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An exploration of introducing internships as an integral facet of distance learning in library and information science

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: This case study examines the qualitative approach to the overall process, implementation strategy, and operational complexity behind internships in Library and Information Science (LIS) programs delivered through distance education. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), aligning with the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Data Collection Methods: A qualitative textual analysis was conducted on IGNOU's internship guidelines through primary and secondary data collected from the official websites, along with the author's personal experiences to provide internship insights.

Data Analysis: Fundamental to this study is a textual analysis of the different aspects of the training, the essential things, and the responsibilities of the participants during their training.

Results and Discussion: The internship program in LIS offers benefits like practical skills enhancement, increased employability, and application of theoretical knowledge in real-world settings. Challenges include logistical issues, student engagement, and mentor support.

Conclusion: The case study explores the new LIS internship programme, emphasising its benefits, challenges, and recommendations for success. It suggests streamlined processes, student preferences, and efficient communication with governing bodies to ensure a successful program. Recommendations include clear guidelines, adequate resources, and ongoing evaluation for success.

Keywords: Internship; NEP 2020; LIS; New Education Policy; Distance Education; ABC

A. INTRODUCTION

The introduction of internships as a core component of distance learning in Library and Information Science (LIS) programs under India's *New Education Policy (NEP) 2020* (MoE, 2023), exemplified by the initiatives, marks a significant shift towards integrating practical experience with academic learning, enhancing employability, and aligning educational outcomes with global standards. In India, the NEP 2020 has proposed new guidelines for the present education system, including online programs, more comprehensive and interdisciplinary education,

and integration of fundamental subjects and transferable skills suitable for the twenty-first century. "They combine the humanities and arts with STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and math)" (MoE, 2023, para. 11.2), requiring students to learn and master various academic subjects in depth. Flexible curricular structures allow for the creative merging of disciplines and provide many entries and exit points, thus replacing the current predominant rigid education structure. Development and adoption of NEP 2020 by nationally recognised public universities like *Indira Gandhi National Open University*

(IGNOU) that function as a model and multidisciplinary hub for research and education to other institutions.

LIS programs in India, particularly the Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) curriculum, highlight the importance of integrating internships to better align education with market and industry needs (Yadav, 2022). A study conducted by Yadav (2022) at 10 LIS schools in 2019–2020 revealed that digital library skills are taught within the information and communication technology (ICT) course rather than as a standalone module, with inconsistencies in course content and credit allocation across schools. Experts emphasised the need to introduce new courses like research data management, data literacy, and soft skills, alongside updating advanced modules to match the evolving job market. Furthermore, there is a clear gap between the skills imparted by LIS schools and the demands of the global workforce. In addition to these curriculum changes, the integration of internships into the MLIS program is crucial. Internships provide practical exposure, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world applications and ensuring that graduates are equipped with the digital, advanced, and soft skills required for the future. As before the NEP 2020 there is no mandatory credit-based internship in the LIS curriculum (MoE, 2023). Incorporating structured internships as part of the distance learning programs in LIS would also enhance career readiness and prepare students for a dynamic, digital environment.

Implementation of *Academic Bank of Credit (ABC)* (MoE, 2024a) in India is a digital platform that stores academic credits earned throughout a student's learning journey. It allows students to easily switch between institutions or programs without losing credits, promoting flexibility and choice. The ABC also tracks and values all registered achievements, ensuring their efforts are acknowledged. Key features include student accounts, credit accumulation, credit transfer, multiple entry-multiple exit, and anytime-anywhere learning. Benefits for students include freedom and flexibility, increased employability, reduced

costs and time, and improved learning outcomes. The ABC is still in its initial stages, but its potential for transformation is immense. As more institutions join the network like IGNOU (IGNOU, 2020), Swayam (MoE, 2024c), and Swayam Plus (MoE, 2024d), students across India will be empowered to chart their unique academic paths, which will store academic credits so they can be considered for degree awards.

The 4-year "integrated bachelor's degree in Education (B.Ed.) will be a dual-major comprehensive bachelor's degree in education and a specialised subject such as language, history, music, mathematics, computer science, chemistry, economics, art, physical education, etc" (MoE, 2023, pp. 42–43). The implementation of internships as part of regular education so that students can engage with the practical aspects of their learning for better employability.

The undergraduate degree will have a duration of either 3 or 4 years, with multiple options for completion within this period, with appropriate certifications, for example, a certificate after finishing one year in a discipline or field including vocational and professional areas, or a diploma after two years of study, or a bachelor's degree after a 3-year programme and 4-year interdisciplinary bachelor's programme (MoE, 2023, p. 37).

All programs strive to meet worldwide quality benchmarks in the present day; we are focusing on a specific aspect of NEP 2020 (MoE, 2023), which is an internship within professional educational programs. The *National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)* (NAAC, 2024) grades Indian higher education institutions (HEIs) on a seven-point scale. With 'A++' being the highest and 'D' being the lowest, based on curricular aspects, teaching-learning processes, research, infrastructure, student support, and governance, IGNOU (IGNOU, 2024) was graded as A++ by the NAAC in 2021, it is the pioneer to be incorporated into its programme as a partial prerequisite for completing the LIS course. Governing bodies like the University Grants Commission (UGC, 2023), All India Council for

Technical Education (AICTE, 2024), and Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR, 2022) must adopt and accept internships under the new NEP 2020 approach.

In this case study, we will analyse the various steps and initiatives undertaken by IGNOU regarding adopting internships in LIS programmes. No other central or state university had implemented the mandatory apprenticeship in the LIS programme curriculum before Dec 22. Let's examine the pros and cons of internships at the bachelor's (IGNOU, 2022a) and master's (IGNOU, 2022b) levels in LIS.

RQ1: Do Internships in distance learning programs for LIS enhance student skills, industry readiness, and career progress?

RQ2: How adoption and implementation of internship in distance learning LIS courses?

The Objective of the Study

This study aims to look at the process and methodology of conducting an internship per the university's guidelines and suggest any improvement in the course.

To examine the essential personnel, material requirements, and topics covered in internships for LIS students.

To analyse alternative methods, benefits, limitations, and challenges of implementing internships in distance learning LIS programs.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Internship Experiences and Career Readiness

Baguma et al. (2024) study conducted on Mbarara University's business students' internship experience has been found to influence their future career prospects significantly. A study involving 100 alums and a cross-sectional survey design revealed that the internship experience had a strong positive and significant influence on their future employment prospects. This study highlights the ongoing discussion about how internship experience influences future employment prospects among business students at Mbarara University. The findings highlight the

importance of internship experiences in shaping students' future career prospects. (Baguma et al., 2024). This research paper presented by Alam & Yesmin (2024) examines the effectiveness of internships in LIS education, focusing on the practical skills of LIS interns. A mixed-method approach was used, with 110 students from Bangladesh's LIS bachelor's degree universities participating. The study found a lack of coordination between theoretical knowledge and practical demonstrations and suggested incorporating faculty members and practitioners for an advanced internship framework. The study also found no significant gender difference in intern satisfaction levels. The findings could help industries redesign their modules and prepare interns for the competitive job market. (Alam & Yesmin, 2024).

Noor Azizi & Kaur (2023) mentioned that the RAMESES (Realist and Meta-Narrative Evidence Syntheses: Evolving Standards) method was used to analyse the existing literature on LIS internship programmes, focusing on satisfaction, educational benefits, educational setting, programme design, and stakeholder roles. "Data sources included Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Modernising the LIS internship programme requires focusing on career readiness, collaborative learning, service learning, and personal objectives while considering stakeholder needs" (Noor Azizi & Kaur, 2023, para. 1).

Hurst et al. (2022) mentioned that recently graduated librarians' knowledge level, often lacking the essential knowledge and skills required for working in a health sciences library, is a prevalent issue. This discrepancy between their experience and expected competencies can be attributed to limited exposure to health sciences librarianship and the generally broad nature of graduate education in library and information science. "The deficiency in skills and comprehension arises from the inadequate growth opportunities in these areas. In 2019, an urban academic health sciences institution's health sciences library initiated an internship programme to tackle these challenges" (Hurst et al., 2022, para. 1). Study on internships by

Nwokike (2022) for their impact on interns' knowledge, attitude, and practices. A paired t-test was conducted on 137 interns using a questionnaire. Results showed improvement in interns' knowledge, attitudes, and practices. The internship effectively enhanced interns' skills. The study suggests collaboration between librarians and educators for similar interventions. Replicating the intervention in other states is recommended for better workplace effectiveness of interns (Nwokike, 2022).

Diversity and Inclusion in LIS Programs

The National Center for Data Services (NCDS) has been actively working on recruitment efforts for BIPOC graduate students interested in data librarianship in health sciences settings. To enhance recruitment efforts, NCDS met with consultants on equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (Cruz et al., 2024). The recruitment process included reaching out to graduate programs, hiring an independent application coach, holding informational sessions, and limiting required components. Despite a small pool of Library and Information Science (LIS) BIPOC students, applications from all US. Racial groups were received. The recruitment efforts led to 38 applications for eight positions in 2022 and 59 applications for 12 positions in 2023, indicating interest and need for speciality programs for BIPOC LIS students. Further research is needed to assess the impact of various recruitment styles on this target group (Cruz et al., 2024).

This study explored by Green et al. (2023) the decisions made by LIS programs regarding online course enrollment caps, focusing on the impact on nontraditional students and addressing existing opportunity gaps. The survey methodology investigates the reasons behind these limits and aims to identify ways to transform online education structures at the University of South Carolina School, ensuring a resilient future of diverse library and information science (LIS) professionals (Green et al., 2023). In Nigeria a study conducted by Ibegbulam et al. (2024), the high unemployment rate necessitates the exploration of data

librarianship as a career option for library and information science professionals. This paper explores the concepts of data librarianship, responsibilities, and training needs for data librarians. It emphasises the importance of exploring self-employment opportunities, highlighting the potential of technological advancements in Nigeria. The paper recommends incorporating data librarianship into Nigerian LIS curricula and developing skillsets to prepare librarians for a successful career in this field (Ibegbulam et al., 2024).

Social Work and Library Collaborations

Public libraries are partnering with local universities to provide social work interns to meet patron needs. This study aimed to hear from library social work interns about their experiences of completing their field placement in a library setting. The research involved an online survey and semi-structured qualitative interviews. The findings highlighted the importance of role clarity, physical space, confidentiality, and supervision arrangements. Despite challenges, interns had positive experiences and spoke highly of their library-based field experiences. Recommendations include identifying field-specific challenges in library-social work partnerships and future research involving other stakeholders (Johnson et al., 2023).

Internships in Specialised Libraries

As per Lantzy & Matlin (2021), science library internships at academic libraries serving diverse student populations may increase the visibility of science librarianship as a career path for undergraduates in the sciences and may help to attract students from diverse backgrounds to the profession. While internships are a "high-impact practice", there is little direct assessment of student learning in the literature that measures perceived and demonstrated learning during an internship. This case study aims to describe how librarians at one university library used multiple direct and indirect learning assessments to evaluate and make curricular changes to a science library internship program.

Pandemic Impact on Internships

The United States has experienced rapid shifts in academic institutions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to a shift from person-to-person services to fully online services. This has presented unique challenges for graduate practicums and internships, such as the Louisiana State University (LSU) Libraries' hybrid internship program. The hybrid program offers adaptability, learning in multiple formats, and networking opportunities while also presenting challenges in altering the original plan for the internship (Wilson et al., 2023).

In Fall 2020, a Community of Practice (CoP) model was initiated for library school interns at Dalhousie University Libraries who were working on a video tutorial accessibility project while remote due to COVID-19. The feature discusses the project background, remote training of interns on Camtasia software, CoP development, and critical takeaways for supervisors. The CoP was meant to support interns but also benefited supervisors by teaching them to mentor from a distance. Changes in mentorship styles throughout the project are reflected upon, as well as plans for the project with a new group of library interns (Hemming & Phinney, 2021).

New Education Policy

The NEP 2020 represents a pivotal advancement in Indian higher education, promoting internationalisation and vocational training. Although India is a major origin of international students, merely 1% engage in overseas study, revealing obstacles in global mobility. Indian institutions aim to enhance campus diversity and appeal through initiatives like COIL and virtual internships (Kapur & Kirloskar, 2023). Vocational education is essential for addressing skill deficits and fostering economic development, yet it faces challenges such as limited industry integration and negative public perceptions. Analysing skilling frameworks in South Korea, Singapore, and Germany suggests that effective NEP execution could improve employability in critical sectors like tourism and logistics (Mishra, 2024).

Moreover, India's education system grapples with insufficient foreign collaboration and outdated curricula. New collaborations, particularly with Australian universities, seek to mitigate these issues and enhance vocational education (Goswami, 2022). Nonetheless, reforms influenced by corporate governance may neglect underlying historical conflicts within India's educational framework, as noted by Bhattacharya (2024). Ultimately, libraries play a vital role in successful policy execution, as evidenced by Nigeria's educational reforms (Bouaamri, 2024; Omeluzor & Ogo, 2018).

Outcome

We can understand the current situation in this facet with an overview of studies on internships within the LIS field. The NEP 2020 marks a transformative shift in Indian higher education, emphasising internationalisation and vocational training. Initiatives like COIL and virtual internships aim to address barriers to global mobility, while efforts to enhance vocational education face challenges such as industry integration and public perception (Kapur & Kirloskar, 2023; Mishra, 2024). Comparative skilling frameworks from other countries offer insights for improving employability in sectors like tourism and logistics, though deeper issues like inadequate foreign collaboration and outdated curricula persist (Goswami, 2022). Meanwhile, COVID-19 significantly impacted LIS internships, pushing them toward hybrid and online models that introduced flexibility but also adaptation challenges (Wilson et al., 2023). Efforts to increase diversity in LIS programs and better integrate practical training are key to bridging skill gaps (Alam & Yesmin, 2024; Cruz et al., 2024). However, a gap remains in incorporating internships as an integral component of distance learning in LIS, particularly in designing flexible, inclusive models that enhance career readiness and bridge the divide between theory and practice. The study highlights the importance of carefully designed internships in enhancing students' LIS capabilities, preparing them through IGNOU, and adding suggestions to the curriculum for the future, a vital aspect of LIS educational programs.

C. RESEARCH METHODS

In this case study, a qualitative textual analysis was conducted on the guidelines established by IGNOU to facilitate course completion through an internship in LIS. These guidelines offer a precise framework of rules and limitations that students must adhere to while undertaking their internship at a library or LIS centre of their preference. Information and data are gathered throughout the internship through field research conducted at the libraries, examining the advantages and disadvantages of implementing internships by the author himself. Primary and secondary data were also collected from the IGNOU official website, as expressed in Figure 2 (IGNOU, 2020). These guidelines are available for readers to access from the official website, data is available on request for author. The author has personally gone through the first internship programme while pursuing MLIS, author has gained insight point on firsthand.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementing an internship in the LIS programme by IGNOU represents a pioneering initiative; numerous steps and methods have been employed to ensure the smooth execution of the internship. Within this section, an examination of these measures for adopting new methods in LIS will be conducted. The study reveals a comprehensive internship programme comprising various components, each training segment entailing distinct tasks and responsibilities (IGNOU, 2023b, 2023a, 2023e, 2023f, 2023c). Interns acquire knowledge spanning diverse areas, encompassing duties such as collection and organisation and more sophisticated undertakings in automation and digitalisation. Postgraduate students benefit from valuable insights by focusing on administrative and publishing aspects. An in-depth analysis of the internship programme is presented by textual analysis and personal experiences, highlighting specific weeks assigned to individual training segments and detailed documentation requirements along with advantages and implementation difficulties.

Internship

Moreover, we investigate the requirements and criteria that govern the selection of an LIS internship. Given the difficulties linked to distance learning, the university presents alternative methods, such as literature-based surveys (IGNOU, 2023b, 2023a) and term papers (IGNOU, 2023c) on LIS topics, as shown in Figure 3. These approaches allow students to meet course requirements regardless of their remote location. The impact of the internship, integrated into graduate and postgraduate distance courses, provides students with increased exposure in their academic journey. The internship allowed interns to familiarise themselves with the library's digital system. Interns recognised their capabilities and reflected on areas needing improvement in their competencies (Balbin & Dolendo, 2023). This exposure allows them to experience various aspects of LIS establishment firsthand, gaining insights into practical aspects and the benefits, drawbacks, and departmental limits. "Enhancing the LIS Internship programme involves concentrating on the program's structural design, emphasising learning outcomes associated with career readiness" (Noor Azizi & Kaur, 2023, para. 1).

Training Constituents

This internship programme in LIS provides comprehensive training across various sections, offering valuable experience for both graduate and postgraduate students. Let's explore the specific tasks and responsibilities within each training component.

Operations: This section explores the fundamental operations of library management, encompassing procurement identification and acquisition of library resources. *Incorporation:* Documentation and enrollment of new resources into the library database. *Arrangement:* Categorisation of resources based on a predetermined system. *Indexing:* Developing comprehensive entries for each resource to simplify searching and retrieval. *Digital resource administration:* Oversight of access and licensing for electronic materials such as online journals and databases. *Inventory*

validation: Periodic inspection and confirmation of the physical existence of library resources (IGNOU, 2023e, 2023f).

Services: This section aims to prepare interns with the necessary skills to aid library patrons in locating and retrieving information. It covers various aspects, including personalised research support, circulation of physical items, facilitating borrowing from external libraries through Interlibrary Loan (ILL), and providing digital copies of materials from other libraries via Electronic Document Delivery Service (EDDS) (IGNOU, 2023f, 2023e). Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) setting up personalised alerts for relevant articles and publications based on user preferences.

Automation and Digitisation: This section presents interns with an overview of technologies revolutionising library operations and user interactions. The creation of databases involves the construction and supervision of electronic databases used for storing and retrieving information. Application usage includes using software for regular tasks carried out in libraries (Sharath & Rao, 2024). Digitisation pertains to the process of converting physical materials, such as books and documents, into digital formats (IGNOU, 2023e, 2023f). Development of applications involves contributing to the creation of library-related applications such as institutional repositories. Preservation encompasses learning methods to safeguard library materials for the benefit of future generations.

Administration (Postgraduate only): The focus of this section, tailored for postgraduate students, is to provide them with a comprehensive understanding of (IGNOU, 2023f) administrative concepts and competencies, enabling them to acquire a deeper understanding of diverse administrative duties in the library setting. They may be able to engage in multiple phases of internal publication procedures, contingent upon availability through the LIS department.

Publication (Postgraduate only): This particular section dedicated to postgraduate studies provides an opportunity to delve into the intricacies of the publishing process (IGNOU,

2023f). The exploration encompasses various publication phases, including editing, proofreading, and marketing. Involvement in managing internal publications overseen by the Department of Library and Information Science is possible (IGNOU, 2023f, 2023e).

Programme: Duration and Requirements

The internship programme requires interns to complete 100 hours of training within one month, with five hours of dedicated training per day, excluding weekends. This intensive programme ensures participants gain valuable practical experience in various aspects of LIS operations (IGNOU, 2024). Specific prerequisites must be fulfilled to initiate an internship at any library or LIS centre. The library should possess a minimum of 5000 books along with automated and digitalisation amenities. The essential qualification for an internship mentor is a PhD in Library Science or a master's degree in library science with two years of practical experience. Each guide is permitted to oversee a maximum of 10 interns. The prescribed criteria for internships at the graduate and postgraduate levels adhere to the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) delineated by the institution and the NEP 2020 guidelines. Different types of operations and services a LIS intern is exposed to are shown in **Figure 1** concerning implementation in the form of word cloud, showing the significance of different key areas of study.

Criteria of LIS Centre Selection

There are two methods of choosing a library or LIS centre for the intern to complete their internship. The first method is for the student to select the institute after meeting the minimum requirements. The second method is for the students to be nominated by their respective IGNOU Regional Centres (RC). Once the institute is selected, the student can approach the RC to obtain a reference letter allowing them to undergo their Internship at the designated centres. Since this course is taught through distance, any individual working in an institute that meets the centre's requirements can complete an internship there.

Internship Insights

During an internship, various subjects must be addressed within a limited time frame. As outlined in the task sheet, there is a specific order in which different components should be covered. A comprehensive list of tasks is provided, which must be completed daily with a particular level of exposure. The first week focuses on operations and services, while the second and third are dedicated to automation and digitisation. The final week of the internship is devoted to administration and publication, with postgraduate students following suit. Graduate students cover operations, services, automation, and digitisation each week.

Throughout the Internship, the student must record their activities in an authorised worksheet, which their supervisor then reviews. The intern must also gather relevant documents and photographs to support their work. A certificate of originality must be signed by the intern's supervisor and countersigned by the Head of the Department or Librarian. Detailed reports must be submitted to the respective University Regional Centres, including the worksheet, certificate, documents, and pictures with proper bibliographical references (IGNOU, 2022c, 2023d).

Alternative Methods Instead of Internship

The university proposed a substitute method instead of an internship as this course is available online and in a distance learning format. Not every student can allocate 20 working days for an internship, as everyone is already occupied with work or a profession, which is why they pursue distance education. IGNOU has provided alternative options to meet the course requirements for these students, and the university has presented various choices to graduate and postgraduate students (IGNOU, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c). Survey-based projects with literature and library-based surveys are available for graduate-level LIS students. The literature survey encompasses current trends, the implementation of AI in LIS, digital trends, and new innovative ideas in LIS development (IGNOU, 2023c, 2023a, 2023b). In the case of a library-based study, one must gather

information about five different libraries, explaining their functions and the facilities they offer to information seekers. For postgraduate students, there is a term paper on an alternative to an internship where they can select a topic in emerging LIS and its subsidiaries (IGNOU, 2023c).

Through the experience, interns have pinpointed their areas of strength and areas necessitating further development within their skill set (Balbin & Dolendo, 2023). A study by Selvaraj Rathinam & Lisa Sheba Rani J (2021) delved into internships' utility, their limitations, and methods to enrich them. The investigation used a survey to amass information from a cohort of 100 students. Interns derive advantages from acquiring competencies tailored for the job market and cultivating a sense of assurance in navigating resource constraints, encompassing the absence of monetary perks and flawed placement protocols. Even the *International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions* (IFLA, 2022) recognises the significance of internships. As Yadav (2022) said, the importance of mandatory internships in LIS programs is to understand the current job market for information providers. It implements virtual interns to partake in prearranged virtual meetings and submit reports on social media, website endeavours, and project advancements. The timeline of these internships covers a single semester, potentially elongating based on performance, and can be aligned with the intern's home academic institution (IFLA, 2022). Internships in LIS are identified as necessary by institutes and organisations worldwide; India also adopted this approach by implementing NEP 2020.

Adopting internships in LIS education presents unique challenges; identifying suitable libraries with adequate resources and skilled supervisors, especially for distance learners, can be difficult. Exploring alternatives like virtual internships or forming partnerships with smaller libraries is crucial to overcoming resource constraints and improving access. As per Torres et al. (2022), practical experience is an essential yet frequently overlooked aspect of MLIS and

BLIS programs. It emphasises the importance of strengthening professional development initiatives, including requiring internships for graduation, thereby improving students' transition to professional employment. Evaluating the impact of internships on student learning is essential to assess their effectiveness. Analysing skill development, job outcomes, and student satisfaction can provide valuable insights. Furthermore, studying successful internship programs at different academic institutions and organisations can help enhance the program. Balbin & Dolendo (2023) identified that interns' experiences anticipated gaining knowledge and skills in library operations, services, and new information technologies. Orientation helped interns prepare for their tasks. Interns encountered challenges such as procrastination and technical issues, which they addressed using avoidance strategies.

Additional factors necessitate consideration, including aligning internships with specific course objectives, the potential risks of exploitation or unequal opportunities, and the critical importance of robust support systems for host institutions and students. Individuals must observe, analyse, evaluate, and address a persistent issue while presenting it systematically and organised. The internship provided an opportunity for interns to acquaint themselves with the digital system of the library. A comprehensive exploration of these complexities and possible solutions is indispensable for optimising the benefits of the internship programme for LIS students in the post-NEP 2020 era; let's understand the pros and cons.

Advantages of Internship

Integrating internships into LIS programs is a revolutionary development comparable to the long-standing practice in medicine. This shift offers several compelling benefits for both students and the LIS field itself:

1. **Enhanced Learning:** By combining theoretical knowledge with practical experience, internships provide a valuable platform for students to apply their classroom learning in real-world settings.

This hands-on experience bridges the gap between textbook concepts and their practical application, fostering a deeper understanding and skill development.

2. **Industry-Ready Graduates:** Internships equip students with up-to-date and industry-specific skills, making them desirable job market candidates. They gain exposure to current trends and technologies within the LIS field, preparing them for the specific demands of professional practice.
3. **Improved Curriculum:** Internship programs provide valuable insights into current industry trends and needs, enabling LIS programs to continuously update their curriculum and ensure it remains relevant to the evolving workplace. This ensures graduates possess the skills in high demand by employers.
4. **Increased Efficiency and Skilled Professionals:** As Golovach (2023) suggests, internship programs can lead to more skilled and prepared library professionals. This benefits institutions by increasing qualified employees' availability and enhancing overall productivity without additional costs.
5. **Holistic Understanding:** Internships expose students to LIS centres' vital role in education and development. They gain firsthand experience interacting with students and library staff, allowing them to understand user needs, perspectives, and the daily operations of a library. This comprehensive understanding fosters a well-rounded and informed professional.

Implementation Difficulties

As the implementation of Internships in LIS courses in distance mode for the inaugural time in Indian universities, there are certain obstacles to confront. There is a scarcity of transparency regarding the duration of the Internship. Initially, it was set for 90 days in this course, with 75 points assigned for practical exposure and 25 points for the viva. However, on Mar 23, a new set of SOPs for Internships was introduced, requiring us to complete 100 hours within a month, excluding weekends. This SOP

change has left staff and students uncertain about which guidelines to follow. Balbin & Dolendo (2023) elucidated that utilising digital resources highlights the lack of organisational support for remote internships. Despite the requirements for ALA accreditation institutions, internship organisation support is limited (Balbin & Dolendo, 2023). The assurance of reference letters for interns has also created an administrative problem, as it is unclear whether the Regional Centre or Faculty of Library & Information Science, IGNOU, should issue the letters. Students have reached out to Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan Schools (MoE, 2024b) for an internship; unfortunately, they have not aided students due to the absence of specific instructions from the university to facilitate internships at their school libraries.

Implementing an internship programme in IGNOU's LIS courses has sparked hindrances among some students enrolled before Jul 2022. These students were not adequately informed about this significant change, resulting in confusion and a sense of being left in the dark. The university's failure to effectively communicate regarding introducing this mandatory 4-credit internship subject has left many students feeling uninformed and unprepared. Instead of receiving clear and official notifications, many only stumbled upon this new requirement through incidental channels, such as submitting assignments, attending computer labs, or talking to other students. This lack of transparency from the university has created a sense of unfairness and additional stress for students who were not given the proper opportunity to adjust their academic plans or expectations. The unexpected addition of a 4-credit subject, coupled with the lack of adequate communication, has undoubtedly disrupted their learning experience and raised concerns about the overall implementation of the internship program.

E. CONCLUSION

The study examines the new LIS internship programme focusing on remote learning. It discusses benefits like professional preparation, understanding industry trends, and practical

exposure. The author expressed the difficulties of implementing internships in LIS programs. Addressing early programme obstacles is crucial for success, emphasising the need for openness, streamlined processes, and resource allocation. Recommendations are provided to enhance the internship experience during the learning process. Training components may be pursued based on student preferences and other aspects. Internships can be pursued on weekends due to distance learning mode; departments at universities need to streamline their roles for efficient internship functioning. Disseminate new policies and advancements through governing bodies for general information. Governing bodies like the University Grants Commission, All India Council for Technical Education and Indian Council of Agricultural Research must be guided to accept internships under the new NEP 2020 approach. Although internships in LIS courses are not monetarily accredited, companies can benefit. Resolving issues and improving internships can equip future LIS professionals with the necessary knowledge and expertise. Indeed, internships, which are a prerequisite within Library and Information Science (LIS) curricula, provide significant avenues for the enhancement of knowledge.

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<https://doi.org/10.1080/10572317.2021.1988393>

FIGURE LIST



Figure 1. Types of Operations and Services exposed during LIS Internship

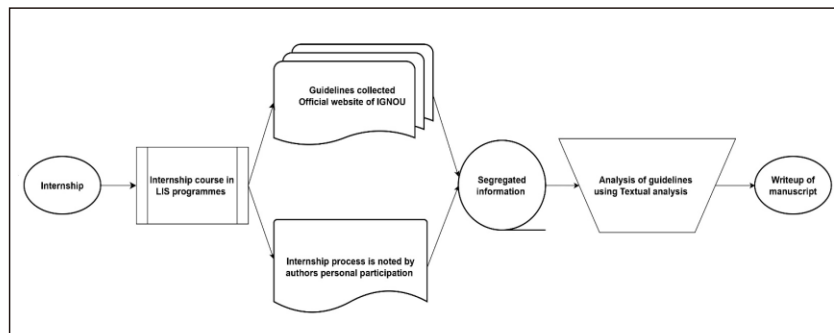


Figure 2. Flowchart of data collection and analysis

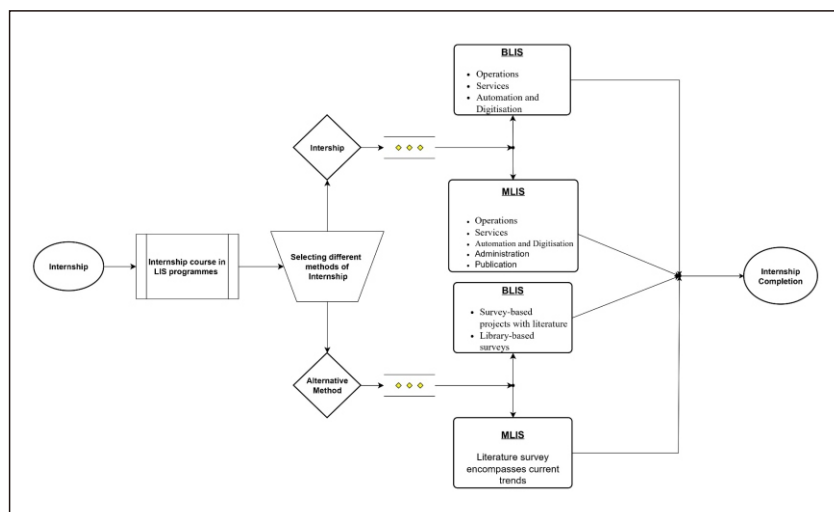


Figure 3. Flowchart of LIS Internship of MLIS and BLIS programs