

not permit laboratory experiments, and if there are no formally trained personnel, quacks will flourish. There is enormous job potential for the trained fishery scientist. We can only imagine the huge damage we are inflicting upon ourselves by depriving our students of this hands-on training.

The proponents of the ban also posit that in all the Western universities the use of animals for education at graduate level has been prohibited. The facts are quite to the contrary. The use of rodents, albeit under strict conditions, is permitted in most Western universities.

Finally, it is often argued that the number of drugs that have been discovered, based on research done on rodents, is woefully small. True. But, this is not

because mice/rats are inadequate to provide the answers, but because of the innate complexity of biological phenomena. In fact, if we want more drugs to reach the clinical trials, we need to expand the research base on rodents, and not reduce it. We can be sure that behind every drug in the market, pre-clinical studies drawn from rodents have contributed a lion's share. On the other hand, we can also be certain that no drug will ever be discovered by studies confined to computer simulations.

It is ironical that while UGC permits the use of animals in research, it is banned in education. Indeed, education paves the way to research and creativity. The negative consequences of the ill-conceived ban on dissections by UGC

are already being felt. Ask any biology teacher across the country and he/she will tell you about the erosion in the quality of education since the blanket ban on dissections. Good students would rather avoid zoology at the Bachelor's or Master's level, and seek other options. The decision to ban dissections is shortsighted, counter-productive and damaging to the higher education in basic sciences in India. There is an urgent need to rid the education system of this self-damaging practice.

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Non-professionals in-charge of libraries

Library and information science (LIS) education in India is a 20th century phenomenon. The purpose of such education is to produce competent and capable professionals who are able to manage the libraries effectively and efficiently. Library and information science education is offered at various levels, such as certificate course, diploma course, one-year bachelor's programme (BLISc), one-year Master's programme (MLISc), two years integrated MLISc programme, MPhil and Ph D. There are 146 library schools recognized by UGC, out of which around 120 departments offer Bachelor's degree, 78 offer Master's degree, 16 offer MPhil degree, 63 offer Ph D degree and 27 offer LIS courses through correspondence or distance education¹.

With the changes that occurred in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector, which had a direct impact on the libraries, UGC constituted a committee under the chairmanship of C. R. Karisiddappa. The committee discussed all aspects of the curriculum and fully proposed modular syllabi for library and information science professionals for Indian universities. The report of this committee was published in 2001, which emphasized on systematic education for library professionals so that they can handle the libraries efficiently and effectively. Besides the regular post-

graduation (MLISc) and Ph D degrees in library and information science being provided by universities, the Documentation Research and Training Centre (DRTC), Bengaluru and National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR), New Delhi – the two premier institutions in the country are also providing specialized training in documentation and information science. They have updated their curriculum regularly, keeping in tune with the changing times.

Due to the efforts of S. R. Ranganathan (1892–1972), who spearheaded the library movement in India and is regarded as the father of library science in the country, library professionals in educational institutions are enjoying academic status at par with university teachers. UGC has fixed pay scales for librarians at par with teaching faculty in the universities. According to the UGC rules, pay scales of Assistant Librarian, Deputy Librarian and Librarian are equal to Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor respectively. While there is a general appreciation that library services in the country should be on par with those in the Western countries, in many institutions, management of library and documentation centre is not left to qualified staff. It is unfortunate that since the last few years, there is encroachment

in the field of library services by persons from other fields. It is observed that in many academic and scientific institutions, the several posts for library staff are vacant. Heads of institutions are not taking any interest in filling up of these vacant posts, which are being occupied by persons from other fields. This practice can be seen in universities, autonomous bodies, and scientific and research organizations. It has led to degradation and deterioration of library and documentation services on the one hand, and to demoralization of library personnel on the other. There is an urgent need to stop this trend and promote library services by qualified librarians, rather than by non-professionals. Besides having a library committee and its Chair-Person to supervise and guide the library services, is there any relevance for non-professionals to be in-charge of libraries?

1. Sharma, J., *DESIDOC J. Libr. Inf. Technol.*, 2010, **30**(5), p. 2.

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