



Annals of Library and Information Studies: Some reflections and future directions

Dinesh K. Gupta^a and M. P. Satija^b

Department of Library and Information Science, Central University of Haryana, Mahendergarh-123029,
Email: dineshkg@cuh.ac.in

Visiting Professor, Guru Kashi University and Honorary Professor, Department of Library & Information Science,
Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar - 143005, Email: satija_mp@yahoo.com

The *Annals of Library Science* was started by the erstwhile INSDOC with S R Ranganathan as its founder editor in the year 1954. Its name was changed to *Annals of Library Science and Documentation* in the year 1964. Again, it was renamed as *Annals of Library and Information Studies* in 2001. Over the years the journal has attained a reputation as one of the top Indian LIS journals which is indexed in Scopus and Web of Science. There are many studies undertaken (mainly bibliometrics) on the journal which proves its stature and popularity among the LIS professionals in India and abroad. The present paper makes reflections on its long history, editorial journeys, and prominent studies conducted on it. Finally, looking through a crystal ball, an attempt has been made to see the journal from a futuristic perspective.

Keywords: LIS journal; LIS research; Library Science journal; Indian LIS journal

Introduction

Annals of Library and Information Studies (ALIS) marked its twenty years with this name in 2022 and starting from the first issue of the 70th volume of the journal in January 2023, the authors of this article took over as Executive Editor and Chief Editor, respectively. Through this article, we look at the journey of journal in the form of an 'editorial-article', highlighting some important milestones and reflecting on the development of the journal in the last 69 years. We also offer some thoughts on the future of the journal.

It further provides decade-wise shift of subject coverage of the journal to reflect the changing nature of library and information science research in India. It also enumerates studies that support the standing of the journal as one of the prominent LIS journals from India. Various bibliometric studies have been undertaken and here, a brief overview is presented of the studies undertaken published during 2011-2021 covered in Scopus. Some more aspects like moving completely into online mode and changes in editorial team patterns are also covered in this paper.

The following steps were adopted to develop the paper:

1. Tracking information from the home page of the journal website <https://nopr.niscpr.res.in/handle/123456789/66>.

2. Collating studies related to the journal through the Scopus citation database with the search string *Annals of Library and Information Studies*. The results from 2011-2021 have been tabulated with information like the author, the title of the paper, the period covered in the study, and the focus of the study.

3. Searching and finding additional studies through Google Scholar with the journal titles (all three) to find relevant literature published at different time-frame.

Historical context

Soon after the establishment of the Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre (INSDOC, now NIScPR) in 1952, the new journal *Annals of Library Science* was started in 1954¹. The first issue of *Annals of Library Science* quarterly journal was printed from the Times of India Press in March 1954 as reported in the *Nature* news item².

The journal came into being under the stewardship of the doyen and Father of Library Science in India, Dr. S.R. Ranganathan³. The publication very quickly rose to become India's premier library science journal⁴. Dr Ranganathan had conceived this journal in the nature of a medium in which the leading lights of the profession could share their ideas and views on various issues of topical interest⁵. As the discipline of library science evolved, so did *Annals*. The journal

was renamed *Annals of Library Science and Documentation* in the year 1964.

In 2001, it was again renamed—this time as *Annals of Library and Information Studies* (ALIS). While renaming the journal as *Annals of Library and Information Studies*, it was proposed that “the new title implies the shifting emphasis on information and the enormous scope for newer studies in library and information science.”⁶

The journal moved to open access in the year 2012 and all the past volumes are available in the NIScPR Online Periodicals Repository (NOPR). The journal stopped its print publication and is available only in online format from the seventieth volume beginning from March 2023. The journal is indexed in major A&I services including LISA, LISTA, Scopus and Web of Science.

Editorial responsibilities

Maintaining the professional standard of science journals is of paramount importance for the satisfactory operation of this communication system. Editorial board members of science journals play an important role in this process and are considered the gatekeepers of science journals¹.

An editor(s) is the overall in charge of the content of a journal. The Editor is expected to maintain the quality of the content and develop the profile and reputation through various ways like inclusion in abstracting/indexing databases, citation databases, maintaining a proper web presence, presentations, write-ups about the journal, receiving the impact of the journal, promoting bibliometric studies and so on. The editor(s) is/are also supposed to keep track of the

emerging areas in the subject and other subjects and incorporate newly emerging works in the journal. The ALIS has been a beneficiary of having editors of high caliber since its inception. The following list shows the details of the editors/Joint/Associate/Assistant Editors who contributed to the overall growth of the journal at different time-frame (Table 1).

Many of the professionals had a long association with the journal. The persons associated for more than ten years include S. Parthasarathy for 18 years, Renu Arora for about 15 years, and G Mahesh for more than 2 decades.

From 2023, a new editorial team has been constituted with M. P. Satija and Dinesh K Gupta as Chief Editor and Executive Editor respectively. G Mahesh continues as the Scientific Editor of the journal. The journal has an editorial board with accomplished members from India and abroad, who include both practitioners and academics with diverse background.

Annals and a major focus on LIS Themes

The journal has been keeping on the latest trends in the subject and its focus being shifted accordingly, which is quite evident from the major areas published in the *Annals*⁷ (Table 2).

The above table indicates that the journal kept track of the development in the subject emphasizing on shifting of its focus and attracting papers with the newer areas.

Special issues

Various journals bring special issues on emerging themes or topics to commemorate some important

Table 1 — Editorial responsibilities of ALIS, 1954-2022

Sl. No	Years	Editor	Joint Editor (JE)/Associate/Assistant Editor
1	1954-1963	Dr. SR Ranganathan	Prof. S. Parthasarthy(JE) (1955-1963)
2	1964-1972	Prof. S. Parthasarthy ---	
3	1973-1984	Dr. B. Guha	Shri R Satyanaryana, Sh B K Sen (1982-1984)
4	1985-1987	T N Ranjan	Shri R. Satyanarayana , Mrs Renu Arora ,Sh B K Sen (1985-1987)
5	1988-1989	Sh B K Sen	Mrs. Renu Arora, Mrs. Karuna Karanjai (1988-1989)
6	1990	Mr. S. I Islam	Mrs. Renu Arora
7	1991-1993	Mr. J K Ahluwalia	Mrs. A Shrivastava (1991-1992)
8	1994-1997	Mr. S B Ghosh	
9	1998-2000	Prof. J L Sardana	
10	2001-2011	Mrs. Renu Arora	Mr. G. Mahesh
11	2012-2022	Dr. G. Mahesh	Mrs. Swarnlata Upadhyay (Assistant Editor)
12	Since 2023	Prof. M. P. Satija (Chief Editor) Prof. Dinesh K. Gupta (Executive Editor)	Dr. G Mahesh (Scientific Editor) Mrs. Swarnlata Upadhyay (Assistant Editor)

events, remembering the contributions of some eminent personalities on the subject, and so forth. Many a time guest editor(s) are involved in bringing out the special issues. Such practice gives opportunities to outstanding experts and researchers in the field to work for the advancement of the specific branch of knowledge and practices in the field. Contributors are invited through an open call for papers or through invitation, or both. *Annals of Library and Information Studies* has also brought out its special issues on the various themes as mentioned below (Table 3).

Mahesh (2017)⁷ observed that "Journals bring out special issues which are usually based on a particular theme or an occasion. The first special issue of the journal was brought out only after four decades of its existence. The IFLA Conference of 1992 was held in India in honour of the birth centenary celebrations of Dr. S. R. Ranganathan" and the special issue was brought on remembering Ranganathan and his contribution.

Mukhopadhyay(2016)⁸ mentioned that the need for one-stop access to a wide range of library resources to

save users from accessing different interfaces is another compulsion in Indian libraries where automated library systems and digital library systems are often two separate entities on this backdrop, the special issue is an attempt to unfold different aspects of resource discovery systems in general and the open source library discovery solutions in particular. Sen (2014)⁹ analyzed the situation of 100 years of Indian LIS periodicals painted the LIS journals scenario of the country with broad strokes of the brush. Arora (2012)¹⁰ considered that because a new consortium was being formed in India almost every year in the last ten years, it is time to give a fresh look at access to electronic resources in the country through the consortium and justified the theme of the special issue on consortia. Arunachalam (2010)¹¹ considered that Eugene Garfield (1925-2017) had significantly contributed to the development of the theory of bibliometrics and also simplified the bibliometric study through the Citation indexes and developed the Science Citation Index.

Celebrating the 85th Birth Anniversary of Eugene Garfield special issue was brought out. Sharma

Table 2 — Areas of focus of the journal, 1954 onwards

Period	Broad areas of focus	Topics
1954-1964	Documentation, Classification, and Cataloguing	Depth Classification, Documentation list, bibliographies
1965-1974	Services	Information retrieval, user survey, indexing services, abstracting
1975-1984	Information Systems and Automation	Library software, translation service, citation analysis, communication technologies, DBMS
1985-1994	CD-ROMs and Networking	Non-book material, Library networks, multi-media publishing, User studies, and training
1995-2004	Internet and e-Resources	Automation of library services, computer-assisted services, web hosting, electronic resources,
2005-20014	e-resources, Consortia, Open Source, Open Access, Scientometrics, and webometric Studies	Electronic resource management, Bibliometric studies, Digital libraries, ILMS, digitization, Open access publishing, Consortia management
2015 and 2022	e-Learning, e-Research, research data management, Plagiarism detection tools, Information literacy	Open source ILMS, Learning management tools, MOOCs, OERs, Reference Management, RDM. Research and publication ethics, information literacy
2023- and beyond	Research life cycle, National education policy, Sustainable Development Goals	Research data literacy, SDG and libraries, Libraries for lifelong learning, Indian knowledge system, Revisiting Ranganathan

Source: Adapted and updated from Mahesh, 2017⁷

Table 3 — Detail of the special issues of the Journal

Sl. No	Volume (issue) and Year	The theme of the Special issue	Name of the Guest Editor(s)
1	December 2016	Resource discovery systems	P. Mukhopadhyay
2	December 2015	Philosophy and Teachings of Ranganathan	Jaideep Sharma
3	September 2014	Indian LIS periodicals	B K Sen
4	September 2012	Consortia-based Access to E-Resources	Jagdish Arora
5	September 2010	Eugene Garfield	Subbiah Arunachalam
6	June 1992	S. R. Ranganathan	

(2015)¹² found that Ranganathan apart from Five Laws of Library Science had not only contributed to classification and cataloging but also his approach to education, training, and research was multi-faceted, multi-fold, and a special issue on the Philosophy and Teachings of Ranganathan was brought out.

The editorial team is keeping track of the developments taking place in library and information services with the technological and societal development and also through various new related developments, like National Education Policy 2020, UN Sustainable Development Goals, ChatGPT, Research Data Management, AI and Machine learning, Augmented reality and Lifelong learning, Indian Knowledge System to mention a few. Special issues will be brought out with some of the emerging themes in the future.

Annals on OJS

The ALIS was the first CSIR journal to use the Online Journal System for online submissions of articles which were launched on an experimental basis on 2nd January 2012. On successful implementation in ALIS, all CSIR journals today are managed through Open Journal System. Now, the journal is available only in online mode in open access starting from volume 70 of 2023.

ALIS was made available online in NOPR when it started making CSIR journals online in 2007. It was the first journal to complete the online access process and was the first CSIR journal to complete the entire digitization and was made available in open access. It was again the first Indian LIS journal to be covered in DOAJ added on 21st July 2017. A study conducted by Lihitkar and Lihitkar (2013)¹³ studied 100 Library and Information Science Journals covered in LIS by January 2012 and this study included only *Annals of Library and Information Science* from India.

Timely publication of the journal

Different individual issues of a journal are combined many a time due to low inflow of papers for a journal or to cover unwarranted delays in the publishing timeline. This practice was prevalent even during Ranganathan's time, Mahesh (2017)⁷ points out that: "Combining journal issues is an indication that all is not well with a journal. Combining two or more issues usually happens when there is a low inflow of papers or for other reasons". He summarises the combined issues of ALIS below:

- In the 10th year of publication of the *Annals of Library Science*, the September and December 1963

issues were combined. The reason for this would remain unknown but the low inflow of articles could be a reason because out of 15 articles published during the year, 11 were authored or co-authored by Ranganathan

- The second decade of the journal in 1964 seemed to have begun unfavorably. The March, June & September 1964 issues were combined into a single issue. This meant that during the first 10 months of the year, not a single issue of the journal came out. And when it came out probably in the last quarter of 1964, the combined issue just had 3 papers!

- The year 1973 was a bad year for the journal. All four issues of the year were published as one combined issue. Incidentally, this was the year when the Editor changed. Strangely, the transfer of Editorship harmed the journal as was the case in 1964 when there was a similar Editor change.

However, there have been no occurrences of such practices during the last 20 years that shows the commitment of the editorial team, authors, reviewers, and publisher towards maintaining the punctuality and up-to-date of the journal, as it maintains a strict schedule of publication.

Studies on the Journal

Once a journal is established, researchers inevitably study its progress, coverage, methodologies, research trends, and bibliometrics outputs and pros and cons. The studies on ALIS have been taken up for conference papers, etc. Also, ALIS has been studied as part of some broader studies. There are many studies conducted on ALIS are covered in the form of books, dissertations and theses, research papers, and presentations. The following are important research studies published in the journals covered in Scopus (Table 4).

The table indicates that during the last decade (2011-2021), 18 studies were undertaken on various aspects of the journal, out of which the largest number of studies (seven) were published in the year 2021. However, no study was published in the years 2015-2018. The studies cover various periods and various aspects of bibliometric studies. The studies published include the general study of the journal, comparing with another journal, authorship and collaboration pattern, citation analysis, editorial pattern, the missing link, self-citation, etc. A good number of studies were published in the open-access journal *Library Philosophy and Practice*. Other journal outlet includes *Annals of Library and*

Table 4 — Key studies undertaken in the Journal based on Scopus

Sl. No	Author(s)	Title	Period covered	Key aspect(s) of the study
1	Bapte, V. D., & Gedam, J. S. (2021) ¹⁴ .	DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology (DJLIT) and Annals of Library and Information Studies (ALIS): A Cumulative Scientometric Outlook.	2011-2021	Comparatively Scientometrics analysis of two journals
2	Chauhan, H. R., & Kalani, V. A. (2021) ¹⁵ .	Authorship productivity and collaborative patterns on annals of library and information studies.	2011-2020	Analyzing the authorship trends and collaborative pattern
3	Das, S., & Verma, M. K. (2021) ¹⁶ .	Authorship and Collaboration Pattern of Annals of Library and Information Studies Journal during 2009-2018: Scientometrics Mapping.	2009-2018	Analysis of the journal titled Authorship and Collaboration Pattern
4	Esh, M., & Ghosh, S. (2021) ¹⁷ .	A Scientometric Introspect of Literary Warrants Published in Annals of Library and Information Studies (ALIS) during the Last Decade.	2011-2020	Bibliometric study based on secondary data sets from Scopus
5	Vijayan, S. S., & Renjith, V. R. (2021) ¹⁸ .	Comparative Analysis of Citation Based Scientometric Indicators of DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology (DJLIT) and Annals of Library and Information Studies (ALIS) Journals Using SCImago Journal Rank for the Period 2016-2020.	2016-2020	Comparatively analyzes the citation-based scientometric indicators of two journals
6	Vaidya, S. Y. (2021) ¹⁹ .	A Bibliometric Study Annals of Library and Information Studies	2016-2020	Authorship pattern and the degree of collaboration
7	Kashyap, R., & Singha, H. S. B. (2021) ²⁰ .	Annals of Library & Information Studies (2015 To 2020): A Bibliometric Study.	2015-2020	Bibliometric study based on the information on the journal website
8				Studying Degree of Collaboration (DC), Collaborative Index (CI), and Collaborative Coefficient (CC)
9	Nath, A., & Jana, S. (2020) ²¹ .	Bibliometric Analysis of Annals of Library and Information Studies (ALIS).	2008-2018	Growth pattern concerning subjects covered, authorship pattern, most cited journals, etc.
10	Qadri, S., & Shukla, A. (2020) ²² .	Growth of Indian library and information science literature: A study of annals of library and information studies.	1985-90 and 2005-2010	Studying the rate of active and missing URLs cited in the article published
11	Vinay Kumar, D., & Sushmitha, M. (2019) ²³ .	Recovery of missing URLs cited in annals of library and information studies: A study of time travel.	2006-2015	Analyzing the authorship trends and collaborative pattern
12	Abu, K. S., & Verma, S. (2019) ²⁴ .	Authorship trends and collaborative patterns on annals of library and information studies.	2007-2017	Comparing bibliometric indicators with other Indian and Asian journals
13	Prieto-Gutiérrez, J. J., & Segado-Boj, F. (2019) ²⁵ .	Annals of Library and Information Studies: A Bibliometric Analysis of the Journal and a Comparison with the Top Library and Information Studies Journals in Asia and Worldwide (2011–2017).	2011–2017	Studying the immediacy index and impact factor of the two journals
14	Garg, K. C. & Bebi. (2014) ⁴ .	A citation study of Annals of Library and Information Studies (ALIS) and DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology (DJLIT).	2010-2013	Bibliometric study based on
15	Pandita, R. (2013) ²⁶ .	Annals of Library and information studies (ALIS) journal: A bibliometric study (2002-2012).	2002-2012	analyses the acknowledgments appearing in the journal
16	Rattan, G. K. (2013a) ²⁷ .	Acknowledgment patterns in annals of library and information studies 1999-2012.	1999-2012	self-citations in Annals of Library and Information Studies
17	Rattan, G. K. (2013b) ²⁸ .	Self-citations in Annals of Library and Information Studies.	2002-2012	
18	Jena, K. L., Swain, D. K., & Sahoo, K. C. (2012) ²⁹ .	Annals of Library and Information Studies, 2002-2010: A bibliometric study.	2002-2010	Bibliometric analysis of the journal
19	Deshmukh, P. P. (2011) ³⁰ .	Citations in annals of library and information studies during 1997 to 2010: A study.	1997-2010	Citation analysis of the journal

Information Studies, and *DESIDOC Journal of Information Technology*.

There is a good scope of other studies to conduct and publish about the journal in areas like, productivity trends, research visualization, thematic / collaboration visualization, thematic mapping, and geographical distribution of editorial team/authors.

Standing of the ALIS among Indian LIS Journals

Mahapatra (1994)³¹ conducted a study and ranked the Indian LIS journals based on the rate of citations and their characteristics. ALIS was ranked as the top journal among nine journals. Kherde (2003)³² brought out the fact that ALIS was the top journal among the top ten journals published in India based on citations in the journals from 1996 to 2001. Patra and Chand (2006)³³ found that ALIS was second in the ranking of Indian LIS journals while studied regarding papers published in the journals and covered in the LISA database from 1967 to 2004. Patra and Chand (2009)³⁴ again investigated that ALIS was the second in the top five journals brought out from India based on papers published in the journals and covered in the LISA database from 1967 to 2004. Mahesh and Wadhwa (2012)³⁵ pointed out that ALIS was the top journal among ten Indian LIS journals in terms of the highest number of citations and also has the maximum number of papers cited in the Web of Science. Gupta and Kumar (2018)³⁶ indicated that ALIS was the top journal while searching the title of the journal with the results in Google Scholar whereas in terms of H5 index and H5-Median, the journal got the second position.

It is revealed by these studies that the most cited Indian journal is the *Annals of Library and Information Studies*. Efforts should be made to improve the quality of Indian library and information science literature and increase Indian LIS literature and researchers' visibility in the global scenario (Qadri & Shukla (2020)²². Parabhoi & Ghosh (2019)³⁷ and Mondal & Maity (2019)³⁸ found that ALIS was the top journal among the top three journals so far contributions from foreign authors to Indian journals are concerned.

Conclusion

ALIS is again in a new format when external LIS professionals are nominated to the positions of Chief Editor and Executive Editor as a policy change at the CSIR-NIScPR level for all its journals. The new

international editorial board members with good teaching and practical exposure will be quite useful in enhancing the visibility, image, and reputation of the journal. A few quick moves include bringing out two special issues every year. Also, to bring out a special issue (March 2024) on Dr. S R Ranganathan to celebrate century of his entering the LIS career January 1924.

The current volume of the journal is unique in the sense that it will now be available only in the open online format. Attracting more international contributors, reviewers, and guest editors to raise the ratio of international contributions is also on the agenda. We would like to welcome the Guest Editors for the forthcoming issue Dr. Antonia Arahova (Greece), Dr. Thomas Dosa (USA), Dr. Carlo Bianchini (Italy), and so on. We are committed to attracting contributors to maintain the journal's reputation and place in high in the Indian and world LIS literature.

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