

## To Information Management and Beyond

**Mumtaz Ali Anwar**

University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.

Email: anwar.mumtazali@yahoo.co



The use of 'Library Science', as the name of the discipline is almost 100 years old. The original term was used in Germany in 1934 and a translation of it in an American government publication in 1876. However, its use in the name of a professional degree is found around 1910. Why was 'library science' used as a term is not known. But one wonders on its structure: Was there a 'science' of the 'library' which could form the basis of a discipline? It could have been simply a matter of convenience due to the lack of a proper term. Nevertheless, it has remained in use, with some variations, for almost a century. Lately, there has been a slow shift to 'Information Management' which began in the 1980s. There are a lot of people who object to it. Traditions once established become part of our psyche and extremely difficult and painful to disown.

There is a need to understand 'Information Management' as a term focusing on 'Information' which has always been, still is and will continue to be its legitimate and primary concern. It does not focus on a 'space housing information artifacts'. Its augmented professional expanse will create professional job market that is hard to identify and measure at this time. Its graduates will serve more and more diverse populations. There will be a more prestigious consequence of this shift. A study of its close and meaningful interdisciplinary relations will enable it to rub its shoulders and receive recognition from some well-respected disciplines, such as education, psychology, medicine, management sciences, etc. Some of these links, which are crucial, have not yet been adequately identified and recognized. This paper will

present a model of interdisciplinarity using Information Management as a core area. It will then use Bibliotherapy, which deals with multifaceted issues, as a case to point out its crucial links with some important disciplines which are of common interest to them.

**Keywords** Information Management, Bibliotherapy, Library Science, LIS Discipline

### Introduction

The identity of a person, a group, a community, a nation or for that matter of a discipline and a profession and the symbols which represent these and their implications are extremely important and powerful. Historically, our identity originated from the word 'library' – a name given to a collection of written records assembled together, somewhat organized for future use and placed in a building, small or large, having walls, doors and windows with a roof. The keeper of this entity, whatever he was, was labeled as 'librarian' and his line of work 'librarianship'. This business continued as usual until the last quarter of the 19th century when these entities and the business related to them became much more complex than it had been during the previous many centuries. Then the educated and concerned leaders of this business started seriously thinking about organizing information, the recorded knowledge, and managing these entities on a professional basis using systematic, scientific and standard methods and procedures. This thinking led to the creation of professional literature and ultimately to formal education of the 'librarian' which initially began in libraries and then found a place in the scholarly world of universities.

It was at this point that a suitable name for this academic activity housed in a university was

needed. It began with 'library economy' and 'library service'. The term 'library science' was originally used in Germany in 1934 and a translation of it in an American government publication in 1876 (U.S. Bureau of Education, 1876). Although its use in the name of a professional degree was found around 1910 (Bostwick, 1910) it was not commonly adopted as a term for the discipline in the professional literature. On the contrary, a textbook published by the University of the Punjab in 1916 used it then (Dickenson, 1916). So, the use of 'Library Science', as the name of the discipline is almost 100 years old. Why was 'library science' used as a term is not known? But one wonders on its structure: Was there a 'science' of the 'library' which could form the basis of a discipline? It could have been simply a matter of convenience due to the lack of a proper term or even a vision at that time. Nevertheless, it has remained in use, with some variations, for almost a century. Lately, there has been a slow but visible shift to 'Information Management' which began in the 1980s (Anwar, 1991-92). There are a lot of people who object to this shift and will continue to do so for quite some time. Traditions once established become part of our psyche and it is extremely difficult and painful to disown them. But is there anything wrong with changing names if there are legitimate reasons to do?

Let us examine the nature of the work of the 'librarian' labeled as such for centuries. What are the functions essential to his work? Serving a defined community of users, he is supposed to (Anwar, 2009):

1. Identify material directly related to the needs of that community from a huge mass of information;
2. Evaluate the identified material using professional and scholarly standards;
3. Select the material which is thought to be suitable to the needs of that community;
4. Acquire needed material in a variety of ways within the means available to him;

5. Organize the acquired material using a variety of professional tools and systems so that effective and efficient access to it is provided to users;
6. Maintain the material in such a way that it remains available for access and use;
7. Disseminate the material by creating awareness among users; and
8. Empower his clients, through information literacy skills training, to become life-long independent users of information.

All of these eight functions converge on 'information', in whatever form and wherever it is found, and its legitimate user creating a meaningful link between them. None of these functions gives a faintest or a foggiest idea of being restricted by space and time. In such an enlarged expanse of the information sphere walls, buildings and time have lost their traditional and restrictive meaning. The question then is that if we are fully performing the eight functions listed above, without any regard to space and time, aren't we managing information? Then where does 'library science' stand? Since we are dealing with 'information' and its 'user', not being restricted by space and time, then we are legitimately engaged in 'Information Management'. There is no doubt that this is a sea change. There are several areas related to this change where a lot of work will have to be done.

All of these areas will present big challenges which will have to be met if the transition from 'LIS' to 'IM' has to succeed and become fruitful. This responsibility naturally will fall on the shoulders of a small number of dedicated people who are endowed with the vision and are knowledgeable, competent, honest, and hardworking. If this work falls in the hands of those who either do not possess these characteristics or pretend to possess these, it will create a disastrous situation resulting in unfortunate consequences.

We can only hope and pray that that does not happen. A lot of serious and dedicated work will

have to be done in stages over an extended period of time. Due to the nature of this paper and shortage of time, we will confine ourselves to discuss only three areas.

### 1. Survey, Identify and Measure the Expanded Job Market as a Result of the Shift to 'IM'

The opportunities for gainful employment of graduates with 'IM' background will be far more rewarding and prestigious than those of the traditional 'library market'. A few possibilities can be mentioned. The private sector organizations, once made aware, will be hungry for 'knowledge managers' if properly educated. These managers should aim "to satisfy current information needs, show the employees the existing information sources and systems that are available in the organization and what they contain. ... The knowledge managers should be identifying ways of taking information (and where appropriate raw data) and converting it into knowledge, based on syntheses of various items of information carried out by experts within the organization, and to store knowledge which reflects the importance and the impact of internal and external information for the organization...." (Pantry & Griffiths, 2003, p. 106).

A unique opportunity has been provided by the recent legislation enacted by various governments in the country. The case in point is *The Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013*. This Act, which came into force at once, stipulated the appointment of a Punjab Information Commission and Public Information Officers (PIO) in all public bodies (Government of the Punjab, 2013). It is logical to expect that many PIOs may have been appointed already. I regret to say that our profession might have been totally oblivious to this wonderful development and might not have tapped it for its benefit.

Another opportunity provided for the traditional library sector was the National Employment Policy issued in 2008 (Government of Pakistan,

2008). This Policy document makes the following provision (p. X):

#### **Public Libraries and National Centers**

**Project:** A public library and national center is established in each city and small town, even at the union council level. This program besides generating significant employment will also contribute in increasing awareness and raising literacy as well as providing a platform to local population for networking. **It will immediate[ly] create more than 12,000 direct jobs in all districts and employ at least 48000 indirectly.**

Did the profession take any notice of this development and did anything to benefit from it? It appears not.

The service structure at the public universities and government colleges has already been upgraded to make it very attractive. A parallel development has been the creation of a good number of academic positions in the government colleges of the Punjab. A logical step would have been to start with lecturer's positions rather assistant professors so that more positions could have been created and in time some of these could be upgraded. The second opportunity that is being lost is to change the present teaching arrangements in colleges from Library Science to Information Literacy skills courses. There is no need to teach a course on library science at the Intermediate and Bachelor level. The focus should be on empowering the information user to become an independent life-long user rather than studying traditional tools of library science.

There are many other avenues of employment in civil and private sector which can be explored for gainful employment of graduates of 'IM'. A national or a provincial survey could be conducted to identify these avenues, make the IM education responsive to it, and prepare graduates for these jobs.

### 2. Review and Meaningful Change in the Curricula to Match the Shift to 'IM'

The expanded job market as partially identified above will only become accessible if

commensurate changes are made in the current master's curricula because the current curricula are not structured to meet the needs of the market identified above. There is an urgent need to review and restructure the curricula in such a way so that its graduates are adequately prepared in terms of knowledge and skills for several sectors. It could take the shape of a common core followed by several streams of specialization. Even the courses for the traditional library market will have to be revamped.

The current teaching of all type below the master's program must be re-examined seriously. The present teaching of library science as an optional subject at the Intermediate level does not make any sense. These courses must be replaced by redesigned courses focusing on Information Literacy skills. The current Bachelor degree programs, whether two- or four-year recently introduced by the HEC, are damaging to the profession. The master's degree must be the first professional degree. Anything below that should focus on either Information Literacy or preparing paraprofessionals. As regards the bachelor degrees, it will be very difficult to abandon them due to several reasons. But then, sometimes hard, difficult and unpopular decisions have to be made.

There is also a need for the proper training of paraprofessionals which at the present time is not being conducted at the level at which it is required. It is suggested that the universities should start two certificate courses at the undergraduate level running for six months and offered in the evenings. These should be post-Secondary School Certificate and post-Intermediate level courses. Their course content, standards of teaching, and the resources used in teaching should be of acceptable standard and so should be the trainees.

It is suggested that a thorough examination of the curricula for all programs must be done followed by revisions which meet the needs of

the market. This exercise will determine the success or failure of the shift to 'IM'.

### 3. Faculty Development

The most critical aspect of the shift to 'IM' and its success is the capability of the faculty who will take the responsibility to implement the sea change to 'IM', do it in a smooth manner with known knowledge and capability. It must be noted that most of the curricular changes made during the past 50 years or so in many countries to match the changes in the knowledge-base and the market needs have been cosmetic. Therefore, the achievements have rarely met the expectations. A perception exists that the major problem in implementing crucial changes and shifts in curricula has always been the faculty because the new situation demands renewal and upgrading of knowledge and skills which is not easy for the incumbent, especially the older faculty. One can simply raise the question: Are the present faculty capable of introducing and implementing a major shift in the education and curricula?

Several universities have started post-master (MPhil and PhD) research degrees during the past 10 years and are producing too many graduates. Some of the research being accepted is of questionable quality. Most of the faculty being recruited comes from their own graduates. This has and will introduce in-breeding which is not a healthy sign for quality teaching and research (Anwar, 2009). An effort should be made to send young faculty to do their doctorates from the top universities in the West.

### Interdisciplinarity and Information Management

Nissani (1997) elaborated the term 'Interdisciplinarity' as follows:

Interdisciplinarity is best seen as bringing together distinctive components of two or more disciplines. In academic discourse, interdisciplinarity typically applies to four realms: knowledge, research, education, and theory. Interdisciplinary



knowledge involves familiarity with components of two or more disciplines. Interdisciplinary research combines components of two or more disciplines in the search or creation of new knowledge, operations, or artistic expressions.

In terms of approach, “interdisciplinary studies may be defined as a process of answering a question, solving a problem, or addressing a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline or profession” (Klein & Newell, 1998, p. 3). It is through ‘interdisciplinarity’ approach that we recognize, comprehend, and appreciate links among all the various factors that shape our complex world.

All disciplines produce knowledge and use not only their own knowledge output but also benefit from, in varying degrees, some of that created by others. There are two disciplines that perform an additional function. Information Communication and Technologies (ICT) processes knowledge also for the use of others and Information Management provides knowledge to all others (Beghtol, 1995). Whereas all disciplines have interdisciplinarity links, varying in terms of strength from discipline to discipline, Information Management has interdisciplinarity links, not fully realized and recognized yet, with all other disciplines. The following 5-ring Interdisciplinarity Onion displays the connectedness of various disciplines in the overall complex social context. It places Information Management in the center supported by ICT in the second ring and interacting with all disciplines that are connected with each other placed in the third ring. All disciplines are influenced by the outer ring of social environment. Information Management, that has a legitimate place in one of the broader areas listed in the circle of disciplines and having inter-connections with them, plays the additional crucial role of acquiring, organizing, and providing knowledge produced by all disciplines to individuals engaged in dealing with complex societal problems. Therefore, its

connectedness, with the dual role of a knowledge-producer as well as a knowledge-provider, is more pervasive than that of any other discipline. This paper will briefly examine the topic of ‘bibliotherapy’ as a case of interdisciplinarity where Information Management has very strong links with several other disciplines.

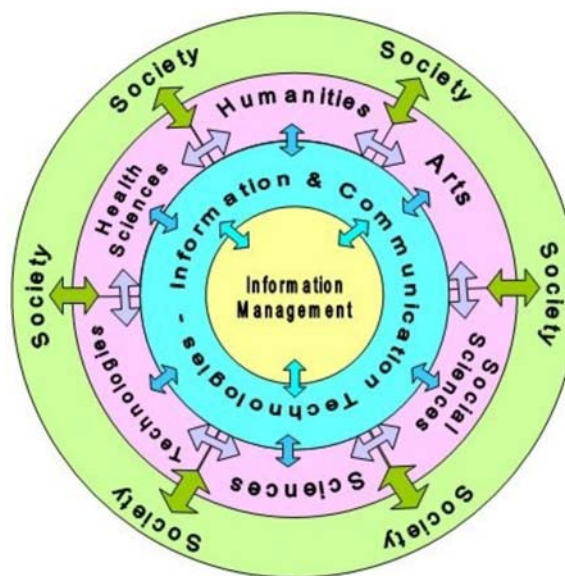


Figure 1. Interdisciplinarity Onion

### Bibliotherapy and Its Literature

‘Words’ possess extraordinary healing powers. They, through reading or listening, have been used by every civilization, old or new, for therapeutic purposes focusing on personal, social, and health problems. Muslims formalized the use of ‘reading’ for therapeutic purposes during the Middle Ages in their hospitals and prisons mainly using religious texts. In time, as Muslims did not develop this practice further, it was adopted in other parts of the world. Its use became more formalized in American hospitals as a joint endeavor between the physician and the hospital librarian. This use of prescribed ‘therapeutic reading’ was then termed, sometime after 1910, as ‘bibliotherapy’.

Bibliotherapy dealt with multifaceted problems and, therefore, became a common subject of interest to several disciplines. Beginning with a

joint practice by medicine and information management, it was later adopted by psychiatry, psychology, education, sociology and social work. Each of these disciplines developed its own techniques of bibliotherapy dealing with particular problems. Bibliotherapy, although still an unrecognized discipline in itself, has developed into a vehicle of interdisciplinarity between several disciplines that have a common interest in the welfare of the human.

A large amount of literature has been produced on this subject by all the disciplines mentioned above. Writings dealing with the power and use of 'words that heal' at least go back to the beginning of Islam. However, the modern discipline-based databases do not go far back to enable us to identify the earlier writings on the subject. *PsycInfo*, a psychology database, lists a paper on neuro-psychiatric services in hospitals published in 1931 that uses the term 'bibliotherapy'. It is estimated that unique citations retrieved from several related databases could reach above 2,000, with the number growing steadily. This indicates a strong multidisciplinary interest in bibliotherapy. However, awareness of this growing phenomenon is still lacking, especially in our part of the world. There is an urgent need to bring out this common interest so that the inherent links

become more visible and a closer interaction begins between the concerned disciplines.

This section will present a demographic analysis of literature on bibliotherapy published in scholarly journals from 2001 to 2005. Bibliometric analysis has been used by many scholars to measure interdisciplinarity (Gatten, 1991; Liu & Wang, 2005; Morillo, Bordons, & Gomez, 2003; & Schloman & Byrne, 1992). It will deal with the journals publishing this literature, subject dispersion, and its geographic origin.

Five discipline-based online databases covering Psychology (*PsycInfo*), Medicine (*Medline*), Education (*ERIC*), Sociology (*Social SciSearch*), and Information Management (*LISA*) were searched using the term 'bibliotherapy'. Non-journal citations were excluded from this analysis. Citations retrieved were examined in order to delete un-related citations, loaded into the Pro-Cite database program and merged. This process, after removing duplicates, resulted in 390 unique citations. The analysis of these is presented in the following sections.

These 390 papers were published in 232 journals with a mean of 1.68 papers. A large majority of the journals (n=166, 71.55%) published only one paper each. The figures for the papers and journals are given in Table 1

Table 1, Number of Papers and Number of Journals

No. of Papers	No. of Journals	Total No. of Papers
1	166	166
2	32	64
3	14	42
4	9	36
5	4	20
6	3	18
7	1	7
8	1	8
12	1	12
17	1	17
Total	232	390

The interdisciplinary nature of bibliotherapy is shown in the wide spread of papers in a large number of 232 journals. However, there are 11 journals that published five or more papers each.

### Subject Dispersal of this Literature

The spread of journals and papers over various disciplines will indicate their interest in bibliotherapy. Table 2 presents the distribution of papers and their publishing journals by various subjects.

*Table 2, Journals and Papers by Discipline*

Discipline	No. of Journals	No. of Papers
Medicine	87 (37.50%)	135 (34.62%)
Psychology	77 (33.19%)	163 (41.79%)
Education	30 (12.93%)	45 (11.54%)
Sociology and Social Work	29 (12.50%)	35 (8.97%)
Information Management	3 (1.29%)	3 (0.77%)
Music	3 (1.29%)	4 (1.03%)
Literature	1 (0.43%)	2 (0.51%)
Religion	1 (0.43%)	2 (0.51%)
Ethics	1 (0.43%)	1 (0.26%)
Total	232	390
Medicine	87 (37.50%)	135 (34.62%)

Medicine and Psychology dominate both in terms of the number of journals and the number of papers published. Education and Sociology also have a reasonable number of journals and papers. However, Information Management which was one of the original two that adopted bibliotherapy lags miserably behind the other four disciplines under scrutiny. It seems that it has focused its attention on providing rather

than creating knowledge. Interestingly enough, four additional disciplines have been identified as having interest in bibliotherapy.

### Geographic Origin of this Literature

The geographic origin of the literature on bibliotherapy will be of some interest. The data for the number of journals and papers published by various countries are provided in Table 3.

Table 3, Journals and Papers by Country of Origin

S. No.	Country	No. of Journals (%)	No. of Papers (%)
1	USA	131 (56.47)	213 (54.62)
2	UK	54 (23.28)	101 (25.90)
3	Australia	8 (3.45)	16 (4.10)
4	Germany	8 (3.45)	15 (3.85)
5	Spain	7 (3.08)	12 (3.08)
6	Canada	4 (1.72)	9 (2.31)
7	China	3 (1.29)	3 (0.77)
8	New Zealand	3 (1.29)	3 (0.77)
9	Netherlands	2 (0.86)	4 (1.03)
10	Switzerland	2 (0.86)	2 (0.51)
11-20	10 countries	1 –	2 –
Total	20	232	390

Twenty countries in all publish 232 journals that contain 390 papers. USA and UK dominate the world in publishing literature on bibliotherapy. USA produces 56.47 percent of the journals and 54.62 percent of the papers. UK publishes 23.28 percent of the journals and 25.90 percent of the papers. It shows their deep concern about solving social problems. Two Muslim countries (Turkey and UAE) together publish only two (0.86%) journals and two (0.51%) papers – a meager amount indeed.

### Conclusion

The long surviving name of the discipline, 'Library Science', is slowly giving way to 'Information Management' resulting in an expanded job market. However, the success of this shift will largely depend on a small number of dedicated individuals who have the vision and are knowledgeable, competent, honest, and hardworking. Do we have such a breed of people is a moot question?

'Information Management' as a subject possesses interdisciplinary interest which goes far beyond the five disciplines included in this paper. However, these data need to be examined in more breadth and depth in order to identify the special areas and the composition of research teams to delineate cross-disciplinary interests. There is no doubt that cross-

disciplinary research will considerably enhance the image of 'Information Management'.

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