

## LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE AND RESEARCH IN MODERN ERA

**Balaji Sayanna Poradwar**

*Subject library science, At post Arjapur ta. Biloli, Dist. Nanded 431710*

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### Abstract

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*Yet many of the methods, techniques, and tenets of basic research are relevant for applied research, and a person conducting applied research should benefit from a solid understanding of basic research methods. The librarian wishing to carry out a cost study, evaluate the performance of his or her library, or survey the library's users will need to be able to apply many of the principles and techniques treated in this book to his or her specific project. The more rigorous the research, the more useful its results, whether it be basic or applied in nature.*

**Keywords:** *Research, Basic research, Library and Information Science Research*

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### Introduction:

There are many ways of defining a profession." All agree that it should form one's main paid occupation, that it involves a high level of specialist knowledge, and that it should entail maintenance of appropriate standards of competence both individually and across the professional group. General acceptance that research satisfies these requirements only came in the decades around 1800. This does not mean that recognizably professional researchers had not existed before 1800. Medicine is a typical example of a profession, and some of its practitioners were famous researchers long before that time. Similarly, surveying was a well-regarded profession in North America from the early days of European settlement, and some of its members contributed to early American research. However, in virtually all these cases, the research was regarded as ancillary to their work, rather than as an essential component of it. Even in the academic world, though a number of professors or fellows of colleges contributed to research, the main justification for their posts was teaching.

The belief that university posts should require ability in both teaching and research grew gradually throughout the nineteenth century. Again, Germany led the way. The different German states competed to obtain the most eminent staff for their universities.

## **Basic Research**

Mouly stated that "Research is best conceived as the process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data.

## **Library research**

According to Shera, Ralph Beals once categorized library literature into the tripartite classification of Glad Tidings, Testimony, and Research, and noted that there was little of the last.

Goldhor, in his text on library research, categorized library literature with regard to research as including: one, a relatively small body of published research as defined in the narrow sense; two, a larger amount of published and unpublished services studies, or applied research; three, an even larger number of reports or descriptions of specific situations, or simply opinions; and four, original data.

## **Library research trends**

Losee and Worley stated: "There is a tendency among information professionals to write and publish in the 'How I done it good' genre, a genre that is very situation-specific." In short, as was noted earlier, and as Busha and Harter indicated in their textbook, the preponderance of library-related research has been applied in nature. A 1984 issue of *Library Trends* was devoted to research in librarianship, and it reviewed research as related to the history of library and information science, economics of libraries, political science, sociology, psychology of information use, organization theory, public administration, and operations research. This work thus provided a categorization of library research in terms of both methodology and subject. In the first chapter of this issue of *Library Trends*, Mary Jo Lynch identified her own general categories for describing different research activities as practical research, bibliographical research, scholarly research, and scientific research. She characterized practical research as problem solving with information; bibliographical research as reordering the thoughts of others; scholarly research as systematic collecting, organizing, and analyzing of data; and scientific research as discovering new knowledge.

Mathews described research performed by the U.S. Department of Education from 1977 to 1988.<sup>18</sup> Along with analyzing the products of the research; she also discussed recent research agenda efforts of the Department and implications for future research. McClure and

Bishop provided a useful summary of reports published from 1976 to 1988 related to the status of research in librarianship. Several of the reports contained analyses of the types of research methods utilized during various time periods. Powell summarized some methodological studies ranging from an analysis of dissertations dating back to 1925 to an examination of research articles published in 1984. He also characterized more recent trends including qualitative, interdisciplinary, and technology-based research. Buttlar analyzed library and information science (LIS) dissertations to identify the authors' gender, the nature of the most highly cited materials, the most highly cited journals, the literature cited in disciplines other than LIS, the countries of origin of publications cited, and the currency of the cited literature.<sup>21</sup> She did not identify the type of methodologies used, but did report that the literature from the LIS field is cited about 50 percent of the time and identified education, computer science, health and medicine, psychology, communications, and business as disciplines that impact LIS research.

### **Basic Research of Library and Information Science**

As indicated earlier, one of the major purposes of basic research is to create new knowledge. "It is the purpose of science [scientific research] to go beyond experience and common sense, which frequently are quite limited and inadequate and often quite incorrect, ... for advancing knowledge, for promoting progress, and for enabling man to relate more effectively to his environment, to accomplish his purposes, and to resolve his conflicts." (Mouly, p15.)

According to Kunge indicates that 'Learning to master theoretically and in practical application, the ground rules of research creates the best foundation for continuing growth in a profession. But perhaps even more basic to the advancement of the profession "is the need for the field to test the various myths, assumptions, rules-of-thumb, and other conventions by which it has operated for so long a time, to link concepts which have been proven through testing to be valid, and thereby establish theories indigenous to the field itself."

In addition, the profession needs to advance beyond its heavy dependence on descriptive data and establish principles and theories on which libraries and information systems and services can be based. "One of the hallmarks of a profession is the ability of its members to give.

## Conclusion

Research is endless process, there is mounting evidence that the quality, if not the quantity, of Library and Information Science research is improving. And, hopefully, there is increasing recognition that the results of research in a broad spectrum of effort extending well beyond librarianship will, in large measure, determine the future directions of library services and the nature of the profession itself" ALA a statement that still resonates after 40 years.

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