study at the University Centre. It is for the benefit of such persons that the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University started the Bachelor's Degree Course in Library and Information Science in 1985. Persons working in libraries who want to improve their professional qualifications get admitted into this programme. With the advent of Information Technology, the social and economic development, spread of education, establishment of training and research institutions, rapid development in industries and fast growing business and trade have necessitated the establishment of libraries and information centres, which have to be manned by qualified staff, to provide the varying needs of the users. The Dr. B. R Ambdekar Open University has introduced a Degree course that can be availed of by the unqualified members, in order to qualify them and enhance their skills.

The objectives of the programme are: (1) to acquaint with the basic principles of Library and Information Science; (2) to train the student in the techniques and management of Library system; and (3) to enable the student to understand the place and functions of each of the different types of libraries in the changing social and educational set up.

## **Syllabus for Library Science**

The design of the syllabus is made excellently with each topic and sub-topic. The famous essayist Francis Bacon in his essay on "Of Studies" said "*Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention*". The library science professionals also have to undergo the procedure of tasting, swallowing, chewing and digesting the topics in library science in order to enhance their skills and become experts and provide better services. If we analyse the topics with these famous quotes: There are topics in Library science that are to be tasted i.e., Library and society, Documentation and Information: systems and services. These topics give general idea about Library discipline. So a student has to just taste the whole concept. Outline information is enough. Such topics give the history and general background of the subject.

The topics such as Information management, Bibliography and reference sources and services are the topics that are to be chewed. These topics contain information that are needed when a person comes across a practical difficulty in managing the library or solving a reference query, the knowledge of different reference sources and the information contained in them is to be remembered by persons, those who are going to become a library professional. Hence these topics are to be chewed thoroughly.

The topics such as Cataloguing, Classification, Computer application, Library application software are the topics in library science that are to be digested. These are the topics that are useful in daily library operations, without which a proper library system cannot survive. A practical knowledge is very essential.

### **Benjamin Bloom's Theory**

In the year 1956, Benjamin Bloom with collaborators Max Englehart, Edward Furst, Walter Hill, and David Krathwohl published a framework for categorizing educational goals: "Taxonomy of Educational Objectives" which was popularly known as Bloom's Taxonomy. This taxonomy has been applied by teachers and college instructors.

The framework consisted of six major categories: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation. Teachers can benefit from using these framework to organize their objectives because it helps them to plan and deliver appropriate instruction, design valid assessment tasks and strategies and ensure that instruction and assessment are aligned with the objectives.

The LIS syllabus can also be assessed based on the theory given by Benjamin Bloom known as Taxonomy of Learning. The simple knowledge or recognition of facts, as the low level, slowly increasing towards more complex and abstract mental levels, and finally reaching the highest order classified as evaluation.

The six levels of learning process can be listed as follows:

**Knowledge:** According to Bloom "Knowledge is defined as the remembering of previously learned material". Knowledge represents the lowest level of learning such as knowing common terms, specific facts, methods, procedure, principles, basic concepts, etc. The topics such as Library and society and Information communication and society comes under this level of learning

**Comprehension:** Bloom defined Comprehension as "the ability to grasp the meaning of material". This may be shown by translating material from one form to another (words to numbers), by interpreting material (explaining or summarizing), and by estimating future trends (predicting consequences or effects). These learning outcomes go one step beyond the simple remembering of material, and represent the lowest level of understanding such as understanding facts and principles, charts, graphs, etc. The topics such as Bibliography and reference sources and services comes under this level of learning.

**Application** According to Bloom application refers to the ability to use learned material in new and concrete situations. This may include the application of such things as rules, methods, concepts, principles, laws, and theories. Learning outcomes in this area require a higher level of understanding than those under comprehension. The application level involves applying concepts and principles to new situations. It also involves applying laws and theories to practical situations.

**Analysis** means breaking down or dissection of material into its components parts in order to understand the whole structure. This may include the identification of the parts, analysis of the relationships between parts, and recognition of the organizational principles involved. Learning outcomes here represent a higher intellectual level than comprehension and application because they require an understanding of both the content and the structural form of the material.

**Synthesis** is the ability of putting together of parts to form a new whole. This may involve the production of a unique communication (theme or speech), a plan of operations (research proposal), or a set of abstract relations (scheme for classifying information). Learning outcomes in this area stress creative behaviors, with major emphasis on the formulation of new patterns of structures. Integrate.

**Evaluation** is concerned with the ability to judge the value of material (statement, novel, poem, research report) for a given purpose. The judgments are to be based on definite criteria. These may be internal criteria (organization) or external criteria (relevance to the purpose), and the student may determine the criteria or be given them. Learning outcomes in this area are highest in the cognitive hierarchy because they contain elements of all of the other categories, plus conscious value judgments based on clearly defined criteria.

**Table 1. The application of different levels of taxonomy in LIS**

S.N	Levels of learning	B.L.I.Sc.	M.L.I.Sc.
1	Knowledge	Library and society	
2	Comprehension	Bibliography and Reference sources and Services	Information Communication and Society
3	Application	Library Management, Library Automation	Information Processing and Retrieval, Information Systems and Programmes, Information Technology
4	Analysis	Documentation and Information: Systems and Services	Management of Information Systems & Services, Academic Libraries, Public Libraries, Special libraries, Digital Libraries
5	Synthesis	Library Classification Theory Library Cataloguing Theory	
6	Evaluation	Library Classification practice, Library cataloguing practice	Research Methodology

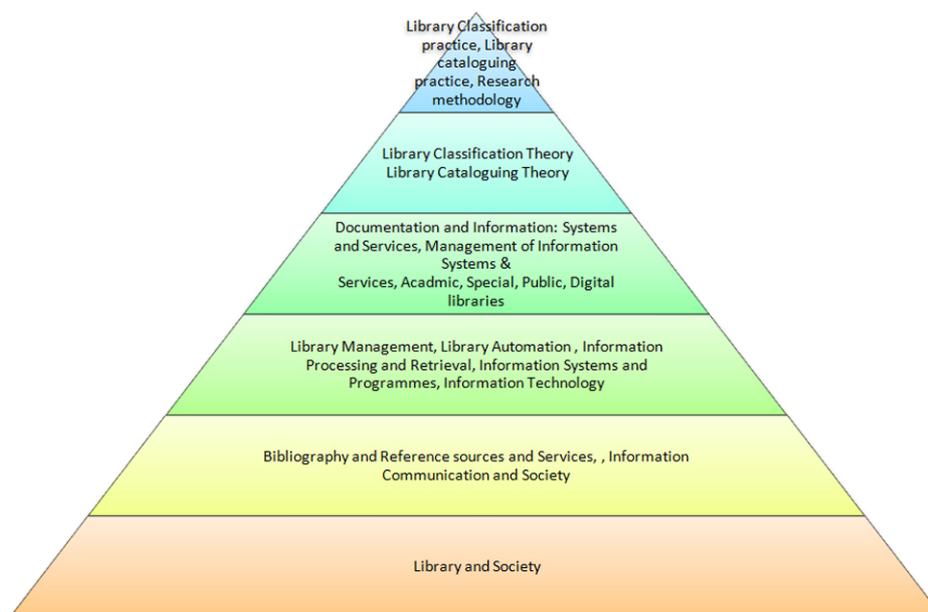


Fig. 1. Pyramid showing the taxonomy of Learning in Library Science (BLIS and MLIS)

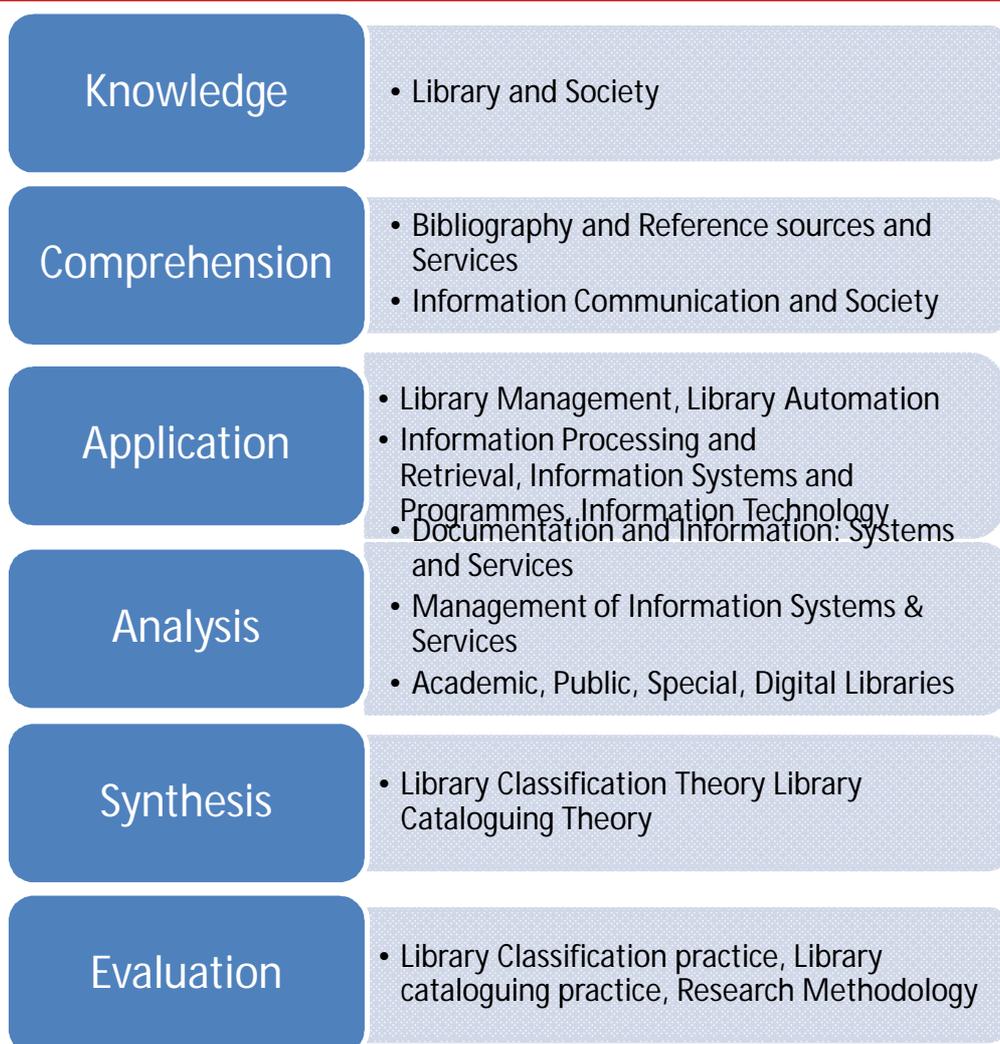


Fig. 2 : Assessment of different levels of Taxonomy of learning in LIS

- The different levels of taxonomy of learning in library science are
- Knowledge is the basic subject imparted to the students which can be memorized and repeated. The BLIS course 1, i.e., Library and society comes under the knowledge level.
- Comprehension is the ability to put to test, what has been taught. The Bibliography, Reference sources and services and Information communication and society comes under this level of learning.
- Application is the process of introducing the existing information to new environment in order to make the system work much better. Library Management, Library Automation, Information Processing and Retrieval, Information Systems and Programmes, Information Technology comes under this level.
- Analysis is the process of analysing a system by breaking into parts and evolving new procedures, in order to solve the problems. Documentation and Information: systems and services, Management of Information system and services and Academic, Public, Special and Digital Libraries come under this level.
- Synthesis is nothing but compiling. The best example for this level is the process of classification and cataloguing. In classification, while assigning class number to a book, the synthesizing phase occurs.
- Evaluation is the process of judging based on definite criteria. The research methods in library science are the best example of evaluation.

## Conclusion

It can be observed that majority of the courses taught in both BLIS and MLIS has reached the Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation level. Thus it can be said that Library and Information Science has gained importance not only as professional carrier but it is providing better opportunities to the Library professionals in the job market also.

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