

Status of LIS in South Africa since 1994: A transformation or Deformation?

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Abstract

The paper examines the position and the extent of Library and Information Services (LIS) in South Africa for the past ten years of democracy. It is therefore the aim of this paper to outline the trends of LIS in South Africa with respect to transformation since 1994. It is in 1994 that the first democratic election was held in South Africa. Focus shall therefore be given to the progress made in transforming the field of LIS in South Africa since 1994. For the future to be predicted, the present status needs to be known. For the present to be known, reference to the past needs to be unfolded.

Introduction

LIS sector in South Africa had since been divided into various categories per services offered to clients within or interested in mother body's business activity. Such libraries exist to either support or enable the daily business activities of their parental organization. For example, Academic libraries exist with the sole aim of supporting the curriculum and thereby enabling institutions of higher learning to conduct their research projects with ease.

On the other side, publishers, distributors and vendors have a major influence on what libraries can acquire for their users. They provide libraries with study materials such as books, periodicals, audio tapes etc in exchange of money. In the government sector, tender system is often opted for, with the lowest bidder supplying relevant study materials for agreed period. Depending on their budget, academic and special libraries often buy books from different suppliers' periodic basis.

Historical background

Unlike other professions, LIS in South Africa contributed greatly towards eradication of illiteracy and thereby building sustainable economy of the country. It is commonly believed that all professions depend deeply on LIS for their survival. Commonly known with its core business of "information dissemination", library and information services equipped South Africans with understanding and overcoming the policy of separate development (Apartheid) and thereby enabling them to achieve democracy.

Pre-1994, every sphere of our society ranging from economic, social, political, moral, cultural, environmental etc were confronted with serious problems. There is no single sector of South African society, nor a person living in South Africa, untouched by the ravages of apartheid (African National Congress, 1994:1). Library and Information services in South Africa were also greatly traumatized by the policy of separate development (Lor, 1994:129).

With reference to the above sentiments, the government gave more attention to the minority group leaving the majority of South Africans less developed. As compared to well resourced libraries in each corner of the minority group, very few and less resourced libraries especially in urban areas existed for the Black community. Very little if not nothing at all, existed in rural areas. Nevertheless, rural people continued to survive without access to basic infrastructures with Library and information services inclusive (Mokgaboki, 2002:78). The rate of illiteracy among fellow rural people kept on rising uncontrollably. Due to apartheid policy, services were offered as per different racial

groups. Africans were not allowed to use well resourced libraries existing in the former white community.

Like a virus scan, the same legacy of apartheid continued to divide LIS practitioners even further. Library and information professionals grouped themselves racially in different professional bodies such as African Library Association South Africa (ALASA), South African Institute for Librarianship and Information Science (SAILIS) etc. In this instance, the then ALASA was meant for Africans while SAILIS was meant for Whites. SAILIS was therefore rich in resources while ALASA struggled to make ends meet. The then government and other relevant stake holders (donors) listened and allocated many resources to the former white controlled professional bodies.

Economically, book publishing and distribution also remained in the hands of the minority group (Machet, 1993:167). The very same less resourced libraries were somehow forced to buy study materials from white controlled companies. Tenders for supply of study materials in government were also allocated to white controlled companies. The same happened to supply of library soft-wares, vendors or distributors in this regard were predominantly from minority group. Very few if nonexistence; from the African community were directly involved in information economy i.e. supplying of study materials, soft-wares etc in exchange of money.

With reference to the above brief historical background, it remains the aim of this paper to investigate extent of transformation in LIS post-1994 to date.

10 years of democracy and LIS in South Africa

Having been traumatized by the policy separate development, since 1994 to date, both government and private organizations engaged themselves in the process of transformation and restructuring to comply with the government policy of employment equity and redistribution. Failure to comply, affected organizations including government departments were threatened with further legal actions by the government. LIS sector in South Africa is no exception to the above process. The above mentioned strategy was

adopted by the ruling party with the aim of correcting the imbalances of the past. According to Mokgaboki (2002:78), democratic government brought along many opportunities through rationalization and re-allocation of resources and services to the former disadvantaged areas.

Although assumed to be a very short period of time (1994 to date), 10 years of democracy is celebrated for the progress made in eradicating the damage caused by the apartheid regime. The introduction of Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) in 1994 came as a strategy by the ruling party to mobilize all South Africans and resources of the country towards the final eradication of apartheid and building of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist future (African National Congress, 1994:1). The inclusion or exclusion of a particular profession in that document; was of critical importance in predicting the attention such profession is likely to receive from the government. Many scholars from different professional background were prompted to investigate the extent of inclusion or exclusion of their field of study in RDP document.

From library and information services perspective, Lor (1994:128) raised a number of questions about the RDP document as follows:

- What does RDP document say about libraries and information?
- What are the implications of what it says (or does not say) for the future development of LIS in South Africa?
- What contributions can LIS make to the success of the RDP?

The above questions were raised at the time when South Africa was nine months pregnant of democracy i.e. 1994. According to Lor (1994: 129), there is no mention of LIS or the right to information among the basic needs addressed in the RDP document. Information is not among the basic needs, such as shelter, food, health care and work opportunities. According to Mokgaboki (2002:78), LIS will have to compete with above mentioned basic needs for the scarce social funding. The biggest challenge is to indicate the extent at which LIS can improve the standard of living of the ordinary people and thereby declaring better life for them.

Among other existing publicly funded and parastatal Arts and Culture structures which needs to be democratized, LIS is only mentioned for the first time in the RDP document. The document further mentioned LIS for the last time in that, local and provincial government should establish libraries and other structures. It is proposed that each community should ensure that these facilities are located within reach (ANC, 1994:71). The question remains, are they currently within the reach of each community as proposed in 1994?

The above paragraph is of crucial importance in measuring the extent of transformation or deformation of LIS sector in South Africa since 1994. The implication might be that, the government lost or gained interest in LIS and thereby affecting its future development as such. After 10 years of democracy and implementation of RDP, it is still important to look back at the document itself and try to answer some of the questions raised by Lor (1994:128).

Apart from RDP as the cornerstone behind transformation, there are many other supportive initiatives by the government which directly affected development of LIS sector in South Africa. Amongst others, such initiatives include the following:

- Introduction of Outcome-based education (OBE) and Curriculum 2005
- Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)
- Restructuring of institutions of higher learning
- Amalgamation of the former State library and South African library into one i.e. the National Library of South Africa
- Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), National Council for LIS (NCLIS); National and Provincial Library Board, South African Education and Training Authorities (SETA's)
- Legislative documents such new Constitution of South Africa (1996), Library policies, Library acts etc

In support of some of the above initiatives, logical understanding by some of the LIS professionals was that, OBE and Curriculum 2005 would not succeed without well resourced school libraries. By introducing OBE and Curriculum 2005, the government indirectly committed itself in ensuring that all schools are fully equipped with school libraries/ media centers as well as qualified teacher librarians.

In support of the above sentiments, speaking at the 32nd International Association of School Librarianship Conference, the then deputy Minister of Education, Mosibudi Mangena, clearly indicated that the draft policy of school libraries in South Africa argued that teachers and learners would only be able to access an outcomes-based curriculum if they had access to learning resources. This has implications on the way school libraries conceptualized, managed and provided resources. His presentation supported the fact that school library is a suitable facility to provide learners with a wide range of curriculum oriented resources in diverse media forms, as required by an outcomes-based education system (Matomela, 2003:7). The existence of the draft school library policy in itself is a milestone in the development of school libraries in South Africa. The then Minister's presentation clearly demonstrated that LIS is counted among other facilities on top of the government's agenda.

With the same understanding, the introduction of ABET was believed to be deeply dependant on Public or Community libraries for their success. Having introduced ABET program, the Provincial/ local government was indirectly forced to ensure that community libraries exist within the reach of the members of the community. Without community libraries, ABET learners would struggle in finding relevant information for their projects. In support of the above statement, Mokgaboki (2002:79) indicated that co-operative arrangements with respect to study materials for schools and ABET should be made by public libraries to the department of education.

Unlike the above two programs, merging of institutions of higher learning was bad news to some LIS professionals. The biggest anticipated problem was loss of jobs and demotion once the process is in place. Unless otherwise; restructuring is always

associated with loss of Jobs, promotion and demotion. For example; the implication of the merger among the former Technikon Pretoria, Technikon Northwest and Technikon Northern Gauteng. Each of these institutions had a director of library services. The merger resulted in appointment of one executive director of library services for the three institutions combined (Tshwane University of Technology).

With respect to BEE in LIS sector, it highly appreciated to note the mechanisms currently applied by the government in empowering the previously disadvantaged. Preferential Tender Processes is currently applied by the government whereby formerly disadvantaged groups are getting a fair share when tenders for books, furniture, library building contracts etc. are awarded. The economic sector in LIS is still in the hands of the minority group. Given their financial position and the attempts by the government in addressing the imbalances of the past, suppliers and service providers from previously disadvantaged group are still finding it difficult to fully enter the information industry. It is therefore advisable for the government to encourage our colleagues in information industry to share their stake with the previously disadvantaged groups.

Transformation of LIS in South Africa since 1994

In trying to respond to transformation, most organizations opted to redeploy their existing staff members or fill vacant positions with professionals from the previously disadvantaged group. For the purpose of this paper, previously disadvantaged groups refer to Africans from both gender (Blacks, Indian and Coloured), women and physically disabled from all racial groups. Since 1994, more qualified professionals from previously disadvantaged groups were seen occupying most senior positions all over LIS categories such special libraries, academic libraries, public libraries etc.

In support of the above statement, a good example is the new face of the National Library of South Africa. The appointment of the Chief Executive (National Librarian) and National Library Board emerged as a positive reaction after 1994. While the National Library is headed by Mr J. Tsebe (the position never occupied by Black person before 1994), the new board is comprised of more delegates from previously disadvantaged

groups. In all, members of the board are Prof Rocky, Ralebipi, Prof Heather, Edwards, Mr M.J. Mariba, Ms T.C. Mbobo, Ms E.S. Nzimande, Mr D.P. Tshidi, Prof J.F. Smith, Mr A. Mestern and Mr G.H. Manack. Some of the provinces are also currently busy calling upon for nominations for the Provincial library and information services board. We hope that they will ensure that appointments are made irrespective of race or sex but not forgetting the imbalances of the past. The biggest challenge is for the Board of National Library and Chief Executive to ensure that transformation is fully implemented as per mandate.

Having outlined various initiatives introduced by government within the scope of 10 years of democracy, it is of relevant importance to evaluate the extent at which LIS had transformed to qualify as a rainbow profession.

For the purposes of this paper, transformation of LIS in South Africa is looked at from different perspectives as follows:

- Unification
- Access
- Re-allocation of resources
- Employment equity
- Training
- Governance

Unification

Having been racially and ethnically divided by the policy of separate development, Unification of Library and Information Services (ULIS) 1 and 2 gave birth to one professional body named Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) in 1997. LIASA resulted from amalgamation of the former racial and ethnic professional bodies such as ALASA, SAILIS etc. It emerged as a body through which LIS professionals in South Africa can speak with one voice. LIS professionals from all racial, ethnic and different sectors started to approach common problems with one voice. This strategy improved LIS sector in South Africa at both National and International level.

Through LIASA, LIS professionals irrespective of colour, race and gender received recognition from SA government and other national and international bodies such as International Federation of Library Association (IFLA). LIASA emerged as a rainbow organization that is not associated with any racial or ethnic group. It united all LIS practitioners in South Africa to speak with one voice.

Apart from unification of LIS professional bodies, amalgamation of the former State library in Pretoria and South African library in Cape Town into one i.e. National Library of South Africa with one national librarian and library board reflect real commitment towards transformation by LIS. From academic library perspectives, restructuring of institutions of higher learning resulted in most academic libraries merged into one i.e. with one executive director of library services especially from previously disadvantaged group. Public libraries were also indirectly amalgamated during the demarcation of new municipal boundaries i.e. managed by one director of community or corporate services in most municipalities. Most of the former well resourced libraries found themselves merged with the less developed in this regard.

It is believed that the unification process from all perspectives would bring along improved service delivery, financial stability and competitive survival / performance of the organizations involved.

Access

For the purpose of this paper, the concept access is approached with respect to physical access and ability to utilize the resources and services offered. Like any other basic resources, it is understood that libraries should be within reach of the members of the community. Furthermore, they should also accommodate the physically disabled. Some libraries are still operating without lifts; paraplegic-ramp etc. to enable physically disabled to access them.

Having outlined the extent of unification of Library and information services in South Africa, it is safe to indicate that since 1994, doors of the former advantaged libraries are

opened for the previously disadvantaged groups. It would be an offence to refuse a client to access your library services based on race, gender and beliefs. For example, members of the former Seshego community enjoy full access of the former Petersburg Public Library. The same thing happens to academic libraries, students from the former Setlogelo and TNG can now enjoy full services from the former Technikon Pretoria library.

Re-allocation of resources

The rationalization and re-allocation of LIS resources to previously disadvantaged areas to redress the imbalances of the past would put the public image of the profession in good standing if it succeeds (Mokgaboki, 2002:79). The emergence of the newly demarcated local government played a major role in re-allocation of resources to previously disadvantaged groups. Public libraries which benefited from the apartheid regime are being integrated with less resourced libraries i.e adapting the structure of their municipalities.

Although municipal libraries are actually receiving very little budgets from their council making it difficult to share, well resourced public libraries are sharing with the less resourced in terms of planning, staff, equipments, etc. The less resourced are somehow assisted by their partners to cope with the needs and expectations of the community. A good example in this case is still Polokwane municipality libraries i.e The former Pietersburg public library fully integrated with the former Seshego public library. The understanding in this case is that the former disadvantaged library (Seshego Public Library) as outlined above, would benefit much from the former well resourced Pietersburg Public Library.

In reality, re-allocation of resources is actually performed by the government at provincial level whereby budget for study materials, equipments, buildings, renovations and marketing is planned. More funds are channeled to the previously disadvantaged and smaller libraries to improve their conditions and ability to deliver services.

The same strategy is being used with Academic Libraries; the process of merging institutions of higher learning would greatly benefit libraries from the former disadvantaged institutions. They would share their resources with interest of student's performance at heart. A good example in this case is still Tshwane University of Technology. One is convinced that, the two formerly disadvantaged libraries (Setlogelo and TNG) would greatly benefit from the former Technikon Pretoria

The whole process of redressing the imbalances of the past in LIS would magically improve services offered to LIS clients. Resources which were not available would become easily accessible.

Employment equity

Although LIS profession was always believed to be greatly dominated by women, the most senior positions were predominantly occupied by men (Lor, 1994:133). As evidently demonstrated by appointments of previously disadvantaged professionals in managerial positions throughout LIS sector, transformation of LIS in South Africa is a reality. Involvement of previously disadvantaged professionals in decision making is a breakthrough in transformation of Library and Information Services in South Africa since 1994. More women from all racial groups, professionals from Indian, Coloured and Black community are seen occupying the most senior positions. A challenge for LIS in South Africa is to involve more physically disabled in managerial positions.

Training

Training of LIS professionals in South Africa is offered by two institutions of higher learning i.e. Universities and former Technikons (currently known as universities of technology). While universities are offering degree programs with the aim of producing professional librarians; former technikons offered diploma programs with the aim of producing para-professionals. Unlike during the period of apartheid, 1994 saw most of the former disadvantaged prospective LIS professionals (students and staff) migrating from previously disadvantaged institutions to the former advantaged in search of better education. Such migration process negatively affected the previously disadvantaged

institutions. Restructuring of institutions of higher learning tempered seriously with this migration process whereby most students and staff members automatically still find themselves in the hands of the previously disadvantage institutions i.e. merged with those benefited from the apartheid regime.

Furthermore, training of LIS professionals was greatly affected by external forces such as technological advancement and changing labour market. Failure to cope with those external forces, resulted in unemployed for LIS graduates. Instead of changing with the market out there, some of the LIS schools continued with the old curriculum. The market requires Knowledge managers, Records managers, Information managers, Consultants etc. Sticking to old concept of librarianship won't assist our graduates.

The inclusion of IT, Knowledge and Records management in LIS curriculum would make a great difference in creating opportunities for our graduates. Currently there is lack of supply of qualified Record managers in the market. Organizations are pressurized by the National Archives Act (Act 43 of 1996) and Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act 2 of 2000) to have their records under control. Very few organizations in South Africa can satisfy the requirements of the above acts. Many fail because they can not find relevant candidate to handle their records and responding to queries.

The commitment of LIASA in ensuring that LIS professionals are thoroughly trained is highly appreciated. The introduction of the South African Leadership Project (SALLP) came as good news to LIS practitioners within the scope of 10 years of democracy. The project was initiated by the Motenson Center for International Library Programmes, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (USA) and Gauteng Environs Library Consortium (GAELIC) South Africa. Funded by Andrew Mellon Foundation, the project's primary and distinctive goal is to develop leadership qualities in current and future managers of public/ community library services (LIASA-in-touch, 2003:7)

The truth about LIS training since 1994 is that, large number of the LIS graduates is unemployed. Institutions fail to change with the requirements of the market. As compared to other positions, Librarianship positions are not seen as crucial positions to fill. Organizations utilize secretaries to manage their libraries. Through SETA's, employers should be encourage to offer learnership programs to equip our graduates with experience and skills required by the market. Institutions of higher learning should also consider training their graduates to become consultants not employees. By so doing, they would create Jobs for themselves.

Governance

Although competing for attention from government with other sectors offering basic needs, unlike during the apartheid era, LIS sector is currently governed by the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. The National Council for Library and Information Services (NCLIS) was formed to inform and advise both Ministers of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology and Education on issues relating to LIS (LIASA-in-touch, 2004:7 &10). By so doing, the two ministers shall be fully informed and can be in control of LIS developments in their respective ministries.

With respect to National Library, National Library of South Africa Act (Act 92 of 1998) exists to govern the National Library of South Africa. Furthermore, the act indicates clearly that the Board of the National Library appointed by the minister shall be in full control of the affairs of the National Library.

With respect to provinces, each province passes its own LIS legislation in terms of public library services based on the SA Constitution. Some provinces have passed their legislation whilst others have not due to the funding challenge, i.e. there is no funds available from Provincial budgets to assign the function to Local Gov. For example, As per section 7 of the Limpopo Provincial Library and Information Services Act (Act 7 of 2001), MEC for sports, arts and culture should appoint the provincial library and information services Board who will advise him/her in matters relating to library and

information services. It therefore clearly implies that provincial library and information services are also controlled by the board appointed by the MEC.

According to Kruger (2003:7), legislation for public/ community libraries in South Africa is very vague and unsatisfactory. In Norway, all the library activities are governed by the Library Act and a regional library plan, which is a strategic tool to coordinate library services in the different countries. The decrees that all municipalities must deliver a public library service with a professionally qualified staff. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) schedule 5(A) stipulates that library function is an exclusive provincial competencies. It implies that provincial library services are responsible for the legislative framework for the provision of public/ community library services (Kruger, 2003:7)

School libraries are governed by the school library act and school library policy under the ministry of education. In 2003 during 32nd International Association of School Librarianship Conference, the then minister of education, Mosibudi Mangena, indicated that the department of education is busy working on a policy framework for school libraries in South Africa (Matomela, 2003:7).

Other commercial information industries appoint board of directors to assist in governance of their company. Such a move reflects transparency and real transformation. The strategy narrows the existing gaps between companies and their clients. Clients feel involved in governance of the company. A good example is observed from SABINET Online in this regard.

Challenges of LIS since 1994

Although taking into cognizance number of newly erected libraries in some of the rural areas by the various provinces over the past 10 years, community libraries still hardly exist in large portion of the rural areas where poverty, illiteracy and unemployment are at their tall (Mokgaboki, 2002:78). Established libraries in rural areas may not be enough but all nine provinces have the erection and improvement of facilities as a standing

budget item. Information is of fundamental importance to the process of social and economic development. The quality of life of individuals and a nation is increasingly dependent on their capacity to absorb, act on and use information, information resources, skills and literacy are therefore essential to ensure that communities remain at the cutting edge of information.

As proposed through RDP document ten years back, community libraries should be established within the reach of each community irrespective of the pattern i.e. rural or urban. Due to lack of necessary information, people in the rural areas are always at the receiving end; whenever the economy experiences problems they are ones to feel the pain (Maseti, 2004:8). Community libraries should therefore provide the cutting edge information, which must enable the community to participate meaningfully in their socio-economic development in a bid to provide a better life for all. The rural poor also voted for better life for all, not for the few (Maseti, 2004:8).

Unemployment and Living wage

Unemployment is a national challenge to all professions. LIS is no exception in this regard. Since 1994, large numbers of our graduates are without Jobs. It is shocking to bump at professionally qualified South Africans working as domestic workers, petrol attendants, security officers, gardeners etc. Some even hide their qualifications in order to be employed at some of the above mentioned positions. The strategy is that, if the employer discovers the real qualifications he/ she might not offer them a Job.

The question of the living wage is long overdue in LIS sector. Based on the comments from fellow colleagues, LIS is the less paying profession in South Africa. It remains the biggest challenge in LIS sector. Unlike other professions like teaching, there is no Union for Librarians through which to negotiate better salaries.

We can not run away from reality. Unemployment is exists and our colleagues are not receiving a living wage. Something needs to be done about the whole question of unemployment and lower salaries.

Digital divide

The current digital divide between urban and rural areas is a drawback to the library profession. It is a reality that technology add value to services offered by LIS to clients. It is the best way of accessing information for local economic development, government information, and educational purposes (Mokgabodi, 2002:79).

At both provincial and national level, libraries have tried their best to run at parallel level with technological advancement. Mpumalanga province for example provided all their public libraries with at least one computer over the past three years to give them access to the Internet, the Provincial electronic catalog and e-mail. The same is happening in the Northern Cape and other provinces. Some Provinces such as the Western Cape is far advanced in terms of linked libraries. Many challenges exist like telecommunication cost, unreliable lines and networks, IT support, etc.

As compared with any other categories of library and information services in South Africa, academic libraries are far much advanced in technology. Many if not all are fully computerized with library system, electronic journals i.e. databases with fulltext journals.

Restructuring

The restructuring of higher education in South Africa further emerged as serious challenge affecting academic librarians. To some, this is deformation of existing academic library services than transformation. Many of our colleagues might be left without Jobs. In support of employment uncertainty, Jayaram (2003:84) further indicated that it is heartening to note that, from libraries' point of view, the merging process has been achieved in spite of the prevailing climate of unease regarding mounting merger costs and employment uncertainty among staff. Academic librarians started to migrate from academic institutions to corporate sectors.

Special libraries are struggling for their survival since the introduction of National Archives Act (Act 43 of 1996), Public Access to Information Act (Act 2 of 2000). This

act encouraged government bodies and other organization to establish a proper management of organization's records as well as ensuring that such records are accessible to the public. Special libraries within government and private organizations are changing over to records management (Archives). Records managers and Archivist are taken more serious than Librarians

With respect to municipal libraries, the existing restructuring taking place demarcation of local Municipalities. Although a much longer process than anticipated, issues of relevance importance are being addressed as the process continues. The process is still confusing in some of the Municipalities in terms of the roles and responsibilities. Joint budget and resource planning is already taking place. We are therefore looking forward for stable and competitive libraries in South Africa once restructuring is over.

Funding

1994 to date is also associated with lack of enough funding to Public Libraries. Some of the Public Libraries are about to close due to lack funds. Communities are at risk of losing services normally offered by those Libraries. Some have instead reduced the services offered to the members of the community.

The biggest funding challenge is the one brought upon by the Constitution where the public library function is assigned to Provinces. The necessary funds to fund this mandate is not available in any of the nine Provinces. Various talks and stakeholders are involved in addressing this issue. In the mean time interim arrangements are made and alternative plans are implemented to address the financial challenge. Once the funding matter has been resolved it will greatly benefit all public libraries.

In 2003, municipalities all over South Africa threatened to terminate budget for libraries. Provincial governments were also not ready to take over all of the responsibilities. Intervention by LIASA through Robert Moropa (the then president of LIASA) was

successful in making municipalities to temporarily reverse their decision (LIASA-in-touch, 2003:10).

Value Added Tax on study materials is also another challenge for libraries to fight. Sometimes this year, library practitioners lobbied for abolition of VAT on study materials

Recommendations for the next centenary

Based on the above status of Library and Information services in South Africa since 1994, it is hereby recommended that LIS in South Africa should consider addressing the following strategic items:

Employment

- Institutions of higher learning should be encouraged to conduct a survey to determine level of placement of their graduates in the workplace after completion of their studies.
- Through SETA's, organizations should introduce learnership programs in LIS. Such programs would empower our graduates with necessary experience required in the workplace.

Marketing

- LIS should strive to equip their graduate with multi skills. Our graduates should be able to offer what other competitors are offering e.g. Information Technology
- Improved service delivery and customer care would market LIS well. A consultancy approach should be adopted.

Training

- In order to respond to the existing market, LIS curriculum needs to be reviewed on regular basis. Perhaps prospective employers should be given s chance to participate in curriculum review. Such closer relationship between training institutions and employers would somehow guarantee some of the graduates with Job opportunities.

- Graduates should be trained to become employers not employees i.e. encouraging them to start their own businesses. Many organizations are struggling to catalogue their large collection of study materials. Why can't we assist our graduate to register their own businesses in this regard?

Conclusion

Having thrashed out the pros and cons of library and information services in South Africa for the past ten years, it remains the responsibility of the librarians to position themselves at the center of the negotiation table. As key enabler to all organizations, LIS should be visible through its services in each structure of all organizations. Our mission should be centered at offering all South Africans with better life. It must be clearly demonstrated that without access to library facilities, organizations can not perform.

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