Indian e-journals in library and information science: A study based on coverage in UGC approved list of journals

Dinesh K Gupta and Vijendra Kumar

*Professor, Department of Library and Information Science, Vardhman Mahaveer Open University, Kota – 324021, India; Email: dineshkg.in@gmail.com; dineshkumargupta@vmou.ac.in

**Assistant Professor, Department of Library and Information Science, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur – 302004, India; Email: vkumarls@vmou.ac.in

Received: 29 May 2018; revised and accepted: 5 November 2018

In the recently released UGC list of approved journals, 11 out of 40 Indian LIS journals were found having e-ISSNs. While searching the ISSN database for e-ISSNs of the remaining journals, 7 more were found having e-ISSNs. However, four of these seven journals could not be considered for the present study as they had wrong country of origin, the journal is not an exclusive LIS journal, etc. Finally, fourteen LIS online Indian journals with e-ISSNs have been studied. The study finds that a detailed check list needs to be developed to assess the journals and concludes that there is a need for improving the quality of journals and making them comparable with the global standards.

**Keywords:** LIS Journals; Library and information science; ISSN; UGC list of journals; e-LIS journals

**Introduction**

On 10th January, 2017, the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India released a dynamic list of 38,652 journals gathered from three citation databases (SCOPUS, ICI and Web of Science) in which Indian researchers can publish their articles. There were concerns in the academic community about the fate of their works they had published in past years. Some of the issues and concerns with the UGC list were reported in the press, social media and other sources. Library and information researchers and professionals have also been affected by UGC’s decision.

The initial list, being a single long list, it was difficult to identify the list of journals belonging to any particular subject. Later UGC brought out category-wise list of journals on 28th March 2017 that had only 15 Indian LIS journals. The category-wise lists were again updated during 16th to 22nd June 2017 based on the recommendations received from universities. As on 25th April 2018, 357 LIS journals were included out of which 91 were Indian journals. In the further updated list issued on 5th May, 2018, a total 293 LIS journals including 40 Indian LIS journals were released. The present paper looks at only the 14 Indian LIS electronic journals in the current UGC list.

**Review of literature**

Maity and Teli analyzed 13 selected English language LIS journals indexed in Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). The journals which were published in English language only during the years 2004 to 2014 were considered in this study. Analysis was done to know the authorship pattern and subject area of LIS which had maximum productivity and also to find out year-wise productivity of articles. Only *DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology* from India was included in the study. Lihitkar and Lihitkar made a study of 100 open access journals in library and information science indexed in DOAJ till January 2012. This study included only *Annals of Library and Information Studies*.

Rufai, Gul & Shah also explored the status of open access titles in the field of library and information science. Data for this study was taken from DOAJ,
Open J-Gate, and Ulrichsweb.com. The results clearly revealed an expounding growth of open access titles in the field of library and information science. The study highlighted that commercial publishers had also joined hands as open access market players.

Schlögl and Petschnig\(^9\) in their survey of 48 international and German-language LIS journals reported that the market of LIS journals, like others, has been very dynamic in the past 10 years. Lewandowski\(^10\) studied 35 major LIS journals pertaining to the years 2004 to 2006 for availability of their articles in Google Scholar (GS). They collected information on the type of availability—i.e., whether a certain article was available as a PDF for a fee, as a free PDF, or as a preprint. The study found that only some journals were completely indexed by Google Scholar, that the ratio of versions available depend on the type of publisher, and that availability varied a lot from journal to journal.

Yet another study to understand the characteristics of LIS open access journals analysed 65 English language LIS journals through descriptive statistical analysis and summative qualitative content analysis\(^11\). The study found the growing diversity of subjects and target audiences, the central role of double-blind peer review in LIS OA, and the acknowledgement that consistency and interoperability among OAJs remain a challenge that may undermine goals for dissemination. Only one Indian LIS journal was covered in the study and name of the journal was not mentioned.

Khandare and Sonwane\(^12\) focused on library and information science e-journals accessible under N-LIST Consortium and suggested that there should be more Indian e-journals of LIS under N-LIST consortium.

Pujar\(^13\) identified journals related to the field of LIS by undertaking a subject search on ‘Library Science’ using downloaded metadata of journals from DOAJ. It was found that 147 titles were related to the field of LIS. Websites of each of the journals were visited to check the current status of the journals. Impact factor of the journals were obtained from Journal Citation Reports 2012. The list of 147 journals included 7 journals published from India.

Awasthi and Jaiswal\(^14\) presented a bibliometric study of library and information science journals archived in the DOAJ. A total of 72 LIS journals were included in the study. The analysis was done on different parameters like country-wise distribution, language-wise distribution, etc. The study covered two Indian LIS journals.

Thavamani, Kotti\(^15\) conducted a bibliometric study of 151 library and information science journals indexed in DOAJ. The study found that the start dates show a proliferation of journals appearing in a three-year period from 2004 to 2006 – 40 in all. While 2011 saw 13 new journals, the numbers have tapered-off significantly in the past two years. The list covered six Indian LIS journals.

Gupta, Kumar and Kabra\(^3\) studied the UGC list and found that this list covered 15 journals of library and information science published from India out of which 8 journals were found to be online of which 4 e-journals have e-ISSNs. The study provided comprehensive information and critically examined key aspects of UGC API such as: ISSN, reviewed/refereed/ coverage in abstracting and indexing in databases, journal ranking and updateness of journals in Indian Library and Information Science journals.

Based on review of literature, the relevant data to make a case for Indian online LIS journals is presented in the table-1

Table 1 that is drawn on the basis of existing literature indicates that the number of online journals vary in each study. Majority of the studies are related to open access. The earlier study made by Gupta, Kumar and Kabra (2018) identified 8 online journals and from which the journals not available in the UGC approved list presently, include Journal of Digital Information Management; Information Studies; and COLNET Journal of Scientometrics and Information Management. So, there may be journals that have not been a part of any previous study and are part of this list. The present study makes a study of e-journals covered in the UGC approved list as updated on 2\(^{nd}\) May 2018 after removal of journals.

**Objectives of the study**

- To identify Indian LIS e-journals covered in the UGC list of approved journals;
- To consolidate information about the e-journals published from India covered in the UGC list; and
To identify and discuss issues about the e-LIS journals covered in the UGC list.

**Methodology**

A total of 14 LIS journals were identified and included in this study from the category-wise list of journals approved by the UGC as available on the UGC website. To identify the 14 journals that the UGC list was studied during 25th April to 25th May 2018. Data received from individual journal from the searches were tabulated and annexed with the name of the journal, ISSN, e-ISSN, Source, Subject, publisher, country of publication, broad subject category. Further, the study analyses various aspects of e-journals that are found pertinent in regard to establishing a quality journals.

**Analysis**

**Identification of online Journals**

In the initial released by UGC on 11 January 2017, only 15 Indian LIS journals were included. Out of these, four journals had e-ISSNs. Later more journals were added and the UGC list had 357 LIS journals out of which 91 LIS journals were published from India (on the basis of UGC journals details which has column of country of publication) with 22 LIS journals having eISSNs. On 2 May 2018, UGC announced removal of several journals in which
51 Indian LIS journals were removed. Thereafter, 40 Indian LIS journals remained in the list. Both prior and post removal of journals’ list, the data are summarized below in the Table 2.

Out of the 40 journals in the final list, 11 journals have eISSNs. On checking the ISSN Database, it is seen that more journals have eISSNs (Table 3).

**Subject-wise category**

The UGC-approved list of journals is classified under four broad subject categories, namely: i) Science; ii) Social Science; iii) Arts and Humanities; and iv) Multidisciplinary. These broad subject categories are further divided into more than 300 sub-categories. The *Journal of Advances and Scholarly Researches in Allied Education* at UGC sr. no.49103 is included under Library and Information Science. However, this cannot be included under LIS neither the editorial board not the coverage relate to LIS and hence has not been included for this study. The journal *Periodic Research* at serial number 41295 of the UGC list has also not be considered for the present study for the same reason.

*Journal of Education of Library and Information Science* at serial number 64137 with e-ISSN 2328-2967 is being published from the USA (as per ISSN records) and hence excluded from the study. *International Journal of Information Library and Society* at serial number 43840 of the UGC list only has print ISSN as per the ISSN database and therefore has been excluded. The remaining 14 journals (Annexure I) have been taken up for the study.

**Title of the journal**

Journal titles are expected to be unique and as per ISSN India Guidelines, journals changing their titles must mention the details of old title/ ISSN and the details of issues published during that period on the new journal or journal’s website. While going through the detailed information of each journal, it is found that some journals have issues related to the change title (Table 4).

Table 4 reflects that a few journals have changed titles in the past. However, looking at the UGC list of approved journals, only one former title of the one journal was found, i.e. *DESIDOC Bulletin of Information Technology*. Mismatches have also been in titles of the journals with the UGC list and mentioning titles different from that the ISSN Database. *Journal of Advances and Scholarly Researches in Allied Education* is *Journal of Advances and Scholarly Research in Allied Education*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particular Status before journals removal from UGC</th>
<th>Status after journals removal from UGC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total No. of LIS Journals 357</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian LIS Journal 91</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Online Journals (with eISSN) 22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Print Journals (with ISSN) 76</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3—e-ISSNs of UGC approved Indian online journals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journals with e-ISSN in the UGC List</th>
<th>Additional journals with e-ISSN through ISSN database</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Annals of Library and Information Studies</em></td>
<td><em>Journal of Indian Library Association</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology</em></td>
<td><em>Library Herald</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gyankosh : Journal of Library and Information Management</em></td>
<td><em>Library Progress International</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>International Journal of Information Library and Society</em></td>
<td><em>Pearl: Journal of Library &amp; Information Science</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>International Journal of Library, Information, Networks and Knowledge</em></td>
<td><em>SRELS Journal of Information Management</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Journal of Advancements in Library Sciences</em></td>
<td><em>KIIT Journal of Library and Information Management</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Journal of Advances and Scholarly Researches in Allied Education</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and KIIT Journal of Library & Information
Management is KIIT Journal of Library and
Information Management in the ISSN Database17,18.

ISSN
‘The ISSN is a standard identifier for serials (e.g.,
journals, magazines, newsletters, newspapers,
annuals) whether published in print, online or other
media. Each medium version is assigned a separate
ISSN’ means online and printed versions of a journal
are required to have separate ISSN’19. As pointed out
in the Table 3, 7 journals were having e-ISSNs as per
ISSN database while UGC list does not mention them.
It is seen that the Journal of Scientometric Research
has different ISSN in the ISSN database (2320-0057)
where as the UGC list gives the ISSN as 2320-0059.

Issuing body vis-a-vis publisher
Each journal is brought out by an issuing
body/sponsoring body and published by a
publisher/printer. In some cases both are one and the
same. While studying the 14 Indian LIS e-journals,
the following variations are noted: The World Digital
Library is brought out by TERI and published by
TERI Press as mentioned at both TERI website and
IOS Press website. While looking at the list of
journals on the UGC list, the only IOS Press is
mentioned as publisher. SRELS Journals of
Information Management is brought out by Sharda
Ranganathan Endowment for Library Science and
published by Informatics Publishing Limited as
mentioned on journal’s website. However, only the
name Sharda Ranganathan Endowment for Library
Science is given on the UGC list. For the journal,
Gyankosh: Journal of Library and Information
Management, the name of publisher at the UGC list is
same as that of the journal name.

Coverage in ROAD and DOAJ and indexing databases
The quality of a journal is determined by many
factors including coverage in recognized
bibliographical and full text databases. The inclusion
of a journal in subject specific indexing databases
should be a matter of concern for the researchers. The
UGC API gives higher weightage to a researcher, if
his/her paper is published in a journal, which is
indexed. The UGC journal evaluation checklist also
prescribes one of the criteria as ‘The journal claims
that it’s indexed in a given database and this claim is
verified.’ Major abstracting and indexing databases in
the subject Library and Information Science include:
Library and Information Science Abstract (LISA);
Library and Information Science and Technology
Abstract (LISTA); Library Literature and Information
Science Index20, 21, 22.

The Communication and Information Sector of
UNESCO has developed the Global Open Access
Portal (GOAP) which presents a snapshot of the status
of Open Access (OA) to scientific information around
the world. ROAD (Directory of Open Access
Scholarly Resources) has been conceived as an
additional mechanism to GOAP23. Whereas DOAJ is
a community-curated online directory that indexes
and provides access to high quality, open access,
peer-reviewed journals24. The indexing status of the
14 journals in the above-mentioned databases is given
in Table 5. Only three journals are covered in one or
more indexing databases.

Ranking of journals
There are various databases like Web of Science
and Scopus which rank journals based on impact of
the published papers. Google Scholar also provides
metrics for academic resources and scholarly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Journal</th>
<th>Former Title-1</th>
<th>Former Title-2</th>
<th>Coverage on the Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DESIDOC Journal of Library Information</td>
<td>DESIDOC Bulletin of Information Technology</td>
<td>DESIDOC Bulletin</td>
<td>Information of former Title-1 only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Indian Library Association</td>
<td>ILA Bulletin</td>
<td>Indian Library Association Bulletin</td>
<td>No information given on the website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRELS Journal of Information Management</td>
<td>Library Science with a Slant to</td>
<td>Library Science with a Slant to</td>
<td>Information about both the titles has been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Documentation and Information Studies</td>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>given on the website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annals of Library and Information Studies</td>
<td>Annals of Library and Information Science and Documentation</td>
<td>Annals of Library and Information Science</td>
<td>Information about both the titles has been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>given on the website</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
literature. Each of the journals under the study is searched with advance search option using exact title of the journal in Google Scholar. Ranking of the selected journals based on Google Scholar based metrics such as h5 Index and h5 median for ranking of the is shown in figures 1 and 2.

On the basis of total number of search results with exact title of the journal, the higher results were found for Annals of Library and Information Studies, followed by SRELS Journal of Information Management, DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology, Library Herald, and Journal of Indian Library Association. While looking at the H5 index and H5-median, the journals that got highest score include: DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology, Annals of

Conclusion

Variations about the Indian LIS e-journals in the UGC list and the ISSN database is seen. There is a need for detailed guidelines from UGC that need to be followed for identifying e-journals. Publishers/issuing bodies also need to be careful in bringing out the e-journals and adopt international best practices to fulfill UGC’s expectations.

References

1. UGC Notice reg.: UGC approved List of Journals for the purpose of Career Advancement Scheme (CAS) and Direct Recruitment of Teachers and other academic staff as required under the UGC (Minimum Qualifications for Appointment of Teachers and other Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges) (Published on 11/01/2017). Available at: http://ugc.ac.in/ugc_notices.aspx?id=1604 (Accessed on 11th January 2017).


18. ISSN National Centre, India (ISSN database). URL: http://nsl.niscair.res.in/ISSNPROCESS/issnassignedinfo.jsp


---

**Annexure-I**

**List of Indian Online journals which covered in the study (After Exclusion/Inclusion)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. no.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>ISSN</th>
<th>E-ISSN</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Year of Starting</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Annals of Library and Information Studies</td>
<td>National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR)</td>
<td>972-5423</td>
<td>0975-2404</td>
<td>Scopus &amp; ICI</td>
<td>New Delhi</td>
<td>1954/2001</td>
<td>4/12</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Gyankosh : Journal of Library and Information Management</td>
<td>Gyankosh : Journal of Library and Information Management</td>
<td>2229-4023</td>
<td>2249-3182</td>
<td>UGC</td>
<td>Ghaziabad</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>International Journal of Information Studies and Libraries</td>
<td>Publishing India Group</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2456-1827</td>
<td>UNIV</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contd—
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Journal Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Volume/Issue</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pages</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><em>International Journal of Library, Information, Networks and Knowledge</em></td>
<td>Scientific Society of Advance Research and Social Change</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>2455-5207</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><em>Journal of Advancements in Library Sciences</em></td>
<td>STM Journals</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>2349-4352</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><em>Journal of Scientometric research</em></td>
<td>phcog.net</td>
<td>2321-6654</td>
<td></td>
<td>2320-0059, 2320-0057*</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><em>Journal of Indian Library Association</em></td>
<td>Indian Library Association, Delhi</td>
<td>2277-5145</td>
<td></td>
<td>2456-513X</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><em>Library Herald</em></td>
<td>Indianjournals.com</td>
<td>0024-2292</td>
<td></td>
<td>0976-2469</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td><em>Pearl: Journal of Library &amp; Information Science</em></td>
<td>Indianjournals.com</td>
<td>0973-7081</td>
<td></td>
<td>0975-6922</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td><em>SRELS Journal of Library Management</em></td>
<td>Informatics Publishing Ltd Bangalore</td>
<td>0972-2467</td>
<td></td>
<td>0976-2477</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>