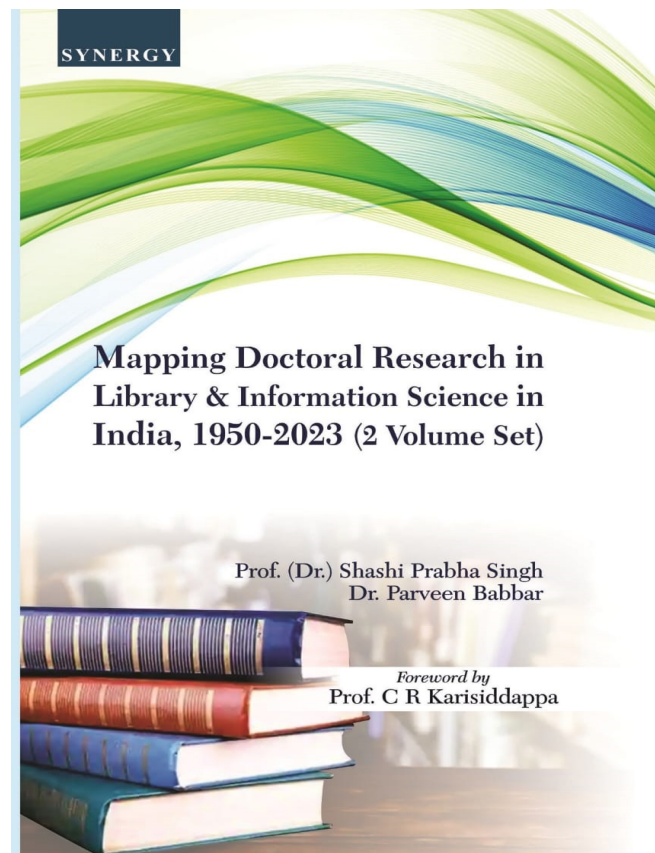


# Mapping Doctoral Research in Library and Information Science in India, 1950-2023



**Mapping Doctoral Research in Library and Information Science in India, 1950-2023. Two Volumes Set. Vol. 1:** Inventory of Doctoral Dissertations. Vol. 2: Appendices and Indices to Inventory of Doctoral Dissertations. By Shashi Prabha Singh and Parveen Babbar. Synergy Books India, New Delhi, 2024, Hardcover, ISBN: 9789392958182.

The book by Prof. Shashi Prabha Singh and Dr. Parveen Babbar, titled “Mapping Doctoral Research in Library and Information Science in India, 1950–2023”, represents a monumental contribution to the Library and Information Science (LIS) field in India. Both authors are distinguished in their field, with Singh being a former Head of the Department of Library and Information Science at the University of Delhi and an Emeritus Fellow, and Babbar serving as the Deputy Librarian at Jawaharlal Nehru University's Dr. B R Ambedkar Central Library. Together, they comprehensively examine LIS education and doctoral research in India over more than seven decades.

The book's title hints at its core methodology – mapping. In LIS and many other fields, mapping refers to analysing and visualizing relationships between terms or concepts in scientific literature. This can often involve co-occurrence analysis, where researchers investigate the frequency with which terms appear together, revealing underlying patterns or associations. These methods help understand the structure of knowledge in a particular discipline, identify connections, and track emerging trends or focal points in the research.

Historically, LIS in India took its first steps into the realm of doctoral research with the award of the first Ph.D. in the field to D.B. Krishna Rao, who conducted a study on "Facet Analysis and Depth Classification of Agriculture" under the mentorship of S.R. Ranganathan, one of the towering figures in LIS globally. Early research in the field centered on information-seeking behaviour, but as technology evolved, the focus gradually shifted toward applying Information and Communication Technology



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(ICT) in libraries and information management. Over time, LIS research in India has broadened to include significant work in bibliometrics, informetrics, and related methodologies – fields that quantify and measure patterns in scholarly communication and information dissemination.

The book is thoughtfully structured into two volumes. Volume one contains two parts, and volume two is divided into three parts. The first volume begins with a comprehensive overview of LIS education and research in India, providing a historical context that traces the development of the field from its inception in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century through to its current state. This is particularly important because it highlights the growth of LIS as an academic discipline and the broader evolution of higher education in India. The authors give particular attention to the origins of doctoral research in LIS, emphasizing the need for bibliographical control and systematic documentation to ensure the cumulative development of knowledge.

One of the key contributions of the book is its extensive mapping of LIS doctoral research in India over 73 years, spanning from 1950 to 2022. This analysis draws from 112 universities and documents an impressive total of 4,362 PhDs, of which 264 were written in regional languages such as Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, and Marathi. Including non-English language dissertations is a critical feature of the study, as it highlights the linguistic diversity of scholarly work in India. In this country, multiple languages coexist within academia. The study also attributes a substantial growth in PhD awards to government initiatives, mainly India's Five-Year Plans, which have provided scholarships and fellowships to support higher education research. This context illustrates the significant role that state policy has played in expanding the scope of LIS research.

Part II of volume one is of particular value for its bibliographic utility. Here, the authors categorize all 4,362 PhD theses into 35 distinct groups. While seemingly compelling, this classification system is not sourced, leaving readers curious about the underlying criteria used. Nevertheless, the breadth of research topics, including a broad category called "Libraries and Information Systems," demonstrates India's vast range of LIS inquiry. Organizing research into thematic clusters aids both

scholars and practitioners in identifying trends and gaps in the field, fostering future research endeavours.

Volume two focuses on appendices, indices, and a list of 409 PhDs awarded between April 2022 and November 2023. However, the latter are not analysed in detail due to their late inclusion in the study. The appendices provide valuable supplementary information, including lists of LIS departments across universities, rules governing PhD submissions, and details about supervisors. Seven indices allow for a thorough search of the thesis data by scholar name, title, subject, and other parameters, offering a user-friendly means of navigating the extensive dataset.

One of the key strengths of the book is its comprehensive approach. It does not merely catalogue and analyse dissertations; it places this research within a broader institutional and policy development context, creating a more dynamic understanding of the LIS field in India. The work is not simply retrospective but also offers forward-looking insights. As noted by C.R. Karisiddappa, who praises the authors in his introduction, the book is an invaluable resource for documenting both past achievements and future needs in the field. He also stresses the importance of maintaining accurate databases of PhDs awarded in LIS, which, as the authors have shown, is no easy task. Their perseverance in conducting this study during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic is commendable.

The book provides essential implications for the future of LIS research in India. By identifying subject areas that have been well-studied and those that remain underexplored, the authors provide a roadmap for future doctoral students and their supervisors. Additionally, their detailed account of how governmental policies have shaped LIS education and research serves as a reminder of the ongoing need for institutional support and strategic direction.

This book is an essential resource for LIS practitioners, educators, and researchers. It documents the history of doctoral research in LIS in India and provides a platform for reflection and future planning. The data contained within its pages will help identify trends, understand research focus shifts, and recognize the institutional contributions that have shaped the field. Moreover, it serves as a call to action for further refinement of research databases and continued growth in the field of LIS.

#### Reviewed by

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