



## Barriers in LIS Scholarship in India: Some Observations

Mantra Roy, Sutapa Chatterjee

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## Barriers in LIS Scholarship in India: Some Observations

Mantra Roy, San José State University, United States  
Sutapa Chatterjee, Presidency University, India

### ABSTRACT

Although LIS research output, globally, has increased in recent years, why is there a dearth in LIS research from countries like India in the Global South? What barriers and challenges impede LIS researchers' active participation in scholarly communications? Is there a bias against research output from the Global South? These are some of the questions that the author investigated with the help of ACRL's Research and Scholarship Grant (2019 - 2020). The author collaborated with a librarian colleague in India at a second stage of the project to collect supplementary data. The second phase of the research was supported by the Marcia Tuttle International Travel Grant from NASIG (2020 - 2021). Important findings include the need for Open Access and training in academic writing standards which could help resolve some of the challenges. Learning from our Global South colleagues may assist with our work with international students and students from multiple backgrounds.

**Keywords:** LIS Scholarship, LIS research, India

### BACKGROUND

In 2019, ACRL published *Open and Equitable Scholarly Communications: Creating a More Inclusive Future* (hereafter, *Open and Equitable*)<sup>1</sup>. The report focuses largely on the United States and draws attention to underrepresented voices in scholarly communications. However, the issues of representation and diversity that *Open and Equitable* examines are also critical to regions beyond the United States.

In response to the *Open and Equitable*'s call for research agendas for its Research and Scholarship Grant, the first author, Roy, saw an opportunity to explore the reasons behind the lack of literature from India she had observed and developed a project entitled "Global South Speaks: A Librarianship Perspective." The premise is that the project would offer an opportunity to hear from librarians in India and expand the geographic reach of *Open and Equitable* to include people of different nations of origin in the scholarly communications system (9).

The study focused on responding to a key research question posed in *Open and Equitable*:

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<sup>1</sup> See "Open and Equitable Scholarly Communications: Creating a More Inclusive Future" (2019). ACRL. <https://doi.org/10.5860/acrl.1>

What are **effective strategies for addressing biases** against library science research being done or the work being produced in the Global South?

In their 2012 article, Nour Dados and Raewyn Connell describe the ‘Global South’ as including regions across Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania that have mostly lower income countries that have been historically, culturally, and politically marginalized. The phrase has a long history in multiple disciplines; for the purpose of this article, the use of the phrase ‘Global South’ emphasizes a focus away from cultural difference and development and toward geopolitical relations of power. Going beyond underdevelopment, ‘Global South’ encompasses a complex history of colonialism, neo imperialism, and social and economic changes that inform vast inequalities around the world.

### Why India?

India’s geopolitical location, colonial history, post-Independence (post 1947) socio-economic status, and its more than a billion population, makes her an intriguing country of study. It is the most populous country in the Global South and is home to the oldest multidisciplinary public university in the entire South and South East Asian region, University of Calcutta, founded in 1857. Today, India is home to at least 300 LIS programs<sup>2</sup> and more than 370 university libraries<sup>3</sup>. Many of these university librarians carry the designation of ‘faculty’ as assigned by the University Grants Commission (UGC). The UGC is a statutory body under the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India. The UGC’s charges include coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of higher education in India. UGC expects research and publications from faculty librarians in order to be promoted to higher ranks, in a system similar to the tenure-track system in the USA. Since 2006, academic librarians in India have been hired as tenure-track faculty members if they already have a PhD in LIS or are enrolled in PhD programs. Librarians without a PhD or NET qualifications but with an MLIS degree are hired as academic staff and have their own system of review and promotion. Research is not expected of staff positions for promotion.

Yet, many librarian scholars have reported, through bibliometric analyses, that compared to world LIS research output, LIS research from India is fairly low (see Alamelu and Geetha). This finding is striking because active research agendas inform academic librarianship across India<sup>4</sup>. Some scholars have also identified that many journals published in India are not indexed in Web of Science or SCOPUS and may therefore misrepresent the number of publications (see Pandita et al). Others have concluded that LIS research published in regional languages of India necessarily remains undiscoverable in English-language indexes and publications (see Singh, Chandelier, Shukla). So, the low volume of research production, lack of visibility of LIS research published in India, and lack of global access owing to research published in Indian languages, characterize the scene of LIS research from India. Please see the Literature Review section.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/228203776.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.4icu.org/libraries/in/>

<sup>4</sup> Notification No. 1343–Edn (U)/ 1U–41/11 (Pt) about Career Advancement Scheme (CAS) published by the West Bengal Government’s Higher Education, Science, & Technology and Biotechnology Department (University Branch) in July 2017 indicates that librarian faculty will be evaluated based on the API scores of their publications. <https://wbxpress.com/files/2018/01/1343-Edn.pdf>

Are there other existing factors that hinder greater LIS research activity in India? Are there factors other than lack of indexing, such as lack of access to current scholarship and the need for Open Access, that lead to less visibility of LIS scholarship from India. India also happens to rank 16th as an Open Access journal publishing country in the world, according to the Directory of Open Access Journals (see Barik and Jena).

How prepared are librarian faculty to engage in scholarly communications? Does academic English writing pose a problem in a country of more than a billion people whose one official language is English? English language as the primary language of scholarly communications is a hurdle for many countries in Latin America<sup>5</sup>, in Japan, and many parts of the Global South.

The hegemony of the English language is cited by Alamelu and Geetha in “The Coverage of Library and Information Science Literature in Web of Science”:

Indian contributions are there in English, yet Indian languages did not find place in Library and Information Science research literature. Though there are many publications from various countries like France, Germany, China, etc. having different regional languages, it is found that the scholars from these countries prefer to publish Library and Information Science in English only” (85).

Several Latin American scholars have argued against the hegemony of English as a medium of scholarly communications as well<sup>6</sup>. Santos, for example, critiques the Eurocentric written system of knowledge as practiced and propagated by contemporary systems of scholarly communications and argues for a space for intercultural collective knowledge systems. He cites examples of how some Western philosophical concepts are untranslatable in some African languages because such words do not exist in those linguistic systems. Beigel observes that when the ISI (Institute of Scientific Information, today’s Web of Science-Thompson Reuters) was founded in 1959 in Philadelphia and the system of citation index and journal rankings was founded, followed by the Science Citation Index (SCI) that valorized scholars who published in core journals, the English language as the primary medium of international publishing was established (744-745). Specific disciplines and institutions became collateral beneficiaries. The triple hierarchy of institution, discipline, and language created a vast distance between scholars in the center of ISI’s circuit and those on and outside its periphery.

Does a similar hierarchy influence the visibility of research produced in English by librarian faculty in India?

## INTRODUCTION

The first author, Roy, developed a study, “The Global South Speaks: A Librarianship Perspective” as a multi-method research project that was funded by an ACRL Research and Scholarship Grant received in 2019. The study’s hypothesis was to identify factors that hinder research productivity among librarian faculty in India. On receipt of the Marcia Tuttle International Travel Grant from NASIG, Roy collaborated with the second author, Chatterjee, in India and made travel plans to

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<sup>5</sup>See Fernanda Biegel’s “Publishing from the periphery: Structural heterogeneity and segmented circuits. The evaluation of scientific publications for tenure in Argentina’s CONICET” (2014).

<sup>6</sup> See “Epistemologies of the South and the future” (2016) by Boaventura de Sousa Santos.

collect more data in early 2021. The additional data collected supplements the original hypothesis of the study.

For this study, academic librarians with faculty status constituted the focus group. Two main sub-themes, rationale for Open Access in India and librarian faculty's preparedness for scholarly communications, inform the premise of this research study.

### **Open Access in India**

The role of Open Access (OA) and Institutional Repositories (IRs) has been critical in the Global South in order to gain access to current research<sup>7</sup>. Open access publishing is also an effective strategy for addressing biases against research originating in the Global South. There are two scenarios from the perspective of researchers in India:

- a. Access to current scholarship, if available through OA journals or IRs, enables them to engage with the recent developments in their disciplines from around the world. Otherwise, by the time researchers in India publish their perspectives, scholars in the Global North have transitioned to newer stages of the research topic. Research in India becomes outdated at the point of publication and publishers in the Global North cannot have much interest.
- b. When researchers in India publish their research based on what they can access, which tends not to be current owing to subscription-based paywalls, their research shows gaps because more recent developments were inaccessible to them. Their research does not come across as foolproof and publishers perhaps develop a bias against publications from India.

For researchers in the Global North, OA research published in India and the Global South will benefit them by showcasing multiple perspectives and case studies in a variety of circumstances that can only enrich a research landscape.

Because of this, librarian perception of OA in India is valuable to the project. Through the first survey, the authors assess librarian faculty's perception of OA and the level of familiarity with and access to OA resources and repositories.

### **Training in Academic Writing and Research Productivity in India**

The English language is a legacy of British colonialism in India. All documentation of governmental work, higher education, and most professional sectors is conducted in English. But the language has a contested presence as a medium of instruction in pre-K to high school education<sup>8</sup>. Similarly, the English language plays a complicated role in higher education. Although English language acquisition possesses immense social, economic, and cultural capital in India, not all students have equal access to the language and linguistic culture even when enrolled in English-medium schools. When they enter HEI, the jump to having all instruction and

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<sup>7</sup> See "Open Access Publishing in India: Coverage, Relevance, and Future Perspectives" (2019) in *Journal of Korean Medical Science*. <https://doi.org/10.3346/jkms.2019.34.e180>

Also see <http://openaccessindia.org/>

<sup>8</sup> "Share of kids in English medium steadily ups..." *Indian Express*.  
"26% of school kids in English medium..." *Times of India*.

examinations in English poses a serious challenge<sup>9</sup>. Consequently, academic librarians who come from a wide range of educational backgrounds prior to their MLIS training have varying levels of ease with expressing themselves in English academic writing, thereby pointing to what has been identified as the ‘hegemony’ of English academic prose, as discussed above.

Because of this, in the second survey, the authors enquired about librarians’ preparedness for the research and publication aspects required for tenure and promotion.

## METHODOLOGY

The research design includes two online surveys, seven one-on-one interviews, and a group interview of forty-two members.

The first online survey was circulated near the end of February, 2020, in order to verify the role of Open Access in the output of LIS research and publication in India. The second online survey was distributed in 2021 and focused on the preparedness for research among academic librarians.

In the summer of 2020, Roy conducted seven one-hour long interviews via Zoom with six librarian faculty and one teaching faculty member. Roy also attended a monthly meeting with a regional LIS organization called SALIS (Society for the Advancement of LIS), a registered library association in southern India with multiple chapters across the country. Roy posed versions of the same questions she used in the seven individual interviews. Forty-two members, including librarians of doctorate-granting universities, three-year degree-granting colleges<sup>10</sup>, business schools, special libraries, K-12 schools, research institutes, and the National Library of India (parallel to the Library of Congress), attended the meeting and shared their perspectives about challenges in scholarly communications.

### Surveys

In the first survey, Roy assesses the perception of Open Access and the level of familiarity with and access to Open Access resources and repositories. She shared the survey through librarians she knew who forwarded the Google form to their networks through WhatsApp and listservs. She also shared the survey through an India-wide listserv called LIS-Forum which is one of the oldest librarian networks in India. 131 responses were received from all over India of which 3 were incomplete. So, the findings from 128 responses are considered.

In the second survey, Roy and Chatterjee enquired about librarians’ preparedness for the research and publication aspects required for tenure and promotion. The two authors conducted an online survey through the networks mentioned above, in order to gather details of the experience of academic librarianship. 120 librarian faculty in various parts of India responded, among which only 105 are taken into consideration. 15 responses were discarded due to incomplete information.

### One-on-one interviews

<sup>9</sup> See “Articulating Identities - the role of English language education in Indian universities.”

<sup>10</sup> In India, Bachelor degrees in Arts, Science, and Commerce, B.A., B.Sc., and B.Com. are earned through three-year programs.

Roy used the the LIS-Forum listserv and networks of librarians she had met in Kolkata, a major metropolitan city in eastern India, to contact and recruit participants in the summer of 2020, at the height of the global pandemic. Like librarians in the USA, librarians in India had to carve out workspaces within their homes and many encountered the challenge of unreliable internet connections. Ultimately, only seven interviews were collected in one hour-long sessions each via Zoom. All interviews were transcribed. Through thorough and multiple readings, the transcripts were coded to discover themes. While specific institutional conditions and research expectations differed based on faculty or staff roles, a few consistent themes emerged.

## LITERATURE REVIEWS

### **Less visibility or low numbers of LIS research output on a global scale**

A survey of the literature demonstrates that LIS publications from India either have less visibility in the global output of LIS research or are comparatively quite low.

Uzun (2002) analyzed LIS research published by scholars from numerous Developing Countries (DC) and Eastern European Countries (EEC) between 1980 and 1999 and discussed how the recognition of LIS research by scholars in DCs or EECs implies that their research deserves merit and is accepted in the international scientific community. Uzun finds that India registers a sharp drop in number of publications in the latter years, as confirmed by more recent bibliometric studies (see below). Pradhan and Chandrakar (2011) find that while the average world contribution per year was 2119.7 articles, India contributed only 22.8 articles per year in the 10-year period under study. Patra (2014) finds that the Web of Science does not index any LIS journals from India while Elsevier indexes only three. Google Scholar does index some of the LIS journals but it is not comprehensive. Patra finds that the average citations of Indian LIS journals vary between 0.29 and 4.21, which is very low, considering that one of these journals, *Annals of Library and Information Studies*, has been around for a long time. Kumar, D.V. (2015) analyzed the number of citations to Indian authors and Indian journals in three LIS journals, *Collection Building* (published in England), *Program* (published in Ireland), and *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* (a SAGE publication) between 2004 and 2013 and found that citations to articles by Indian authors is a mere 3.92% and citations to Indian journals is at an abysmal 0.81%. Prieto-Gutiérrez and Segado-Boj (2019) found that the annual percentage growth rate of articles published in *Annals of Library and Information Studies* (ALIS), a peer reviewed and highly rated journal published in India, during 2011 and 2017 was -1.94%. Alamelu and Geetha (2019) found that India's LIS research output was 1.2% or 323 records between 1987 and 2017. Pandita, Singh, and Baidwan (2022) found that Indian LIS scholars contributed only 4.59% of the world's LIS research output, thereby reconfirming a very low visibility of research by academic librarians from India.

Such low rates of citations point to the hypothesis of the project: what factors impede research output in LIS in India? Many of these authors are librarian faculty. These low citation numbers reflect the challenges identified by all the interviewees in publishing globally. Survey responses about Open Access emphasize the need for access to current research. Need for better training in academic writing emerges in the interviews and second survey responses. More scholars such as Singh, Chander, and Shukla (2018) not only find that there is less global visibility of LIS

research published in India, like Kumar (2015) above, but also that close to 40% of LIS periodicals are published in Hindi, which necessarily undermines international visibility of LIS research in India.

### **Status of Open Access in India**

Nazim and Ashar (2023) determine that many researchers across different disciplines are not aware of Open Access and therefore don't participate in OA publishing. This article's findings are consistent with the long form responses in the first survey about Open access in which librarian faculty expressed frustration with how little teaching faculty know about Open Access. In individual interviews, all the librarian faculty members mentioned that clear policies from upper administration will help raise awareness about the need to publish in Open access journals. Some of the barriers identified by respondents in Nazim and Ashar's project echo what librarian faculty mention in our first survey: money needed for APCs, predatory journals, and less policies and initiatives across campus.

Consistent with what our survey responses told us about librarians' attitude toward Open Access, Nagpal and Radhakrishnan (2022) find that librarians support Open Access initiatives and with their support and outreach work, researchers in different disciplines can adopt OA publishing protocols. Palla et al (2022) find that students in HEI have little knowledge about OA and high APCs are deterrents. But students acknowledge that OA publishing can have tremendous research impact. This finding is important because HEI students will become researchers in the future and will be better informed about publishing in Open access publications. Kanojia and Verma (2021) find that researchers in Central universities across North India use Open Access journals for research and teaching. But the article doesn't focus on these researchers' understanding of the impact of their own writing if they publish in OA journals. The finding contradicts that in the more recent Nazir and Ashar (2023) article. It is possible that the location and funding of universities informs the awareness and adoption of OA initiatives. This is consistent with some of our interviewees stating how well-funded central Universities have more resources available, including Institutional Repositories.

### **Training in Academic Writing**

Bommanaboina et al (2021) discuss the need for concrete strategies for training in academic writing for students whose first language is not English or who are First Generation Learners of the English language. This need is identified by some of the interviewees.

Ismail and Balasubramanian (2021) discuss how research scholars and HEI students are underprepared with the rigors of academic writing because academic institutions typically do not invest curricula in teaching how to write academically because of which many authors from India get rejections based on poor language skills. This lack of training is corroborated by all the individual interviewees. Some respondents to the second survey demonstrate that the more years they spend on reading and writing for research, the better they get at academic writing for publication. M. Nisha et al (2021) discuss the complex experiment of implementing an 'Academic Writing' course for undergraduates at a university in Kerala, a southern state in India. While the intention was to integrate writing practices and critical thinking skills for all disciplines, administrative red tape and lack of training for teachers led to ineffective results. But in its latest



iteration, the course has begun to gain traction among students. Such a need to teach and learn academic writing was raised by all the individual interviewees and the group meeting attendees in our project.

## KEY FINDINGS

### First Survey

The need for Open Access (OA) rests solidly on the current gap in access across many institutions.

50% of the respondents (n=64) recognize OA as a bridge across the chasm between research produced in the Global North and the Global South.

93.9% responders (n=120) selected 'Free access to current research published around the globe' as the definition of OA.

To the question 'Why is OA needed?', 53.1% (n=67) chose 'Decreases gap in research output between Global North and South'

In the comments section, some participants stated that institutions need to be more proactive about OA mandates on campus for academics to embrace OA, an opinion not unfamiliar to US librarians.

### Second Survey

The results demonstrate the time and training that academic librarians possess for their own scholarly communications varies based on their years of experience.

The number of hours librarians spend for their research work per week:

| Number (%) of respondents | Hours for research per week |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 42 (40%)                  | 1-5                         |
| 18 (17.14%)               | 6-10                        |
| 12 (11.42%)               | 11-15                       |
| 3 (2.85%)                 | 16-20                       |

|           |       |
|-----------|-------|
| 6 (5.71%) | 21-25 |
|-----------|-------|

The fact that forty two or 40% of librarian faculty are able to spend only 1-5 hours per week on research, matches with what librarians mentioned in the interviews (see below). Of the librarians who spend 10 or more hours for their own research each week, 23% or twenty-one have seven or more years of work experience, another fact shared by more experienced librarians in the interviews.

About having received formal training for conducting research and writing academic articles, about sixty (57.14%) respondents affirmed that they received such training while thirty nine (37.14%) said they didn't. On the other hand, three (2.85%) said they got their expertise on their own, i. e. by browsing the internet for writing advice and consulting books.

We discuss more findings in the 'Discussion' section.

## Interviews

Four main themes emerge from the interviews:

1. Limited access to current scholarship - The common experience was lack of access to subscription-based journals from around the world. Few institutions with adequate budgets and LIS programs subscribe to LIS-related journal packages. The University Grants Commission (UGC), the apex administrative body for higher education in India, has established INFLIBNET (Information Library Network) through which librarians share resources. Some library associations have active e-groups through which affiliated members also share resources. Besides such networks, access is limited. Two interviewees in individual sessions and ten participants of the 42-member group discussion with SALIS noted that after they submitted their articles for review, other colleagues brought their attention to similar studies published in the USA at least one calendar year ago. The lack of access to current scholarship creates a legitimate sense of falling behind in the scholarly communications community. In the group discussion with 42 librarians during the monthly meeting of SALIS, twenty-three librarians raised their virtual hands during the Zoom interview to confirm that lack of access to expensive journals slows them down in their research and Open Access would enable access to current literature<sup>11</sup>. Others discussed Open Access from the perspective of publishing venues. However, the UGC has recently published a list of approved journals with high impact factors in which researchers are expected to publish for their tenure and promotion, as pointed out by four of the six individual interviewees. Most of these journals are not Open Access, thereby discouraging Open Access publishing. A challenge similar to many tenure-track faculty members in the USA, Open Access both helps and hinders librarians in the field of

<sup>11</sup> See "Correlates of the national ranking of higher education institutions and funding of academic libraries: An empirical analysis." in order to understand how well-funded libraries with greater monetary access to resources create a positive impact on the national ranking of the institutions in the HEI landscape in India. It must be noted as well that funding of libraries stems from total funding of the institution.

scholarly communications. IRs are active only on a few well-funded campuses. These responses tie in with the response to the need for OA as found in the first survey responses.

2. Limited funding - The librarians' respective institutes are often prepared to give them 'leave of duty' to attend local, regional, national, and international conferences. But employees are responsible for funding their travel and accommodation. Owing to budget crises, librarians are often required to submit onerous paperwork to justify their attendance at conferences.

3. Limited time for research - One of the individual interviewees and seven of the 42-member group discussants said senior library-faculty members perform a "one-man show" with little support from non-MLIS, lesser-skilled staff. The librarians, most of whom are PhD holders and need to have active research agendas for promotion, receive salaries at par with other faculty members on campus. However, they are responsible for all administrative work at the library, beginning with book purchasing and processing to reviewing and submitting requests for facility maintenance. Time is the most valuable resource not available to most academic librarians. One of the interviewees shared that when she won a national grant, her university administration actively managed her funds but refused to relieve her of some of her duties for her to complete the project on time. Her name was published in campus newsletters but she struggled with time management. The second survey found that 40% of librarians spend only 1-5 hours per week on their research.

4. Limited training in academic writing - In the individual interviews, all librarians said they receive minimum to no training in academic writing, especially as newcomers. It must be noted here that the interviewees were all senior librarians and had been in the profession for a while. Since 2015, PhD programs in LIS have offered a 'how to write' course for writing a dissertation and literature review. The results of the second survey include librarians who joined the profession around 2015 and said they received formal training. About sixty (57.14%) respondents affirmed that they received such training while thirty nine (37.14%) said they didn't. On the other hand, in the interviews the more experienced librarians discussed the need to keep reading and writing although the time constraint is a constant concern. This is attested to by the 2.85% of librarian responses in the second survey who said they relied on their own learning, i. e. by accessing the internet, consulting books etc. Another three (2.85%) respondents did not react at all.

Two of the individual interviewees and twelve participants in the group discussion (in chat responses) stated that reading and comprehension of journal articles are not problems, but expressing complex thought in writing is a challenge.

## LIMITATIONS

An online survey, a workshop, and one-on-one interviews with librarians and LIS educators in India were scheduled in April 2020. COVID-19 disrupted the plan. Only the online survey was completed and seven one hour-long individual interviews were conducted through Zoom in 2020. The second collaborative part of the study was interrupted owing to the second wave of Covid-19 (Delta) that India encountered in the summer of 2021. The data was conducted through an online survey only. The digital divide in India and its associated problems such as lack of access to reliable internet access posed a challenge when Roy started scheduling interviews because data

plans at home often could not support all family members, adult professionals and students, and their online/remote work and learning<sup>12</sup>. Wider collection of data became impossible.

## DISCUSSION

The first three findings from the interviews - limited access to current research, limited funding, and limited time for research - deserve attention from institutional policy makers and funding strategies as well as strong advocacy from librarian faculty. Only the fourth finding about training in academic writing falls within the scope of our discussion. The second survey responses also draw attention to the need for support/training in academic writing. Thirty nine (37.14%) said they didn't receive any formal training.

### Training in Academic Writing and Research Productivity in India

Race MoChridhe has identified the English language as a hidden paywall. She gives the example of sub-Saharan Africa:

In sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, Jaygbay (1998) has estimated that as much as half of the population is effectively excluded from academic discourse by the inability to read English, French, or Portuguese at a sufficient level. The mastery needed to author academic prose being even greater than that required to read it, Pearce (2003) found that even advanced second-language speakers of English suffer from grammatical and diction errors that negatively impact their rates of acceptance for publication and hence their academic careers" (424).

In India, preparedness in writing for academic research and publication is a critical part of academic librarianship. In the second survey, the authors assessed the number of hours they devote to their research, their productivity, and the training they have received for writing. As mentioned in the *Findings* section above, 42 librarians get only 1-5 hours and only 6 librarians claimed to spend more than 20 hours per week to do their research. To the question about having received formal training for conducting research and writing academic articles, sixty (57.14%) respondents affirmed that they received such training while thirty nine (37.14%) said they didn't. On the other hand, only three (2.85%) said they got their expertise on their own by accessing the internet and consulting books. Another three (2.85%) respondents did not respond. Was the training helpful? The analysis shows that about sixty (51.7%) agreed that the training helped them a lot, whereas only six (5.71%) answered negatively. On the other hand, twenty-four (22.85%) are not sure about the help. Only three (2.85%) respondents said that they gained the knowledge only by experience. While most librarians responding to the questions affirm that they have received training in academic writing and owe their publications to such training, they happen to be newer professionals who have benefitted from mandatory training offered through PhD courses. The more experienced librarians believe in their self-motivated learning and expertise and clearly did not receive any institutional training. This is also reflected in some of the interviews in which the more experienced librarians emphasized their own hard work and perseverance over any training received. Scholars cited above also attest to the need for training in academic writing.

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<sup>12</sup> See "There is No App for That: Manifestations of the Digital Divides During COVID-19 School Closures in India." <https://doi.org/10.1145/3555140>

## CONCLUSION

Limited hours for research and writing seem to inform less research productivity and lower number of publications among academic librarians in India, especially in spite of training and support available to help their work. Attempts to offer training in writing academic prose are being made, as discussed above, and can be most beneficial at the undergraduate level so that MLIS students are more prepared with writing skills when they begin their doctoral journeys toward academic librarianship. Further study can investigate if the global lower visibility of the literature produced in India can be mitigated with training in writing for North American and European academic publications. Need for access to current scholarship through Open Access is also critical so that librarian faculty in India, and the Global South, can engage in scholarly communications simultaneously with colleagues in the Global North.

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### About the authors

Mantra Roy is the Collection Strategy Librarian at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library at San Jose State University. Her research focuses on the Global South, scholarly communications and Open Access, collection management, Oral Histories, and DEI initiatives. She received her MLIS in 2015 and her PhD in American Literature in 2010.

Sutapa Chatterjee is a University Assistant Librarian (Senior Grade) at Presidency University, Kolkata, India. Her research focuses on Copyright, IPR, Copyright piracy, Plagiarism, and Digital Library and E-resources in academic libraries. She received her PhD in Library and Information Science in 2018.