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## Perspectives and viewpoints of undergraduate students towards library and information science (LIS) as a major subject of study and preferred profession

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### Abstract

Library and Information Science is a newly added major in Indian universities, prior to that it was a one-year course after graduation. The purpose of the study is to identify the viewpoint of the undergraduate students about library and information science as a major subject of their study. The author conducted an online survey to collect data from students of the Library and Information Science (LIS) department of the Government Post-graduate College in Noida, Uttar Pradesh in India. The results show that the subject is not very popular among the students and most of the students chose this subject because they had no other choice, but after studying this subject, they find it interesting and want to take it as a profession. The main significance of this study is a rich descriptive overview of how the subject of LIS is gaining popularity among students. The findings and conclusions are expected to help the LIS education community, experts of professional associations.

**Keywords:** LIS education, LIS profession, online survey, LIS history

### Introductions

#### Aim and scope of the study

The present research survey attempts to gather information about LIS Education from the viewpoint of the undergraduate students. The study is limited to the BA I, II and III year students of the Library and Information Science department of Government postgraduate College Noida.

#### The main objectives of the study are

- Review the opinion of the students towards Library and Information Science as a major subject.
- To Analyse the awareness about the subject and profession before and after the study of the subject.

#### Research Methodology

A survey method has been used to collect data from a large number of people in a short period of time. An online survey has been conducted on the students of the Department of Library and Information Science, Government Post-graduate College Noida. The main objective of the survey was to know the perspectives of Undergraduate students towards LIS as a subject of study and as a Profession.

#### Online survey

An online survey is a data collection method that involves administering a questionnaire or a set of questions to a targeted group of participants over the internet. It is a popular and convenient tool used in research, marketing, and various fields to gather information and opinions from a large number of people. An online survey method used to collect data from the students because it has many benefits such as:

- **Cost-Effective:** Conducting online surveys is more cost-effective compared to traditional methods such as paper-based surveys or phone interviews? There are no printing or postage costs involved.

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- **Convenience and Flexibility:** Online surveys provide convenience to both researchers and participants. Participant. Real-time data can be accessed instantly, enabling researchers to analyze results and draw conclusions more efficiently.
- **Anonymity and Honest Responses:** Participants may feel more comfortable sharing their opinions and experiences in an online survey compared to face-to-face interviews or focus groups. The anonymity provided by online surveys can lead to more honest and unbiased responses, resulting in more accurate data.
- **Data Accuracy and Quality:** Online surveys often have built-in validation features, such as skip logic and data validation rules, which help ensure data accuracy. Researchers can also implement randomization techniques and control the order of questions to minimize biases and improve data quality.
- **Data Analysis and Reporting:** Online survey platforms usually offer data analysis tools, making it easier for researchers to analyze and interpret the collected data. Graphs, charts, and statistical summaries can be generated automatically, simplifying the reporting and visualization process.

### Sample

Total sample of 82 students from the Art faculty (BA with library and information science as a one subject) of the Government Post-graduate College, Noida, has been taken to the Study. The survey garnered a total of 84 complete responses (39 from BA First year, 29 from BA Second year and, 23 from BA Third year students)

### Historical Background

The pace of development of Library and Information Science (LIS education) in India has been terribly slow and uneven in almost all respects. An American disciple of the famous American librarian Melvil Dewey, W.A. Borden (1853-1931) initiated LIS education in India in 1911 under the patronage of Maharaja Sri Sayaji Rao Gaekwad III of Baroda (1863-1939), he started a short-term training program in library science in Baroda. Then in 1915, another American student of Dewey's, Asa Don Dickinson (1876-1960), the librarian of Punjab University, Lahore has started a three-month apprenticeship training program for working librarians.

British Government appointed Calcutta University Commission in 1917 to look into the affairs of Calcutta University to keep the importance of libraries in academic institutions. The Commission under the Chairmanship of M. E. Sadler was recommended that "libraries be strengthened, and that training should be given to the students and occasionally to the teacher in the use of library" (Government of India, 1919)<sup>[10]</sup>.

The recommendations of the Commission were mainly for Calcutta University but the basic idea of the Commission for the development of university along with its library was also applicable for other institutions. After the publication of the report in 1919 academic institutions paid attention to developing the libraries and professional librarians were appointed to organise the libraries. Dr. S. R. Ranganathan and Dr. Nihar Ranjan Roy was appointed as Librarian in Madras University and Calcutta University in 1924 and 1937 respectively.

After these great efforts, some other professional associations started providing courses on library science education. The first such course was started by Andhra Desa Library Association in 1920, then by Madras Library Association (MALA) in 1929, and by Bengal Library Association in 1937.

Before independence, only five universities were there: Andhra University (1935), Madras University (1937), Banaras Hindu University (1941), University of Bombay (1943) and University of Calcutta (1945).

Dr. S.R. Ranganathan made valuable contributions in the field of LIS education and profession in India. He started a certificate course at Madras Library Association in 1929. This was later taken over by Madras University in 1931. Presently more than 350 institutes are running various LIS courses. After independence, many schools, colleges, universities, and research institutions were opened to make a strong educational system to serve the country, therefore qualified library personnel were required to cater to the need. As a result, the number of library science schools increased. Aligarh Muslim University was the first to start a Bachelor of Library Science course in the country. Later Dr. Ranganathan moved to the University of Delhi from Banaras Hindu University. With the efforts of Dr. Ranganathan, the University of Delhi started the first diploma course in Library Science in 1947 and in 1951 then started Bachelor's (B. Lib. Sc.) and Master's (M. Lib. Sc.) degree courses in Library Science. In 1957 the first Ph.D. in LIS was awarded to D B Krishna Rao under the supervision of Dr. S. R. Ranganathan. M.Phil. was also started in 1972 at the University of Delhi. At present Following Courses are running all over India:

### Academic elective at senior secondary level

In view of the libraries playing a very distinct role in serving the needs of - students, teachers, various professionals and researchers, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has decided to introduce 'Library and Information Science' (Code No. 079) an academic elective at senior secondary level from academic year 2014-15 on pilot basis in some selected schools." Source: <https://www.icbse.com>

**Diploma in Library Science:** 3 Year diploma course initiated by the polytechnic colleges. Matriculation is the minimum eligibility criteria to join the course. The course provides an in-depth theoretical knowledge about the subject, which is further followed by interim training.

**B. Lib. / BLIS:** It is a one-year bachelor's degree course, which provides knowledge of the basic skills of the subject. Graduation in any trait is the eligibility criteria to join this course. Traditionally, it has been recognized as Bachelor of Library Science; however, some universities have added some relevant amount of Information Science in their curriculum and have designated it as Bachelor of Library and Information Science.

**M. Lib. / MLIS:** It is a one-year master's level course after B. Lib. or BLIS. The course endows us with the knowledge of advanced skills and techniques of the subject. The course has been named Master of Library Science. There are some institutes which have unified both Bachelor level and master's level degree courses of Library and Information Science into one integrated course.

**PH.D./Research in Library and Information Science (LIS)**

Several institutes in India conduct research in LIS education. Here are a few prominent ones:

**Indian Statistical Institute (ISI)**

ISI, with its headquarters in Kolkata, offers courses in LIS and has a research division dedicated to Information Science. They conduct research in various areas of LIS, including information retrieval, data mining, and knowledge organization.

**Documentation Research and Training Centre (DRTC), Bangalore**

DRTC is a renowned institution affiliated with the Indian Statistical Institute. It offers a master's program in Library and Information Science and focuses on research in information organization, digital libraries, and information retrieval.

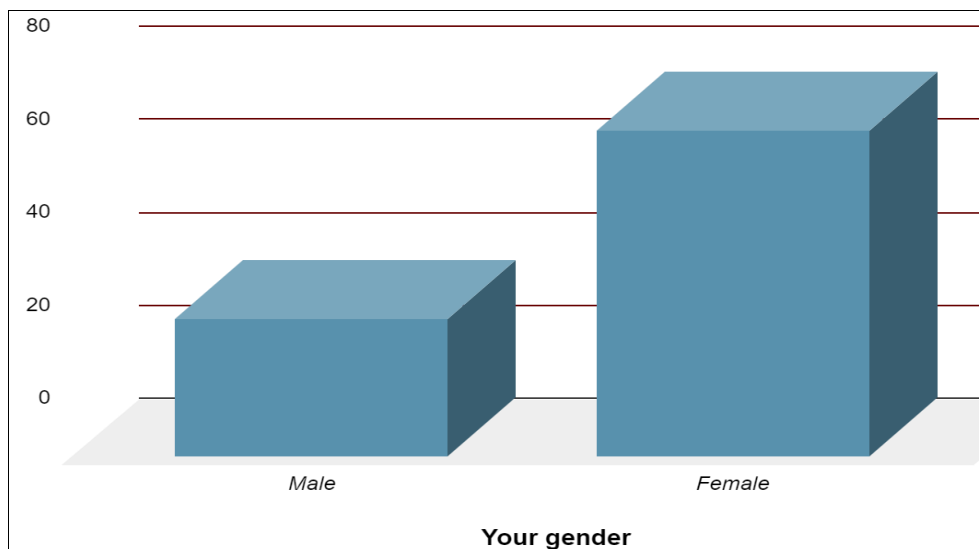
- **Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS):** TISS, based in Mumbai, offers a master's program in Library and Information Science and actively engages in research

related to LIS education, information management, and social aspects of information science.

- **University of Delhi (DU):** The Department of Library and Information Science at the University of Delhi offers undergraduate, postgraduate, and research programs in LIS. The department has a strong research focus, covering areas such as knowledge organization, digital libraries, and information management.
- **Aligarh Muslim University (AMU):** The Department of Library and Information Science at AMU, located in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, conducts research in various domains of LIS, including information retrieval, digital preservation, and library management.

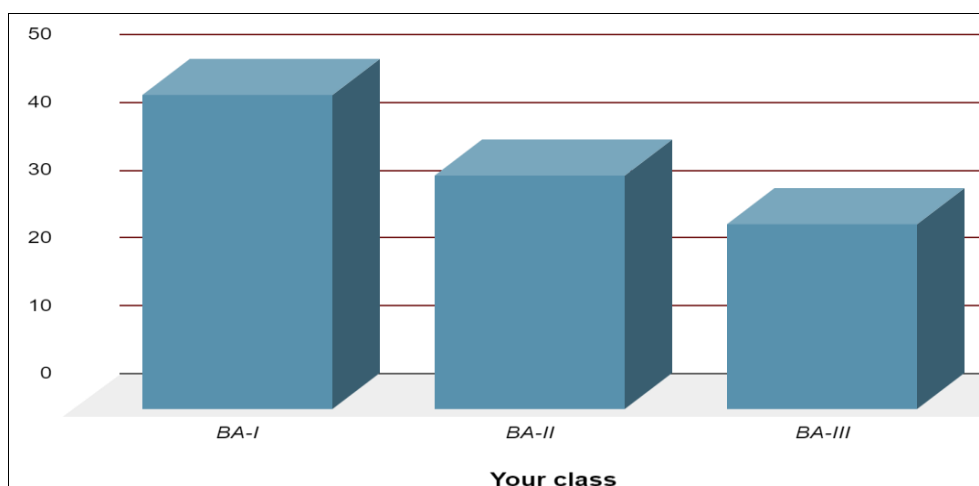
Beside that there are other universities and research institutions in India that also conduct research in LIS education. The curriculum has evolved to meet the changing needs of the profession, embracing technology and incorporating diverse areas of study. The focus has shifted from traditional library science to broader information management and digital initiatives, reflecting the dynamic nature of the field.

**Results and Findings**



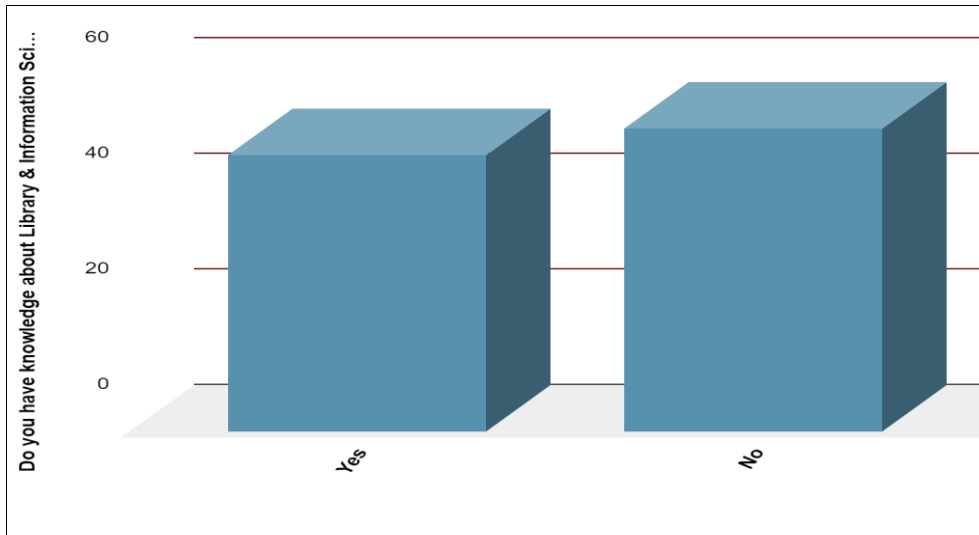
**Fig 1: Gender**

Above diagram depicts that 29.8% participants are male although 70.2% participants are females.



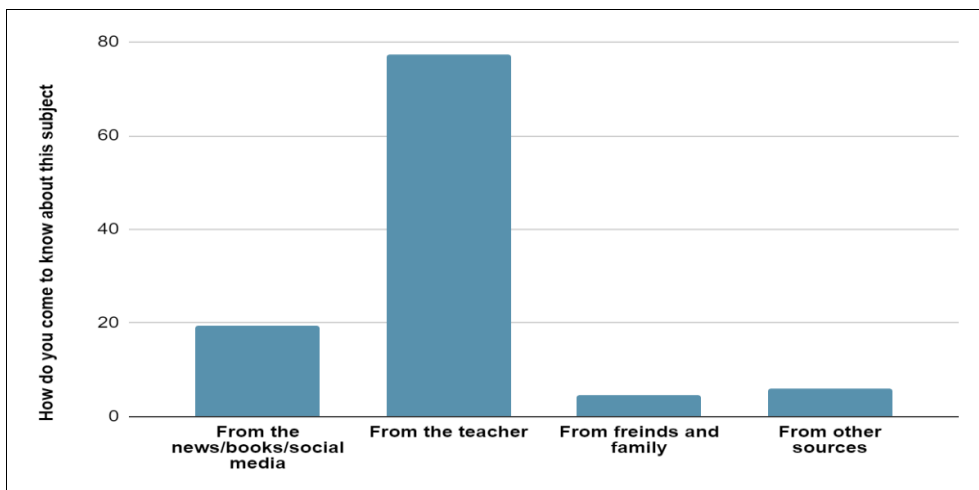
**Fig 2: Class**

This diagram shows that 46.4% participants are from BA-I year, 34.5% participants from BA-II year and 27.4% participants are from BA- III-year classes.



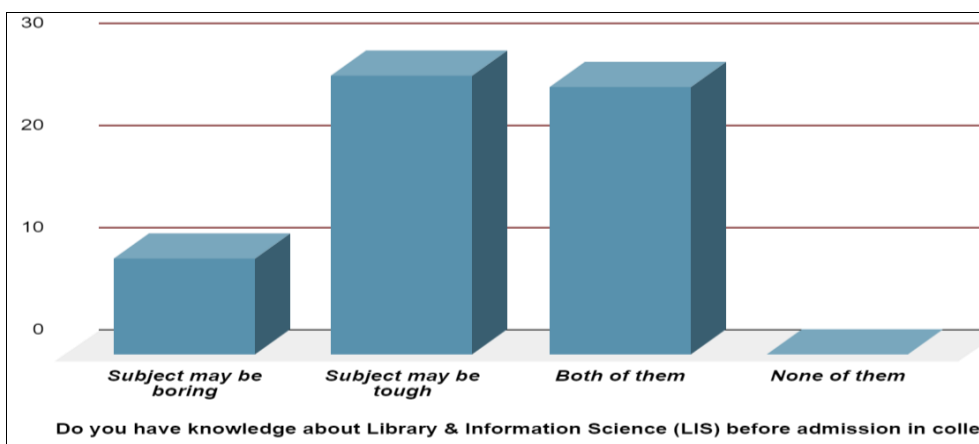
**Fig 3:** Do you have knowledge about library & information sci.

The above diagram shows that 47.6% of students have knowledge about Library and Information Science subjects before admission in the college whereas 52.4% students are not aware of this subject before admission in the college.



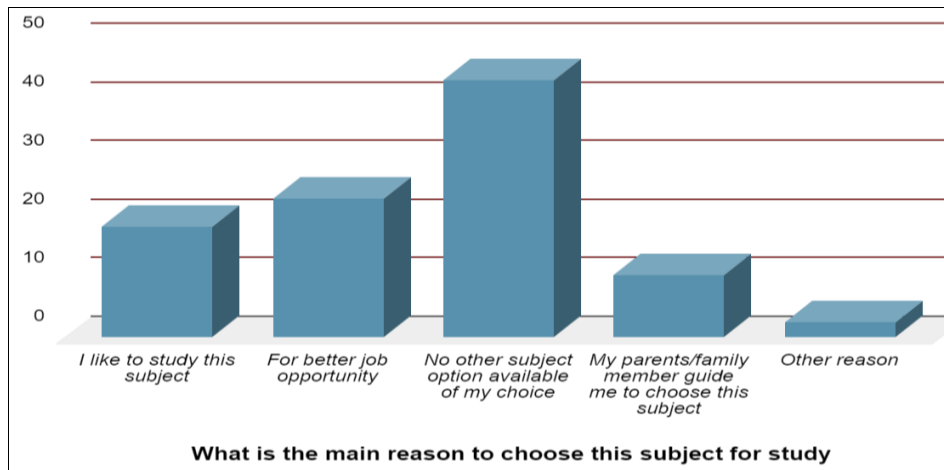
**Fig 4:** How do you come to know about this subject

Study shows that most of the participants 72.6% come to know about this subject from their teachers, 16.7% from the news/books or social media, 4.6% from the friends and family whereas 6% participants know from other sources.



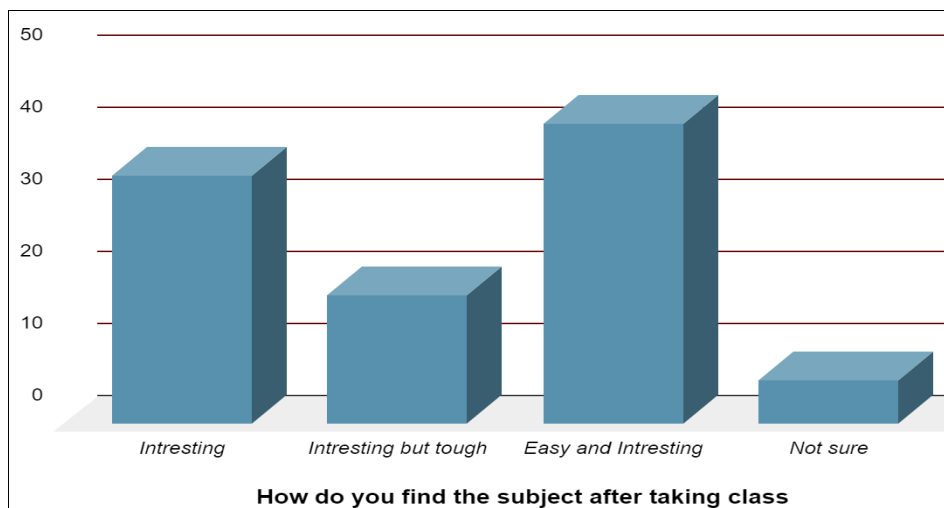
**Fig 5:** Do you have knowledge about library & information science (LIS) before admission in colle.

Above figure depicts that 27.4% students thought that LIS subject may be tough, 9.5% students thought this subject may be boring, 26.2% student thought that this subject may be boring and tough although 36.9% students have thought none of the above options.



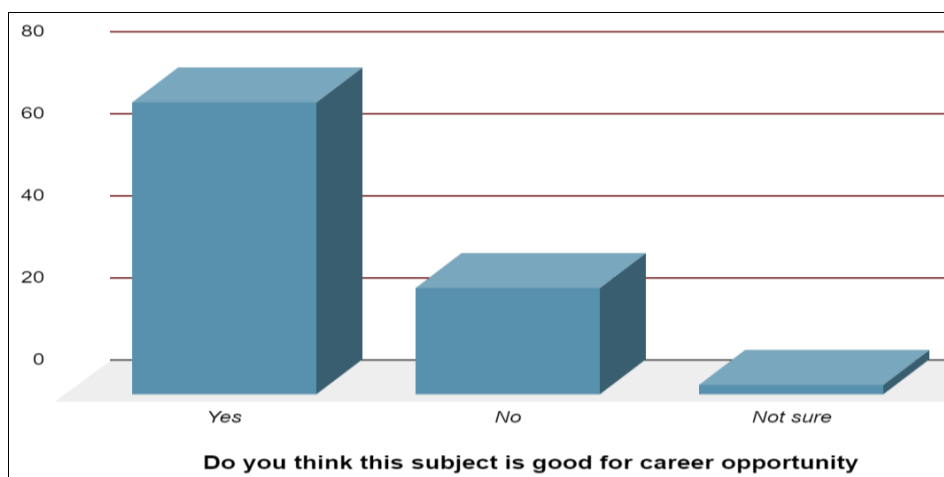
**Fig 6:** What is the main reason to choose this subject for study

Study also revealed that the main reason to choose this subject among students is there is no other option available of their choice 19% students choose this subject because they like to study it, 23.8% students choose the subject for better job opportunity, 2.5% students choose this subject because their parents or family members guide them to choose this subject, only 10.7% students have some other reason.



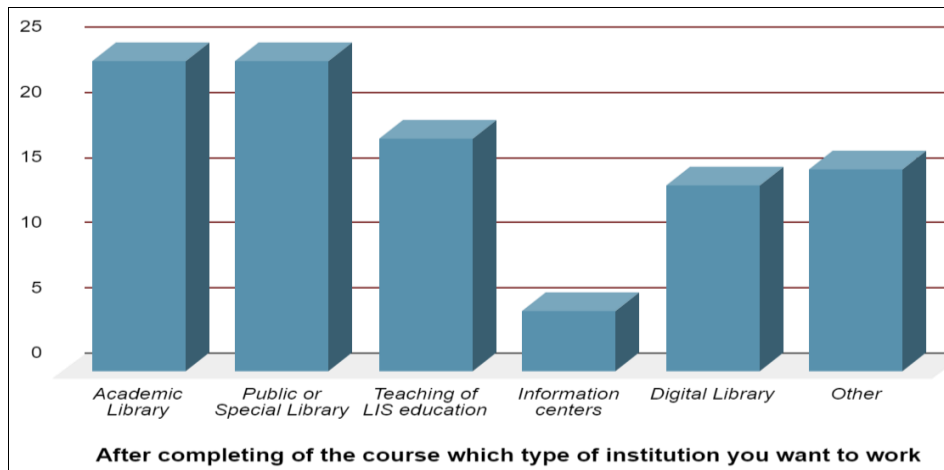
**Fig 7:** How do you find the subject after taking class

Study shows that 34.5% students find the subject interesting after taking classes, 17.9% find it interesting but tough, 34.5% students find the subject easy and interesting although 6% students are not sure about the options.



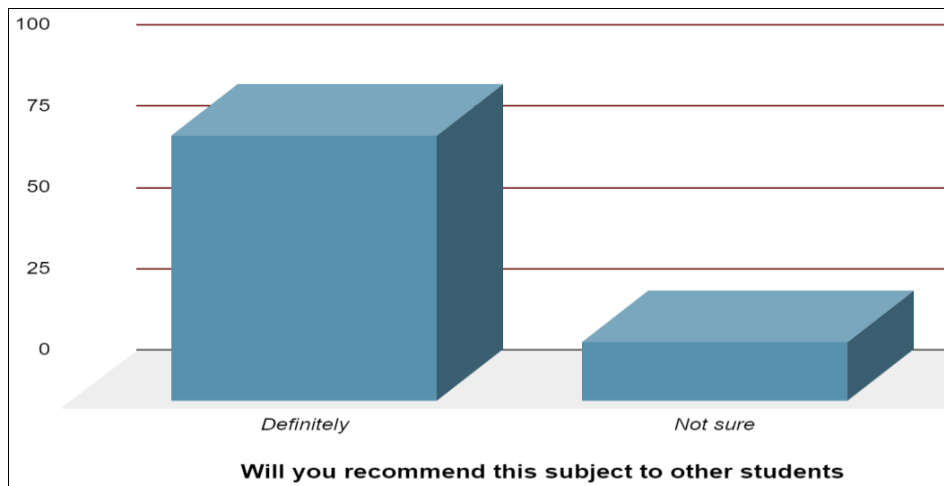
**Fig 8:** Do you think this subject is good for career opportunity

The above diagram depicts that 71.4% of students thought that this subject is good for career opportunity, whereas 26.2% of students are not sure about that.



**Fig 9:** After completing of the course which type of institution you want to work

Study shows that 23.8% participants like to work in academic libraries, 23.8% participants like to work in public or special libraries. 17.9% of participants were interested in teaching LIS education, 14.3% interested in working in digital libraries, 4.7% in information centers, and 15.5% interested in other institutions.



**Fig 10:** Will you recommend this subject to other students

The above diagram shows that 81.9% of students say that they will recommend this subject to other students whereas 18.1% of participants are not sure about it.

**Conclusion**

The growth of LIS education in India has been substantial, expanding from a few library schools to numerous universities and institutes offering various programs at the diploma, undergraduate, and postgraduate levels. Dr. S. R. Ranganathan contributed to the upgrading of LIS education and the profession in India. Before independence, only six institutes offered diploma courses in library science. Currently, there are more than 300 institutes offering various LIS courses. Although this subject is not as popular among students as other subjects like history, sociology, political science, etc., most students do not opt for library and information science first. But after studying this subject, they find it interesting and good for their career opportunities. The students also wanted to take this subject as a career and would like to recommend it to the new students. Now library and information science (LIS) is gaining popularity among students.

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