On revamping and strengthening internship in libraries

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Basing the emails about openings that appeared during January 2009 to August 2015 in few mailing lists, the paper examines the advertisements, positions, designations, locations, institutions, qualifications, duration, compensation, age limit, and special skills required for intern positions. The paper proposes a revamped internship routine giving equal weightage to pragmatic work-based learning of library routines blended with academic, development and research activities. The selection process, nature and mode of recruitment, preference to fresh or experienced candidates, work constraints, work profile, honorarium and deliverables are illustrated. The potential locations for deploying interns are estimated using data from different sources. Similarly, the enrolment and pass-out details of library science students are assessed to estimate the required number of intern positions. The number of intern positions to be accommodated in every institution depends on the strength and diversity of its library activities and the present staff strength. To strengthen internship in libraries, a national policy regarding the operationalization of the scheme in all libraries may be pursued as a vital CSR initiative.

Keywords: Intern – library; Trainee – library; Academic library; Research library; Public library

Introduction

Internship is an ideal means to fruitfully engage new professionals into the profession, practiced successfully in many professional streams of medicine, engineering, management and law, to name a few. Library profession also like other professional streams has adopted the practice of deploying interns in several academic and research libraries. Successful work as a library professional requires practical know-how which is not naturally incorporated in MLIS programs since library schools do not have laboratory libraries where students can practice real-world librarianship[1]. Any professional discipline needs hands on experience in the actual work situation before the graduates are to be sent for professional work. Perhaps to meet this objective, several programmes of internship, training and apprenticeship are available in different institutions in the country. The benefits of this initiative to a budding professional are tremendous as it enables the person to effectively acquaint with the differences between preach and practice and to focus on those areas which are of increased attention in practical professional work.

Gupta[2] takes internship as a process to fill in the gap in learning between academic institution and the corporate world. Students bring fresh ideas and perspectives, youthful enthusiasm, perhaps even skills and insights from previous professions if librarianship is a second career for them to offer us nascent creative solutions[1]. Kent shared her work as a trainee as "experience in a new and challenging environment, in-depth training in an interesting subject, a chance to work closely with experienced and interesting professionals, and a degree of independence in my working so I felt that I was making my own contribution to the library"[3].

Libraries which operate such programmes are also immensely benefitted from trainees on many counts. Internship enables students a rich learning experience to see and experience how libraries work and see the contexts in which they operate, issues faced and how they are addressed, patterns of interaction with internal and external constituencies[1]. The general perception that computerized information handling needs a smaller number of officials, relatively low number of professional positions in libraries, and the long-drawn recruiting process for regular positions are reasons for stagnating human resources in libraries. To overcome the staff shortage, many libraries have trainee or intern positions. Gupta[2] identified twofold objectives for the internship programme as:

(i) To attract motivated and talented students of LIS coming from diverse academic background to work in the library for a short period to enhance academic expertise through practical work.

(ii) To provide the faculty members of LIS centres, a kind of assistance of highly enthusiastic and talented students capable of hard work with good analytical and research aptitude to work in key areas.

Review of literature

Sawant and Sawant discuss the status of job placement and internship activity held in fourteen LIS schools/colleges in Maharashtra. They found that none of the departments/colleges receive job request through the job placement cell which normally caters to streams of engineering, management, pharmaceuticals etc., and LIS teachers play significant role in job placement of their students. The paper also mentioned about 30 days of internship of 2/4 credits pursued by some departments as part of the curriculum[4].

Biswas and Roy analyzed five notable websites dealing with job advertisements: Naukri (www.naukri.com), Shine (shine.com), Monster (monsterindia.com), Indeed Jobs (indeed.co.in) and trovit jobs (jobs.trovit.co.in). Their study pertained to the year 2017 and the authors identified 76 trainee positions (around 5%) out of a total of 1573 jobs[5].

Jakaria Rahman et al., assessed library science education in Bangladesh and found that new library graduates are facing challenges in the real world of library activities in terms of 'literacy and numeracy, organizational qualities, inclusive vision, a questioning approach, perspective, problem-solving and analytical skills, communication and social skills, political and economic skills, a sense of service and an ability to accept uncertainty; 'professional' knowledge relevant to librarianship; and practical library skills etc.' They also suggested the LIS teaching "department should make sure that their graduates have some practical experience as full-time paid interns, like doctors, lawyers, business personnel and executives, before they accept professional positions of responsibility."[6]

Irfan et al., identify workplace learning as essential for library professionals to provide creative and innovative services and the inbuilt learning environment in libraries provides ample opportunities for workplace learning[7]. Pradhan suggests LIS graduates to develop certain set of market oriented and multidimensional skills such as communication skills; professional competencies; analytical capabilities; problem solving skills; and ICT skills to meet the changing demands of the information job market[8].

Gupta[2] identifies the crux of internship in libraries as it 'needs more weight and attention of LIS professionals to expand its scope and availability to groom better LIS professionals.'

Mays considers "offering internships is akin to a covenant with the next generation of professionals." The author identified the benefits of internship as enabling the intern 'to see how library staff work and to feel it out; see the contexts in which libraries operate; how libraries navigate the issues faced and interact with internal and external constituencies; and how libraries fit in with campus life and communities'[1].

Illustration of reported internship opportunities

With automated smart office procedures, cost cutting measures and better perks granted to those in position, libraries like other entities of academic and research institutions are often finding it difficult to increase the number of permanent professional positions. In many cases, recruitment to vacant positions is due to procedural delays. For a service institution like library, a set of professionals are required to keep the libraries functional. Whenever there is a shortage of staff, it is generally observed that those in the front office are deployed in the back office impacting the overall service aspect of libraries.

Internship naturally comes to the rescue of libraries in such a scenario. Young professionals can be hired on short term contract at lesser pay than what is paid for entry level permanent position. The profile of learners in every discipline is changing rapidly due to advances in the discipline concerned. The new learners bring with them new skills. It is practically impossible for a library to hire permanent positions every 5/10 years whereas they get the advantage of employing new skilled youngsters continuously through internship. The interns can be easily motivated to undertake a variety of tasks, routine as well as intellectual, development as well as research and traditional as well as modern. The rich training on various aspects they receive in a library would put them in a better advantage than untrained fresh candidates. This will help them gain better jobs in future where prior experience in related field is almost a constraint in every position advertised.

Expectations of libraries from Interns as per some of the advertisements are:
- to work conscientiously and diligently
- devote to acquire skills and knowledge during the term of training
- dedicate whole time and attend exclusively to the training
- not work for any other person, institution or company whatsoever nor do any occupation or take any scholarship for gain without prior permission in writing
- not being absent from the training without the prior permission of the appropriate authority

- to observe and comply with all the established rules and regulations
- see that no damage to the property is caused and agree to reimburse or make good the damage, if any, caused

The study surveyed emails about openings for trainee positions that appeared over a six-year period from January 2009 to August 2015 in few mailing lists. Although the data pertains to the period 2009-2015, the general situation with respect to library human resources have not undergone a major change. Regular positions in Indian libraries remain vacant and more and more libraries are depending on trainees and interns. In addition the analysis of this data, the recent trends regarding such positions in the country are also discussed.

The mailing lists NMLIS (nmlis@yahoogroups.com), DIGLIBINDIA (digilib_india@yahoogroups.com) (both are mailing lists on Yahoo Groups which shutdown on December 15, 2020, as per https://groups.yahoo.com/neo) and LIS-FORUM (LIS-Forum@ncsi.iisc.ernet.in) were identified for the purpose. The individual advertisements were analyzed to reveal the trends and patterns of opportunities available. Advertisements that have appeared in other sources are not included in this study.

Advertisement and positions

Table 1 shows that many advertisements did not mention the number of positions available. Advertisements for trainees with certificate and diploma in library science were not included in this study, though they are useful in tasks assigned to library attendants. It was also noticed that more advertisements occurred during certain months. More positions got notified in advertisements that appeared in the months of September, October, May and July (Table 2). Since the data for 2015 is partial, it can be concluded that both advertisements and positions are rising in succeeding years probably due to the increasing interest in offering internship shown by more libraries due to its inherent virtues.

Designations galore

Different institutions follow different nomenclature for the intern positions in library as shown in Table 3. Such diversity in designations is expected in the absence of a national policy or guidelines regarding deploying interns in libraries. There are also at least three categories of such positions based on the qualification prescribed such as diploma, bachelor and masters in library and information science. The preferred designations are library trainee, apprentice, graduate trainee, graduate apprentice, trainee, library intern, and library management trainee. Out of which, the positions with designations 'apprentice', 'graduate apprentice' and 'graduate apprentice (Library or Library Science)' are recruited as per the Apprenticeship Training Act[16] of Government of India by few libraries. The term 'intern' is used to denote this category of professionals in this study due to the currency the term has gained in the corporate world, legal and management professions, and in many libraries of the country. However, the one-month

Table 1 — Advertisements

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2009	2		1	1	1		3	1		4		1	14
2010	2		1		4		4	3	4	1	2	3	24
2011	1		2	1	4	2	2	3	2	1	1	1	20
2012	1		1	1	3	3	5	5	6	3	1	3	32
2013	2		2	1	4	4	3	3	7	3	3	1	33
2014	1	1	2	2	1	1	5	5	8	3	3		32
2015	1	2	2		5	4	4	2					20
Total	10	3	11	6	22	14	26	22	27	15	10	9	175

Table 2 — Positions

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2009	NM		NM	4	NM		NM	6		19		2	31
2010	2		3		7		NM	1	9	NM	4	4	30
2011	3		7	6	3	2	8	3	11	2	2	NM	47
2012	3		NM	4	9	2	18	5	9	5	NM	2	57
2013	2		1	2	21	12	7	16	17	21	12	NM	111
2014	8	6	2	5	6	4	14	16	31	23	3		118
2015	1	8	2		15	8	7	NM					41
Total	19	14	15	21	61	28	54	47	77	70	21	8	435

(NM- Not mentioned)

Table 3 — Designations followed for internship by libraries

Sl. no.	Designation	Advertisements		Positions	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	Apprentice	5	2.85	34	7.82
2	Graduate Apprentice	3	1.71	24	5.52
3	Graduate Apprentice (Library Science)	3	1.71	6	1.38
4	Graduate Trainee	7	4.00	27	6.21
5	Graduate Trainee (Library)	2	1.14	13	2.99
6	Intern	1	0.57	6	1.38
7	Information Management Trainee	4	2.28	3	0.69
8	Learning Resource Centre (LRC) – Intern	3	1.71	8	1.84
9	Library Apprentice	2	1.14	Not mentioned	
10	Library Assistant / Trainee	4	2.28	6	1.38
11	Library Intern	6	3.43	15	3.45
12	Library Internee	5	2.85	Not mentioned	
13	Library & Information Assistant (Intern)	1	0.57	4	0.92
14	Library & Information Trainee	1	0.57	5	1.15
15	Library Management Trainee	1	0.57	15	3.45
16	Library Professional Trainee	2	1.14	13	2.99
17	Library Science Trainee	1	0.57	6	1.38
18	Library Trainee	87	49.71	185	42.53
19	PG trainee- Library Science	2	1.14	2	0.46
20	Professional Trainee	2	1.14	Not mentioned	
21	Senior Library Trainee	1	0.57	8	1.84
22	Stipendiary Trainee - Category II	1	0.57	4	0.92
23	Trainee	8	4.57	24	5.52
24	Trainee in Library Science	1	0.57	6	1.38
25	Other designations	22	12.57	21	4.83
	Total	175		435	

internship conducted as part of MLIS by some universities, as they are before the receipt of degree, is not considered in this study.

Places with positions

The places with most intern advertisements are Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Gandhinagar, Pune, and Ahmedabad (Table 4). Delhi maintained the lead in the number of positions followed by Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Trivandrum, Chennai, and Bangalore. Institutions in other places are either not appointing interns or they are not advertising in mailing lists.

Number of positions

The exact number of positions is difficult to estimate because many advertisements were silent on the number of positions available. Institutions do not follow a fixed number of intern positions and the number is decided based on the specific requirements in a particular session and/or depending upon the suitability of available candidates. There are also advertisements showing approximate numbers or a range. It seems that since stipend is to be provided,

many libraries are constrained to decide on the exact number of interns for a particular session beforehand. They want to leverage on the best candidates available based on specific projects of the library.

Institutions with interns

The advertisements from different institutions indicate that those institutions which started the internship programme are continuing with it (Table 5). More advertisements originated from national education institutions other than central universities, IITs, IIMs and NITs and national research institutes. It is evident that educational institutions of national importance and research institutes have an ample preference for library internship than others due to well stocked, multiple service driven, user-oriented libraries functioning in such institutions. As a result, institutions advertising more intern positions are national research institutes, national education institutions, central universities, IITs, private institutes, IIMs, state universities and NITs. This has more to do with academic and research atmosphere prevailing in these institutions which desires better libraries.

Table 4 — Locations with Intern positions

Sl. no.	Place	Advertisements		Positions	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	Ahmedabad	9	5.14	43	9.89
2	Bangalore	20	11.43	24	5.52
3	Belgaum	1	0.57	8	1.84
4	Bhubaneswar	4	2.28	9	2.07
5	Chennai	6	3.43	26	5.98
6	Delhi	21	12.00	65	14.94
7	Gandhinagar	13	7.43	31	7.13
8	Gurgaon	2	1.14	2	0.46
9	Haridwar	1	0.57	6	1.38
10	Hyderabad	6	3.43	11	2.53
11	Jaipur	3	1.71	2	0.46
12	Jamshedpur	3	1.71	9	2.07
13	Kasaragod	4	2.28	2	0.46
14	Kharagpur	2	1.14	Not mentioned	
15	Kolkata	7	4.00	12	2.76
16	Koraput	2	1.14	4	0.92
17	Kozhikode	3	1.71	4	0.92
18	Mumbai	21	12.00	43	9.89
19	Pondicherry	2	1.14	13	2.99
20	Pune	12	6.86	20	4.60
21	Rohtak	2	1.14	Not mentioned	
22	Rourkela	2	1.14	17	3.91
23	Sagar	1	0.57	15	3.45
24	Santiniketan	1	0.57	10	2.30
26	Shimla	2	1.14	8	1.84
27	Sonepat	4	2.28	5	1.15
28	Surathkal	1	0.57	5	1.15
29	Tiruchirappalli	3	1.71	Not mentioned	
30	Trivandrum	4	2.28	30	6.90
31	Others	13	7.43	11	2.53
		175		435	

Table 5 — Type of institutions with advertisements and positions

Sl. no.	Institution type	Institutions		Advertisements		Positions	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	National education institute	25	25.26	49	28.00	92	21.15
2	Central universities	8	8.08	15	8.57	57	13.10
3	IIMs	6	6.06	13	7.43	27	6.21
4	IITs	6	6.06	17	9.71	49	11.26
5	International research institute	1	1.01	2	1.14	4	0.92
6	National research councils	1	1.01	1	0.57	5	1.15
7	National research institutes	23	23.23	38	21.71	116	26.67
8	NITs	3	3.03	4	2.29	22	5.06
9	Private industries	2	2.02	2	1.14	Not Mentioned	
10	Private institutes	7	7.07	11	6.29	29	6.67
11	Private universities	6	6.06	13	7.43	7	1.61
12	Public industries	1	1.01	1	0.57	Not Mentioned	
13	Public libraries	3	3.03	3	1.71	2	0.46
14	State universities	7	7.07	6	3.43	25	5.75
	Total	99		175		435	

Qualifications prescribed

Table 6 details the qualifications prescribed for deploying interns. There is an edge for MLIS holders than those with BLIS for getting recruited as interns. A few advertisements seek "BLIS/MLIS" where there is a possibility that MLIS degree holder might have an edge on the BLIS applicants. Some advertisements also prescribe special qualifications which will be discussed in a later part of this paper. Though internship is generally offered to fresh

Table 6 — Prescribed qualifications

Sl. No.	Qualification	Advertisements		Positions	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	Bachelors with MLIS or Masters with BLIS	4	2.29	30	6.90
2	BLIS	29	16.57	51	11.72
3	BLIS with 55%	3	1.71	18	4.14
4	BLIS with 60%	5	2.86	42	9.66
5	BLIS with experience/computer knowledge	7	4.00	8	1.84
6	BLIS/MLIS	24	13.71	61	14.03
7	BLIS/MLIS with computer knowledge	6	3.43	6	1.38
8	BSc and BLIS/ MLIS	10	5.71	24	5.52
9	MLIS	32	18.29	60	13.79
10	MLIS with at least 55%	14	8.00	46	10.57
11	MLIS with first class	29	16.57	64	14.71
12	MLIS with 65%	2	1.14	8	1.84
13	MLIS with experience/computer knowledge	8	4.57	16	3.68
14	Not mentioned	2	1.14	1	0.23
	Total	175		435	

Table 7 — Duration of internship

Sl. no.	Duration of internship	Advertisements		Positions	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	84 days	2	1.14	4	0.92
2	3 months	3	1.71	6	1.38
3	5 months	2	1.14	3	0.69
4	6 months	13	7.43	24	5.52
5	6 months extendable to 1 year	12	6.86	12	2.76
6	6 months extendable to 2 years	1	0.57	1	0.23
7	8 months	5	2.86	8	1.84
8	9 months	1	0.57	2	0.46
9	10 months	2	1.14	3	0.69
10	11 months	3	1.71	12	2.76
11	1 year	85	48.57	200	45.98
12	1 year, extendable to 2 years	3	1.71	3	0.69
13	1 year, extendable to 3 years	2	1.14	Not mentioned	
14	2 years	18	10.29	88	20.23
15	Not mentioned	23	13.14	69	15.86
	Total	175		435	

candidates with some advertisements stating that qualifying degree had to be in the last couple of years, but there are others that seek prior experience of 6-12 months.

Duration of internship

Nearly half of the intern positions are for duration of 1 year as listed in Table 7. A sizeable number of libraries operating yearlong internship is one of the reasons why this paper proposed an annual internship in libraries in the latter part of this paper. There are also advertisements for 6 months and two-year internship programmes. The specific duration of internship is not mentioned in few advertisements. There are also some advertisements which mentioned performance-based extension of one/two year(s) from the initial 6 months or 1 year internship.

Compensation offered

The compensation provided to interns, varied from institution to institution (Table 8). The advertisements from the same institution for different years sometimes showed an increase in compensation and sometimes the same compensation was continued. It has been found that in the absence of prescribed guidelines, often it is up to the institution concerned to fix the emoluments. Forward looking institutions preferring good candidates often fix higher compensation. Some advertisements did not indicate the compensation offered. Around 37% of the positions paid ₹ 8000-10000 and almost 30% of the positions offered more than ₹ 10000.

Age limit

Some advertisements do not prescribe any age limit for candidates to apply for intern positions (Table 9).

Table 8 — Compensation offered

Sl. no.	Compensation in ₹	Advertisements		Positions	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	2530	2	1.14	14	3.22
2	3560	2	1.14	18	4.14
3	4000	4	2.29	3	0.69
4	4000/3000	1	0.57	5	1.15
5	5000	10	5.71	58	13.33
6	5000-6000	1	0.57	2	0.46
7	5000 (1st Year) and 6250 (2nd Year)	1	0.57	10	2.30
8	6000	8	4.57	8	1.84
9	6000 to BLIS; 7000 to MLIS	1	0.57	3	0.69
10	6200 (1st year) and 7200 (2nd year)	3	1.71	7	1.61
11	7000	4	2.29	5	1.15
12	7500 (1st Year) and 8000 (2nd Year)	4	2.29	24	5.52
13	8000	18	10.29	53	12.19
14	8400	1	0.57	7	1.61
15	9000	3	1.71	2	0.46
16	9000 with free accommodation	1	0.57	6	1.38
17	9000 plus HRA	1	0.57	2	0.46
18	10000	38	21.71	64	14.71
19	10000 for first six months and then 12000	1	0.57	4	0.92
20	11500	6	3.43	12	2.76
21	12000	10	5.71	21	4.83
22	12000/14000	1	0.57	6	1.38
23	13000	1	0.57	4	0.92
24	14000	6	3.43	21	4.83
25	15000	7	4.00	26	5.98
26	16000	9	5.14	23	5.29
27	16000 (1st Year) and 17000 (2nd Year)	1	0.57	3	0.69
28	16000/20000	1	0.57	3	0.69
29	18000	1	0.57	4	0.92
30	20000 (1st Year) 21000 (2nd Year)	1	0.57	2	0.46
31	Others	22	12.57	3 (Not Mentioned-19)	0.69
32	Not mentioned	5	2.86	12	2.76
	Total	175		435	

Table 9 — Prescribed age limit

Sl. No.	Age Limit Prescribed in years	Advertisements		Positions	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	18-minimum	1	0.57	2	0.46
2	18-22	2	1.14	5	1.15
3	18-28	3	1.71	6	1.38
4	22 maximum	1	0.57	2	0.46
5	25 maximum	19	10.86	34	7.82
6	26 maximum	16	9.14	47	10.80
7	27 maximum	4	2.29	6	1.38
8	28 maximum	19	10.86	75	17.24
9	30 maximum	14	8.00	50	11.49
10	35 maximum	4	2.29	8	1.84
11	Degrees after 2010	5	2.86	37	8.50
12	Not mentioned	87	49.71	163	37.47
	Total	175		435	

The age limit prescribed varied from as low as 18 to as high as 35. In the case of a few advertisements, rather than prescribing the age of the candidate, the advertisements mentioned the date of receipt of degree preferring fresh candidates. This might be taken as a better strategy because library science is being pursued by many students after their studies even up to post graduation in other disciplines. It would be ideal if the

candidate undertakes internship immediately after B/MLIS so that theory and limited practical learned in the course can be perfected through internship, leading to gainful employment in future.

Special skills prescribed
The different special skills sought for intern positions by libraries are listed in Table 10. These are characterized into three groups of soft, library and ICT skills. Libraries seem to expect candidates to possess such skills so that the interns can meet the ever-changing needs of the digital information organization landscape and associated service delivery challenges. Another reason could be that the libraries want to restrict the number of candidates applying for these positions to reduce the workload in conducting

Table 10 — Special skills required for intern positions

Soft Skills	Library Skills
1. Ability to adapt to an intercultural work environment	1. Abilities to understand the importance of systems and standard procedures to manage libraries
2. Able to interact with different kinds of clients	2. Experience in library and information services
3. Aptitude for providing excellent service	3. Familiar with the preservation and conservation procedure of the library materials
4. Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English	4. Good Knowledge of Library Management Software
5. Good academic record and professional knowledge	5. Good Knowledge of Library Management Software, E-Resources
6. Good communication skills in English	6. Hands on experience in day to day running of the library facility
7. Good communication, interpersonal and social skills	7. In-depth knowledge of the formal functional activities of a library
8. Initiative, flexibility, and strong ability to work in a team environment	8. Knowledge of DSpace and cataloguing in MARC21 and Dublin Core
9. Proficiency in written and communication skills	9. Knowledge of providing information services
10. Skills in the application of theory to practical work situations	10. Technical processing skills, familiarity of MARC21, computer applications in library management and automation
11. Strong commitment to public service	11. Understanding of the area of and trends in Environment Education and Education for Sustainable development and how such subject-specialist library collections are built
12. Strong communication (written and oral) skills in English	
13. Strong interpersonal and intrapersonal skills	12. Working experiences in a Technical Library
14. Systematic, logical and hardworking	13. Working knowledge of library software, open source software and e-resources
15. Take initiatives and result oriented	14. Working knowledge of Web Based Information Resources
16. Team player	
17. Work as a team member and excel in assigned tasks	
18. Young, tech-savvy, enthusiastic, highly motivated and committed, dynamic and fresh Post-/Graduates	

Computer and ICT Skills

1. Basic Knowledge of Computers
2. Basic working knowledge of IT and IT related applications used in libraries
3. Certificate/Diploma in Computer Application/ PGDCA
4. Competence in using new technology as a research tool
5. Development of Institutional Repository, Content Development for Library Portal, Up-gradation of Library webpage and for other Library computer services
6. Expertise in ICT application and computing
7. Familiarity with Web Based Information Resources
8. Good data entry skills, accuracy and speed in typewriting
9. Good IT Skills
10. Good knowledge and experience in the usage of computers
11. Knowledge about developing websites
12. Knowledge and experience in area of Institutional Repository, DSpace / Greenstone / Eprints and web designing
13. Knowledge of computer data processing
14. Knowledge of Linux, PHP and web design
15. Knowledge of MS-Office software with data entry skill
16. Profound knowledge of computer applications
17. Proven record of expertise of data-intensive jobs
18. Skills for developing websites
19. Solely untiring and assured people to undertake very data-intensive and ICT application
20. Sound IT skills, communication skills and interpersonal skills
21. Sound knowledge of Windows and MS Office
22. Sound working knowledge of basic IT tools
23. Sound working knowledge of IT and IT related applications use in libraries

the cumbersome selection process. This is also a reflection of the skill gap libraries face due to limited permanent positions.

Revamping internship

Some Likert type questions identified by Jacobson and Shuyler in their study on 'student perceptions of academic and social effects of working in a university library'[9] are also relevant for interns such as, has the internship:

- developed my ability to work in a team?
- increased my self-confidence?
- improved my time management skills?
- made me more comfortable using the library's services, resources, and spaces for my own studies?
- improved my ability to communicate with others?
- helped me develop skills that I can use in my future career?
- improved my skills in finding and evaluating information?
- improved my customer service skills?
- allowed me to interact with people outside my normal peer group?
- enhanced my social life?
- reduced my overall worry and stress?
- been a source of social support?

The objective of internship is to provide hands-on training as well as facilitating sufficient exposure in the latest tools and techniques of information handling to instill confidence in new library and information science post/graduates helping them find a fruitful career in the libraries of reputed institutions. It is thus impending up on libraries to expose interns with modern library management and information services providing them an opportunity to work and learn on emerging applications of information, communication and digital technologies. Interns should be trained about the functioning and services of different sections of the library, library automation software such as Koha, open access repository, data applications, managing library collections through various technical and administrative functions, e-journals link checking and usage report assessment and soft skills essential for a service institution. Different libraries currently follow different patterns for engaging interns. Some libraries treat them as temporary hands to merely deal with all professional and supporting tasks which the permanent staff members are unable to handle.

In some libraries, the interns may be given time to polish their skills and nurture their academic interests. Librarian and other senior staff also engage them in academic discussions and development activities. To standardize and evolve uniformity, working out a plan for engaging interns in libraries is required and a schematic of the same is proposed in Table 11.

- **Work week and working hours**: Interns are expected to work eight hours a day for five or six days a week depending up on the work week followed by the institution.

- **Duration**: Evolve a uniform 12-month schedule for internship with no scope for any extension. Gupta proposed a three-month internship[2]. In the context of large academic and research libraries with multiple sections and some sections demanding a month-long training in one section itself, it will not be feasible to wind up the training in three months. Another area of concern is even entry level jobs these days seeking at least a year of experience which will be fruitfully met if the internship is of that duration. There is a question of library getting some work in return for the honorarium paid to interns. The annual schedule also helps the libraries with sufficient time to plan innovations in the programme, if required drawing a smooth timeline for the selection process.

Table 11 — Schematic of the proposed intern programme

1	Duration of Internship	One year
2	Working hours	Eight hour shifts daily for 5/6 days as per the timings and work week of the institution
3	Four hours a day in the first half for normal shift and four hours in the second half of evening shift	Professional work in every section of the library such as acquisition, technical processing, reference, journals, circulation, etc.
4	Four hours daily in the second half for normal shift and four hours in the first half of evening shift	Academic and development activities through lectures, tutorials, interactions, discussions, brainstorming etc., by the librarian and senior professionals. Interns can also take any courses offered by other departments of the Institution in computer technology, management, research methodology and related areas which may upskill them.
5	Project Work: Four hour slots daily out of academic and development activities during the last three months	Professionally tackle a practical problem with a research bent of mind under the active guidance of Library/Technical Officer or Assistant Librarian/Deputy Librarian/ Librarian and prepare a project report as well as publication in professional journal.

- **Learning professional work in different sections of the library through doing**: The interns should spend a month in every section of the library such as acquisition, technical processing, reference, journals, circulation, computer services, etc. After covering all these sections, if months are still left, then they may be rotated again in those sections with more workload where complex skills are to be nuanced. On a day, only four hours, preferably in the forenoons are to be assigned for work in these sections.

- **Academic and development activities**: The remaining four hours daily, preferably in the afternoons should be for academic and development activities in the form of lectures, tutorials, interactions, discussions, brainstorming etc., by the librarian and senior professionals. Interns can also take any courses offered by other departments of the institution in information and communication technology, management, research methodology and related areas. They may also be encouraged to attend conferences, workshops, seminars and other professional gatherings related to library and allied disciplines. They may also be exposed to theoretical and practical knowledge on firm foundations of technology intensive librarianship with mock interviews so that they ace tests and interviews in future for permanent professional positions.

- **Project work through research**: Project work was made essential at the MLIS level with the objective of inculcating research skills in students. However, owing to various reasons such as the high student to teacher ratio, limited time and so on, the project work in MLIS generally do not have the desired quality to mature as publications. Interns need to be given opportunities to learn research methodology and practice research on professional problems concerning day-to-day, medium as well as long terms issues concerning library operations. Interns should be assigned to a senior professional at the level of Library/Technical Officer, Assistant Librarian, Deputy Librarian, Librarian for at least three months during the last phase of the training period. Academic slots should be used to solve problems and prepare a project report as well as a publication to equip the interns with research skills which are becoming increasingly essential in the LIS profession.

Selection process

Some libraries shortlist candidates based on qualifications and select interns based on interview only. Many libraries conduct written or/and practical test apart from interview. Some libraries use the test as an elimination round where only those who qualified in the test are allowed to sit in the interview. Many fresh postgraduates in library science now take the UGC NET examination where mark list is awarded to the candidates. The libraries may use this score, if available, to prepare the merit list instead of conducting own test. Or else, the local test may be conducted only for those candidates without a NET Score.

Nature of recruitment

Advertisements for interns spell out clearly the temporary nature of the position such as "candidates may note that the intern position is purely temporary or contractual and does not lead to permanent absorption" or "the candidates will not be treated on par with regular employees and shall have no right to claim implicit or explicit for their absorption or regularization" or "the On-the-job Training Programme does not establish any relationship of employer and employee between the Institute and yourself" or "it shall not be obligatory on the part of the" institution "where training is imparted to offer any employment to any apprentice after completing the … apprenticeship training" or "the trainee programme is not regular employment and does not entitle any privileges or benefits of regular employment" or "it is only a temporary study programme for imparting training".

Mode of recruitment

Interns are recruited in libraries directly or through outsourcing agencies. Over 99% of the Interns are aware of the dynamics of recruitment in public institutions and they take internship only as a purely temporary initiative to upgrade their skills and make them more suitable to the job market. There are a few instances where after the completion of training, the interns or trainees create unpleasant experiences to the institutions by claiming permanent employment through legal route and lobbying. This has made many institutions to be wary of continuing with this noble Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) aspect of libraries. Thus, some institutions are now recruiting interns through outsourcing agencies specialized in providing human resources rather than recruiting them directly. Some institutions are also exploring to engage interns without any honorarium as a preventive tactic, though it is difficult to ensure the quality and interest of those who come for free.

New or experienced candidates

Most of the advertisement insist for the applicants to be just out of college or must have received their qualifying degrees in the last three years or so. Completion of training in another library is taken as a disqualifier in many cases. But some institutions are a bit liberal on this count as they accept candidates with some experience in other libraries. One advertisement mentioned— "preference will also be given to those who have completed internship in reputed libraries". Dalby opined that "the best interns are current students as qualified professionals who are struggling to get a job are more likely to find themselves quickly frustrated with the limited tasks and hours allocated to interns"[10] .

Work constraints

Many of the advertisements prescribed "working time varies from eight to nine hours following five or six-day week". It appeared that the sole purpose of intern position is to keep the circulation counter operational after office hours and during weekends with advertisements carrying "the selected candidate will have to work in shifts on a rotation basis and even on weekends" or "the selected candidates will have to work from Monday-Saturday (six days a week) and be ready to work in different shifts and weekends on rotation basis" or "to work in round-the-clock shift".

Work profile

Interns need to have ample opportunities to work and learn on emerging IT tools and technologies including hands on experience to work on different library related software. They need to get sufficient exposure to supportive role in routine activities of the library such as collection development (identifying resources, procurement, accessioning, bill processing and making data entries); technical processing (classification, cataloguing and bar/RFID coding); serials control (shortlisting recommendations, approving subscriptions, facilitating advance payments, monitoring receipt of issues, preparing binding lists); e-resource (enabling trial, conducting user orientation sessions, shortlisting recommendations, link checking, usage report analysis and follow-up); reference and information services (provision of print and e-reference services, indexing and abstracting, attending to the reference queries and sourcing out content for various information products), digital initiatives (digitization of text and image content with comprehensive tagging; identification and conversion of various file formats), circulation (managing counter duties, attending to user queries) as well as maintenance (binding related, reading room and stack management) duties. Some of the advertisements also list shelving, packing of parcels, and other routine jobs of an attendant.

Honorarium

The current rate of fellowship for UGC Junior Research Fellow (JRF) is ₹ 25000 per month[17]. The multitasking staff (MTS) recruited in the pay level 1 of 7th Central Pay Commission norms get a monthly pay of at least ₹ 18000. Considering these metrics, the professionally qualified B/MLIS holders joining as library intern should get matching honorarium, to compensate for the work they put in and to motivate them. The practice followed by other professional streams may also be examined to fix appropriate honorarium. Apart from this, they may either be provided with shared/single hostel/residential accommodation in campus or HRA as per the norms of the institution. Those who attend duties from own residence may also be sanctioned transport allowance applicable as per rules. They may also be granted leave and medical facilities as per the rules of the institution concerned. Good interns will not come for free and there are institutions which pay reasonably well as per some entries in Table 8. Due to the flood of library graduates hunting for limited available positions, libraries on the lookout for free interns may get them, but one can't vouch for their quality and sustain their interest. Institutions may be supported to the tune of 50% by funding agencies for interns, to begin with, as an encouragement for those which pool 50% of the honorarium from own funds.

Deliverables

A certificate of experience is generally issued to those who complete the internship training. They can come out of the internship with sufficient exposure to the best practices of librarianship armed with confidence, a project report and possibly a research publication. The graduate from the university who entered the library a year ago would emerge as the job market ready professional.

Strengthening internship

Very few institutions advertise for interns in the national media. The mailing lists and groups provided at least a national coverage to select advertisements, most often posted by outsiders. It is observed

that several libraries advertise for intern positions on the library's/institution's website, local newspapers or through circulation to nearby library science departments, making it almost impossible to estimate a comprehensive list of such positions currently available in Indian libraries.

Also, the post is not available across even one category of institutions, such as IITs, IIMs or central universities. The data compiled from different sources provide an estimate of the institutions with potential for conducting library internship (Table 12). There may be an overlap in the numbers as the chance of covering one institution in different types is possible. Most of the states have research institutions and assessing their exact number is difficult in the absence of a single affiliating or funding authority unlike estimating educational entities which have national funding and accreditation bodies. Thus, one can safely conclude that the potential locations for internship are much higher than the figures estimated in Table 12.

India is a vast country spread over 593 districts, 5564 sub-districts (tehsils/talukas/blocks)[11] and 638,365 villages[12]. Developing public libraries as per the figure indicated in Table 12 would make one such facility available for each of the thirteen or fourteen villages. Apart from the mandate for light reading, entertainment and socio-cultural awareness, as per IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, public library performs as 'the living force for education'[13].

In our country with several learners seeking higher education through the distance mode and many youths are educated but unemployed, public libraries need to be developed as information resource centres for higher education and career guidance. The public libraries should have internship programmes. It may be difficult at once to develop all the 46746 libraries considering the huge costs involved, but starting with at least 5564 libraries, one public library be developed with the support and guidance of Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) in each sub-district

Table 12 — Libraries with potential to host internship

Sl. no.	Institution	Number	Source
1	Central Universities	45	https://www.education.gov.in/en/central-universities-0
2	State Universities	417	https://www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/State%20University/Consolidated%20State%20%20University%20List.pdf
3	Deemed Universities	125	https://www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/Deemed%20University/DeemedUniversitiesList_07_12_20.pdf
4	Institutions of National Importance	128	https://www.education.gov.in/en/institutions-national-importance
5	Private Universities	369	https://www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/Private%20University/Consolidated_List_Private_Universities.pdf
6	Colleges	39931	AISHE 2018-19[14], p. 1. An unnumbered list of colleges is also available at https://www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/colleges/ List of collegesason30112020.pdf
7	Stand Alone Institutions	10725	AISHE 2018-19[14], p. 1.
8	Organizations with experts	8089	https://vidwan.inflibnet.ac.in/
9	Institutions under Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) (except deemed Universities)	98	https://icar.org.in/node/119
10	Institutions under Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO)	50	https://www.drdo.gov.in/labs-and-establishments
11	Institutions under Department of Space (DOS)	44	https://www.isro.gov.in/about-isro/isro-centres
12	Institutions under Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)	43	https://www.csir.res.in/about-us/csir-network-map
13	Institutions under Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)	31	https://main.icmr.nic.in/institutes
14	Institutions under Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)	29	https://icssr.org/research-institutes-0
15	Institutions under Department of Science & Technology (DST)	20	https://dst.gov.in/autonomous-st-institution
16	Institutions under Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)	19	http://www.dae.gov.in/node/77 http://www.dae.gov.in/node/81
17	Institutions under Department of Biotechnology (DBT)	16	http://dbtindia.gov.in/about-us/organization-structure/autonomous-institution?page=1
18	Institutions under Ministry of Environment	7	http://moef.gov.in/organisations-institutions/
19	Public Libraries	46746	http://rrrlf.nic.in/Docs/pdf/PUBLIC_LIBRARY_DATA.pdf
	Total	106932	

Table 13 — Enrolment in library science courses in regular and distance modes

Sl. no.	Enrolment in	Quantity	Source
1	Regular: Master of Library Science (M.Lib.Sc.)	5821	Table 11,
2	Regular: Master of Library & Information Science (M.L.I.Sc.)	4846	AISHE 2018-19[14]
3	Regular: Bachelor of Library Science (B.Lib.Sc.)	6305	
4	Regular: Bachelor of Library & Information Science (B.Lib.I.Sc.)	43241	
5	Distance Education: Master of Library Science (M.Lib.Sc.)	2934	Table 11a,
6	Distance Education: Master of Library & Information Science (M.L.I.Sc.)	2184	AISHE 2018-19[14]
7	Distance Education: Bachelor of Library Science (B.Lib.Sc.)	4281	
8	Distance Education: Bachelor of Library & Information Science (B.Lib.I.Sc.)	33461	
	Total Enrolment	103073	

Table 14 — Enrolment and pass-out in Library Science Programmes

Sl. no.	Programme	Enrolment in 2017-18	Pass-Out in 2018-19	Pass Percentage	Source
1	Master of Library Science (M. Lib. Sc.)	5871	3898	66.39	Table 11, AISHE
2	Master of Library & Information Science (M.L.I.Sc.)	3791	2370	62.52	2017-18[15]
3	Bachelor of Library Science (B.Lib.Sc.)	5164	2216	42.91	Table 34, AISHE 2018-19[14]
4	Bachelor of Library & Information Science (B.Lib.I.Sc.)	29200	14225	48.72	
	Total	44026	22709	51.58	

with dynamic state-of-the-art information provision options for higher learning and career guidance. The same may be extended to more public libraries in a phased manner targeting those locations with acute concentration of distance learners and educated unemployed/underemployed on a priority basis. Professionals holding CLIS and DLIS may also be considered as interns in public libraries where BLIS and MLIS holders are not available and in small public libraries.

It will not be out of place to similarly consider the enrolment and pass-out rate in library science courses to estimate the number of aspirants for internship positions. The All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2018-19[14] figures for enrolment in library science programmes (Bachelor and Master) on both regular and distance modes are highlighted in Table 13.

The AISHE data provides enrolment for different programmes on regular and distance modes. However, pass-out information is available only for the regular mode. Taking two subsequent year data of enrolment and pass-out for yearlong bachelor and master programmes in library science, an attempt is made in Table 14 to work out the pass percentage of library science courses in the regular mode which varies from 43% to 66%. Approximating the same pass percentage for distance mode in library science programmes, more than 50000 internship opportunities are to be created in different academic, research and public libraries to accommodate every library science pass-out. There may be extra candidates willing to undergo internship in the few initial years till the operations are being stabilized.

Number of intern positions in each library

The number of intern positions to be accommodated in every institution depends on the strength and diversity of its library activities and the number of permanent professional positions available. The number of interns may be a certain percentage of the number of professional staff available such as, for libraries with more than 50 professional staff, 10-15% that many numbers of interns may be recruited. For libraries with 25-50 professional positions, Interns upto 20% of the total strength of professionals may be deputed. In libraries with less than 25 professionals, interns to the tune of 25-50% of the professional staff strength may be engaged. In case the library undertakes development activities on a mission mode, extra positions may also be created. There should be enabling provisions to guarantee equal opportunity to SC/ST/OBC/PWD and women candidates as per government norms while deploying interns in every library.

Conclusion

More often the ideals are taught in classrooms and the pragmatics are practiced in professional workplace. This may be the reason why professionals who undergo training in a well-equipped modern library perform better in work situations. Libraries which recruit such

professionals also benefit in the long run. The special skills stipulated in some of the advertisements show the importance libraries attach to new skill sets in diverse streams of library and information science, information and communication technologies and personal skills in deploying new professionals. There is also a need to pool in resources at the institutional and government levels to guarantee satisfactory honorarium to interns ensuring their total commitment in this exercise. It is evident that educational institutions have an ample preference for library internship than research and other categories of institutions.

Internship in libraries is currently offered at the discretion of the institutions. It is imperative upon agencies concerned with higher education in the country such as MHRD (Ministry of Education), UGC, various councils engaged with overseeing research and RRRLF to devise desired policy guidelines with twin objectives of guaranteeing internship of one year to every library science pass-out on the one hand and deploying sufficient number of interns in every academic, research and public library of standing on the other hand to meet their respective academic, research and career guidance roles. The funds required for revamping and strengthening uniform deployment of interns in libraries on a national perspective may be treated as investment in national development. The interns so trained with improved professional, technical, research and people skills will be of immense benefit to the libraries.

Acknowledgements

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