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Editorial Column

Changing Trend in LIS Education
Siddhartha Shankar Ray

In my previous editorial address I have mentioned about the transformations and transitions our profession is going through. It seems therefore relevant to discuss the issue in the context of LIS Education. LIS education being a professional course of studies, the course curriculum should be made according to the demand of the day and a strong background of their intrinsic theories. It is quite natural therefore to see introduction of Computer & IT related techniques which were virtually non-existent in B.Lib.I.Sc. Course a couple of decades ago. I can still recall my M.Lib.I.Sc. days more than 30 years back when we used to enter data through punched cards at ISI, Calcutta where we used to go for practical class. With the pedagogic discourses comprising basics of FORTRAN, BASIC COBOL and the binary numbers of 0s & 1s and by dint of which we could wrench out an additional letter 'I' added to our Master's Class leading it to Master of Library & Information Science. We believed that it was sort of recognition of our expertise which may help us to compete with our counterparts passing out from the then INSDOC & DRTC with degrees of Associateship!! While, as I can tell for myself, I was hardly competent enough to work before a computer (I should admit that this inability is still in my guts even today!!)

The situation has changed drastically over the years and almost all the faculty in LIS departments are expert IT specialists and they teach exceptionally well. However, it is a bare fact that LIS education is not all about Computer & ITs. It has some basic issues & theories pertaining to the techniques of common library practices like organization & dissemination of information, selection of books, techniques of bindings (which we were taught in our Physical Bibliography classes), Indexing & techniques of database searching etc. They are all practical requirements and as such, the curriculum needs to be framed with a combination of both. Librarianship is a professional course; yet, unlike other vocational courses its nature is virtually academic. It is to be seen that the academic flavour of this profession is retained to keep this profession apart from other professional courses.