

## **A critical evaluation of the curriculum development strategy of the LIS education programs in Sri Lanka**

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** A comprehensive analysis of the LIS education system was carried out covering the 2004-2007 period and it was established that currently 24 LIS education programs are conducted in Sri Lanka by eight educational institutions. This paper presents a critical evaluation of the curriculum development strategy of the LIS education programs in Sri Lanka based on the major research.

**Methodology:** The research used both quantitative as well as qualitative research methods to determine the present status of affairs and the study was based on primary and secondary data collected by means of questionnaires, semi structured interviews, participatory observations and review of documents. Primary data were collected from the LIS course co-ordinators, teachers, and policy makers. Researchers own reflections were also used.

**Findings:** The empirical survey identified that six main subjects are taught across most of the LIS programs, that most programs provide a general knowledge in LIS but not opportunities for specialisation, appropriate levels of complexity were not evident across the different levels of programs and there is no national core in LIS so that all programs cover a set of common subjects at appropriate depths and breadths suitable for different levels of programs. Findings with regard to the curriculum development strategies identified that most of the curricula documents are not comprehensive, that the Sri Lankan LIS curriculum developers do not use any formal curriculum development model. Analysis of the curriculum development teams indicated that most members have no training in curriculum designing, the teams lack contributions by other stakeholders except LIS professionals. Several recommendations are presented at the end to eliminate the weaknesses of the curriculum development strategy in the LIS programs.

**Research implications:** This paper is based on a broader empirical study of the LIS education system of Sri Lanka and throws some light on specific research on identifying the most appropriate curriculum development model for Sri Lanka.

**Practical implications:** The findings of the research are directly applicable to the tasks of the curriculum developers and the LIS education policy makers in Sri Lanka and they can use the findings for the improvement of the LIS education programs.

**Originality:** Contents or the curriculum development strategy of the current Sri Lankan LIS education programs have not been critically analysed before and this paper presents the original research findings relevant to all the programmes conducted in 2007.

**Keywords:** Curriculum Development Strategy, Library Education, Sri Lanka