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CURRICULUM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: EMPOWERING STUDENTS AS ADVOCATES FOR ACHIEVING THE GLOBAL GOALS

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Abstract

The integration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the Library and Information Science (LIS) curriculum is essential for preparing future LIS professionals to contribute effectively to sustainable development of the society. Libraries play a vital role in promoting sustainability through knowledge dissemination, equitable access to information, and community engagement. This study examines the significance of incorporating concept of SDGs within LIS education, highlighting how it can enhance the role of libraries in achieving the Global Goals. Expected outcomes of this integration include increased awareness among LIS graduates about sustainability, improved library services aligned with SDG objectives, and stronger collaboration between LIS institutions and sustainability-driven organizations. By equipping students with relevant skills and knowledge, LIS education can empower future professionals to support sustainable practices in information management, library operation, and policy development. This study concludes with suggestions for Curriculum Development members, policymakers, educators, and LIS professionals to enhance curriculum design, ensuring that LIS education not only meets academic and professional standards but also actively contributes to societal needs with a sense of social responsibility to achieve the goals of the United Nations for global sustainable development.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Library and Information Science Curriculum, Global Goals, Curriculum Development, Libraries, Sustainable Practices.

1. INTRODUCTION

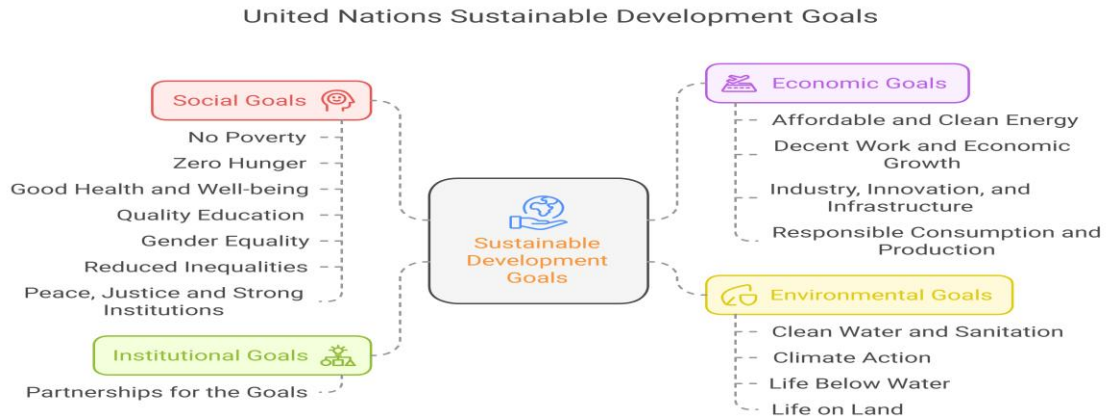
The challenges of the 21st century demand a generation of learners who are not only knowledgeable in their academic subjects but are also sensitive to the pressing global concerns around them. By witnessing the Present global challenges like climate change, resource scarcity and social inequality can be better addressed by integrating sustainable development goals (SDGs) into the curriculum. Awareness of SDGs at an early stage of life can serve as a guiding framework that shapes how students think, act, and contribute to the sustainable development of society. The integration of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into academic curricula has emerged as a significant strategy to prepare learners for the realities of a rapidly transforming world (UNESCO, 2020).

1.1 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030:

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) launched by the United Nations in 2000 were an ambitious effort to address global challenges by 2015. MDGs were focused on eight key areas, including eradicating poverty, achieving universal education, promoting gender equality, reducing child and maternal mortality, combating diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, and fostering global partnerships (*United Nations Millennium Development Goals*, n.d.). To address limitations of MDGs United Nations (UN) introduced the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their 169 targets, along with the corresponding indicators used to measure

progress in 2015 to address the global challenges by 2030 (*THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development*, n.d.).

Figure 1



Note. The Image outlines the 17 SDGs, which are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure peace and prosperity for all.

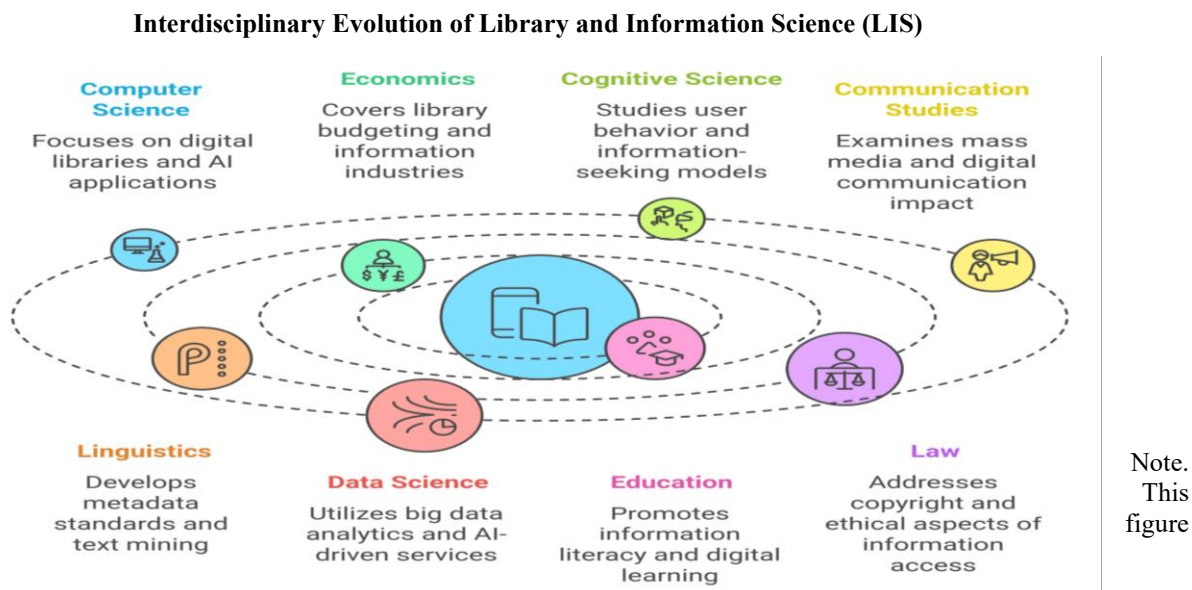
1.2 Curriculum Development:

University Grants Commission (UGC) in its report UGC Model curriculum for Library and Information Science (2001) states that “Renewing and updating of the Curriculum is the essential ingredient of any vibrant university academic system. There should be a dynamic curriculum with necessary additions and changes introduced in it from time to time by the respective university with a prime objective to maintain an updated Curriculum and also provide therein inputs to take care of fast-paced development in the knowledge of the subject concerned. Revising the Curriculum should be a continuous process to provide an updated education to the students at large”.

1.2 Library and Information Science (LIS) Curriculum Development:

The Library and Information Science (LIS) curriculum has undergone significant evolution since its inception. Initially focused on traditional areas such as classification, cataloguing, later curriculum changes incorporated new fields of knowledge for the better management of Libraries. LIS education has expanded to include management principles for optimizing the better use of human resources.

Figure 2



illustrates the interdisciplinary evolution of Library and Information Science (LIS), showing its integration with fields such as computer science, economics, cognitive science, communication studies, linguistics, data science, education, and law.

Subjects like accounting and finance have been integrated into the curriculum to ensure efficient financial management, record keeping, and auditing, which are essential operations in Library management. Technology-driven innovations have significantly enhanced library services and improved user experiences and satisfaction. The integration of technology into the LIS curriculum has revolutionized various library functions in the sections, including the acquisition section, the Technical and Circulation Section. This transformation has minimized manual efforts while maximizing efficiency. The adoption of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and other emerging technologies in library science continues to streamline operations, optimize resource management, and provide seamless access to Information.

1.3 Integration of SDGs in Curriculum:

United Nations SDGs Target 4.7 states “By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development” (*Goal 4 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.*). The University Grants Commission (UGC) in its Guidelines mentioned “The integration of Sustainable Development Goals in to Curricula is crucial for preparing future professionals to contribute to global sustainability. Embedding SDGs related content equips students with the knowledge and skills of social equity, environmental responsibility, and inclusive education” (*Fostering Social Responsibility & Community Engagement in Higher Education Institutions in India 2.0, 2022*).

1.4 Objectives of the Study:

- To analyze the evolution of the Library and Information Science Curriculum in India.
- To identify important Library services and programs that help achieve SDGs
- To provide suggestions for curriculum development.
- To highlight the benefits of integrating sustainability-related topics into LIS education.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) concepts into Library and Information Science curricula is a growing focus across the literature. The strategic embedding of SDGs into LIS education is crucial for equipping future professionals with the necessary skills to contribute to global sustainability efforts. Chowdhury and Chowdhury emphasize the importance of a strategic approach to embedding SGS concepts within LIS curricula, suggesting that this integration forms the foundation for education and research in information science, leading to trained professionals who can promote and achieve SDG targets (Chowdhury & Chowdhury, 2024). Students were surveyed about the opportunities their institutions provide to support the implementation of the SDGs. Among the respondents, 30% emphasized that institutional policies promoting student participation in SDG-related workshops and events play a crucial role (Maoela et al., 2024). Ren highlights the need for increased awareness and knowledge of sustainability among librarians, advocating for its inclusion in LIS curricula to develop competencies in students that align with sustainability goals (Ren, 2024). Libraries play a pivotal role in achieving SDGs by providing access to information, implementing sustainable practices, and engaging in community outreach and advocacy programs. The study also identifies challenges such as inadequate funding, limited research on the impact of libraries on sustainable development, and institutional obstacles that hinder effective SDG initiatives (Odularo, 2024). The SDGs were most commonly integrated at the bachelor level and across fields such as engineering and technology, humanities and social sciences, and business, administration, and economics. Integration methods included workshops, courses, lectures, and similar activities, with workshops and courses being the most prevalent. Approaches also differed by region: high-income countries tended to adopt a more academic orientation, whereas low- and middle-income countries emphasized applying the SDGs to address real-world challenges (Amorós Molina et al., 2023).

3. METHODOLOGY

A comprehensive literature review exploring existing efforts, best practices, and challenges in aligning Library and Information Science (LIS) curricula with SDGs. The study employs a qualitative methodological approach, combining literature analysis with critical reflections to assess the effectiveness of SDG integration and its impact on LIS students.

4. INTEGRATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) INTO LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE (LIS) CURRICULUM

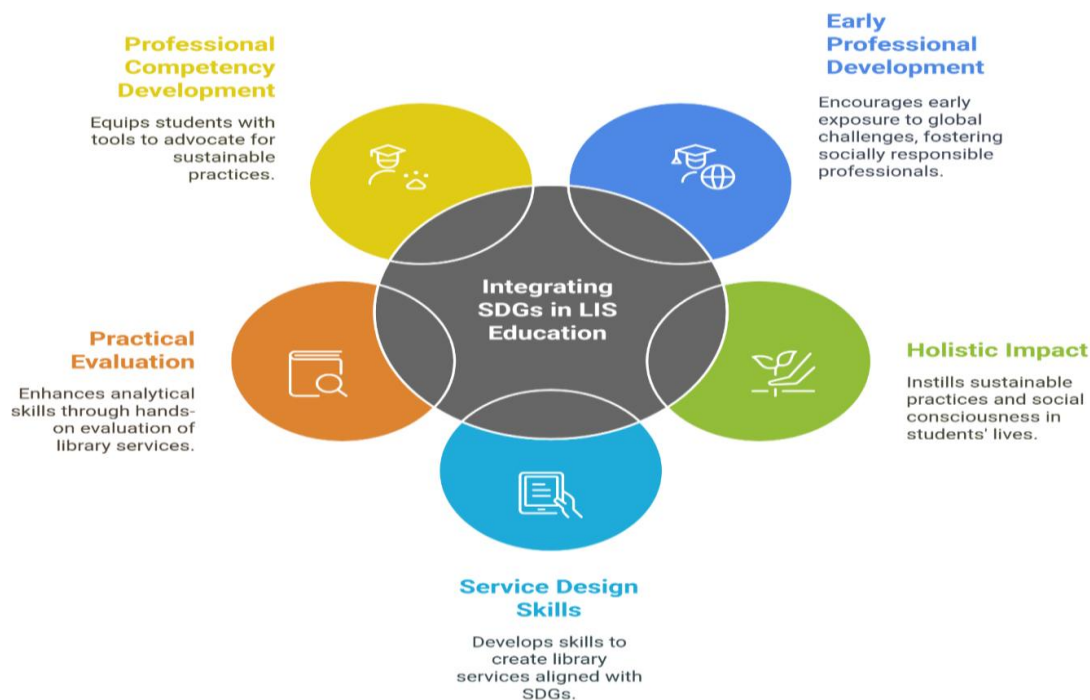
The integration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the LIS curriculum represents a natural evolution of these classical principles, particularly the fifth law, which envisions the library as a growing organism responsive to societal needs. Achieving sustainable development requires collective efforts from individuals, institutions, and organizations. Libraries and information professionals play a crucial role in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by ensuring access to knowledge, promoting digital literacy, and supporting research and education (*IFLA Toolkit*, 2017).

4.1 Expected outcomes of Integrating SDGs in to LIS Curriculum

Incorporating Sustainable Development Goals into Library and Information Science curricula is the need of the hour, as information professionals must be equipped to address pressing global challenges and contribute to sustainable community development. This integration provides students with a comprehensive understanding of social, economic, and environmental issues critical to modern information practice.

Figure 3

Possible outcomes of Integration of SDGs in to Curriculum



4.1.1 Key Benefits in Introducing SDGs in curriculum

- **Early exposure to Global Challenges:**
 Exposure to global challenges at early age during academics enables LIS students to become socially responsible professionals committed to fostering sustainable development in their communities and in their profession.
- **Holistic Impact:**
 Integration of SDGs instills sustainable practices in students' personal and professional lives while cultivating a strong sense of social consciousness.
- **Service Design Skills:**
 Curriculum should include activities encouraging students to design library services that contribute to achieving one or more of the 17 SDGs.
- **Practical Evaluation:**
 Hands-on sessions should be introduced to help students identify and evaluate existing library services that align with SDGs.
- **Professional Competency Development:**
 This approach ensures students develop necessary skills to support sustainable initiatives throughout their careers as information professionals.

4.2 Mapping SDGs to Core LIS Competencies

A good framework for integrating the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into a Library and Information Science (LIS) curriculum involves aligning core LIS competencies with specific SDG targets. This approach ensures that students not only understand their role as information professionals but also recognize how their skills can directly contribute to global sustainability and development.

Information Literacy:

Goal 4 (Quality Education): Teaching critical evaluation of educational resources.

Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being): Helping the public find reliable health information.

Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions): Training users to identify misinformation and disinformation.

Knowledge Management & Archiving:

Goal 13 (Climate Action): Preserving data on climate change and environmental trends.

Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities): Documenting local history and urban development.

Community Engagement & Outreach:

Goal 1 (No Poverty): Providing access to job search resources and financial literacy programs.

Goal 5 (Gender Equality): Hosting workshops on women's empowerment or creating collections that promote diverse voices.

4.3 Assessment and Evaluation

Reflective Essays: Ask students to write about how their future roles as LIS professionals can contribute to the SDGs.

Portfolio Development: encourage Students to build a portfolio of projects they have completed that demonstrate their commitment to sustainability.

Practical Exams: Create scenarios where students have to solve an information problem related to a specific SDG.

By following this approach, LIS programs can prepare a new generation of professionals who are not only skilled in their craft but also deeply committed to using information as a tool for positive global change.

5. CONCLUSION

By thoughtfully integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the Library and Information Science (LIS) curriculum, we can prepare a new generation of professionals who are not only skilled technicians but also engaged global citizens. This approach moves beyond traditional library science to a more holistic, action-oriented model of librarianship. It positions LIS professionals as key facilitators of change, equipped with the knowledge and tools to address some of the world's most pressing challenges—from combating misinformation to ensuring equitable access to information. In doing so, we don't just teach students about a career; we inspire them to see their work as a powerful force for a more sustainable, just, and inclusive future.

6. STATEMENTS & DECLARATIONS:

Use of AI Statement

The authors declare that they have not used generative artificial intelligence, specifically ChatGPT in the writing of this manuscript and/or in the creation of images, graphics, tables, or their corresponding captions

Conflict of Interest and Declarations:

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