

Study of LIS Courses Offered by Selected State Universities in Bihar

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to explore the current state of the ongoing Library and 05 university-examined Information Science (LIS) courses in Bihar. All the universities in this study are state-funded. This study is based on primary data-based. A web questionnaire is used for data collection in this study. The universities selected give insight into the strengths and weaknesses viz. the programs of the study, admission processes, curriculum, faculty, and infrastructure for LIS education, specifically focusing on BLIS (Bachelor of Library and Information Science), MLIS (Master of Library and Information Science), and Ph.D. programs..

KEYWORDS: LIS Education, Bihar Universities, LIS courses.

INTRODUCTION

Library and Information Science courses, specifically BLIS (Bachelor of Library and Information Science), MLIS (Master of Library and Information Science), and Ph.D. programs have been highlighted in the last decade. Various universities across the country offer these courses and have witnessed a new trend to include certain topics related to digital application and automation. The universities in Bihar are also offering LIS course. Revamping of syllabi is going on along with the demand for the creation of technical and trained manpower for automated libraries.

In the earliest phases, LIS education in Bihar was limited, with few institutions offering formal courses specifically for library science. The universities focused on the short-term certificate and diploma courses aimed at providing basic training in library management, cataloguing and classification. These programs benefited individuals seeking employment in libraries but did not offer in-depth knowledge or new skills that would later become essential in academic and research institutions. Patna University, one of the oldest universities in Bihar, was among the first few institutions in the state to introduce a formal program in Library Science. This program marked a step forward, establishing a standard for LIS education and encouraging other universities to consider similar offerings. Over a period of time, as the need for well-trained library staff increased across academic, public, and specialized libraries, universities in Bihar recognized the importance of expanding their programs to include more advanced training in library and information science.

The introduction of Bachelor's (BLIS) and Master's (MLIS) degree programs represented a new era for LIS education in Bihar. These programs were designed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of library science, with a curriculum that covered a wide range of topics such as cataloguing, classification, information retrieval, and library management. The shift from diploma courses to full degree programs reflected the increasing complexity of library operations, especially within academic institutions, and the growing role of libraries as essential resources for education and research.

The paper examines the scope for adding value-based information to the curriculum keeping given the need for the modernization of the libraries.

INFLUENCING FACTORS

Several factors influencing the growth of LIS education in Bihar include the involvement of concerning guidelines being followed by national educational bodies like the University Grants Commission (UGC) and increasing demand for LIS courses for students. The UGC has emphasized standardized curricula, and uniform fee structure and encouraged universities to adopt better and advanced approaches to library and information science. With the support of UGC guidelines, many LIS programs in Bihar adopted a more structured curriculum and integrated information technology and communication into their LIS courses.

Support from both state governments and university administration played an important role in expanding LIS education in Bihar. Recognizing the value of libraries as resources for students, researchers, and the public, government policies began to offer financial and infrastructural support for LIS programs. This encouragement enabled more universities in Bihar to establish LIS programs and improve existing ones, making LIS education more accessible and increasing the number of trained professionals in the field.

Overall, the early efforts in LIS education in Bihar laid a strong foundation for the profession within the state. These programs have contributed to the development of a skilled workforce, capable of managing and supporting academic libraries and public libraries across Bihar. The continued expansion of LIS education ensures that libraries remain valuable resources for education and research, adapting to meet the evolving needs of the digital age.

Library and Information Science Education nowadays has become an interdisciplinary field of study. Library Science education in Bihar is offered through different institutions and universities, including state-funded, central, private, and open universities. In this study, 08 state-funded Universities were taken for the study. These institutions provide a range of Library and Information Science (LIS) programs, from diplomas to advanced degrees such as BLIS, MLIS, and Ph.D. courses.

Course Structure and Levels

Diploma in Library and Information Science (DLIS): -

A diploma in Library and Information Science is one of the basic courses of LIS. Many universities conduct diploma and certificate courses in LIS subjects. These courses are typically shorter in duration, often ranging from 06 months to 3 years. No university of this study offers a diploma in LIS in Bihar.

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Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS): -

The BLIS program is one of the major opted courses in the field of LIS. All the selected universities of this study offer BLIS course. In this course, universities offer students an introduction to the fundamental principles and practices of library science. This course is typically one year in duration.

Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS): -

For students pursuing advanced studies in library science, the MLIS program is available in several institutions and universities. All the selected universities offer MLIS courses except Lalit Narayan Mithila University. Duration of this course may vary for different universities; some universities offer a one-year MLIS course and some universities offer a two-year integrated MLIS program. In this study all the universities which offer MLIS courses of one year.

Ph.D. in Library and Information Science: -

Universities, provide Ph.D. programs in LIS, enabling research in specialized areas of library and information science. C. V. Raman University is the only university from this selected group of universities of this study that offers a Ph.D. in LIS.

M. Phil. in Library and Information Science: -

It is a one- to two-year advanced, research-focused degree bridging the MLIS. Typically requiring an MLIS for admission, along with an entrance exam and interview, the M.Phil. prepares students for roles in academia, research libraries, and information consultancy. It is also a solid foundation for those planning to pursue a Ph.D. in LIS. Not a single university in this study offers a Ph.D. in LIS.

Table 1. LIS Course

S. No.	Name of University/ Technical Institutes	MLIS	BLIS	Ph.D.	DLIS
1	Patna University	Yes	Yes	No	No
2	B. R. Ambedkar Bihar University	Yes	Yes	No	No
3	Tilka Manjhi Bhagalpur University	Yes	Yes	No	No
4	Magadh University	Yes	Yes	No	No
5	Lalit Narayan Mithila University	No	Yes	No	No

Admission Criteria

Admission to LIS programs varies across universities. Some universities base admission on merit, while others conduct entrance exams. Patna University, B.R. Ambedkar University, and Magadh University conduct Entrance examinations for admission whereas Tilka ManjhiMithila University, and Lalit Narayan Mithila University, Reservation policies for admission adhere to government regulations, ensuring access to education for diverse groups. Additionally, all the universities of the study offer fee relaxations for reserved category students, as per the government policies.

Table 1.2: Admission Process

S. No.	Name of University/ Technical Institutes	Admission Process
1	Patna University	Entrance Exam
2	B. R. Ambedkar Bihar University	Entrance Exam
3	Tilka Manjhi Bhagalpur University	Merit
4	Magadh University	Entrance Exam
5	Lalit Narayan Mithila University	Merit

Curriculum and Teaching Tools

All LIS curriculum includes cataloguing and classification systems, including Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR2), Classified Catalogue Code (CCC), and classification schemes like Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) and Colon Classification (CC). ICT and automation software, such as E-granthalaya, SOUL, and KOHA, are also there in the curriculum, that reflects the integration of ICT in LIS curriculum.

Faculty and Infrastructure

The selected universities offer self-finance LIS courses, so availability of permanent faculty in LIS departments is nil, no universities in Bihar employing permanent faculty, but the department of LIS is relied on guest and contract staff. Most of universities have not their own independent departments. This affects the continuity and depth of education provided.

The Fee Structure

The fee structure for Library and Information Science (LIS) courses in Bihar is not uniform. Every University has different fee structure for the same course. Here's a summary based on the different universities and types of programs:

Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS)

- Patna University: ₹6,500 per year.
- B.R. Ambedkar Bihar University: ₹13,000 for the course.
- Magadh University: ₹14,000 per year.
- Lalit Narayan Mithila University: ₹27,000 per year.

Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) Fee structure

- Patna University: ₹11,000 per year.
- B.R. Ambedkar Bihar University: N/A.
- Magadh University: ₹20,000 per year.
- Lalit Narayan Mithila University: N/A

Ph.D. in Library and Information Science's Fee Structure

- None of the selected universities of this study offers Ph. D. in LIS.

Challenges and Opportunities:

While LIS education in Bihar has diversified, the sector faces challenges, including limited faculty resources and a need for updated infrastructure. However, the integration of technology and adherence to NEP 2020 reforms signify progress, positioning Bihar's LIS programs to better equip students for dynamic library and information management roles in the digital era. The scenario of LIS education and research in India and its overall development is very progressive today. The number of library and information science departments has been increasing since the 1960s and over time this subject has gradually emerged as a stream.

CONCLUSION

In the earliest phases, LIS education in Bihar was limited, with few institutions offering formal courses specifically for library science. Initially, universities focused on short-term certificate and diploma courses but due to the increasing demand for LIS courses in students, LIS education in Bihar is also expanding. Among all the LIS courses BLIS has been the most offered course by universities and popularly opted course by students followed by MLIS course. None of the selected universities of this study offers a Ph. D. in LIS. As per the study, Universities should improve their infrastructure and employ permanent faculties for a better LIS education scope in Bihar.

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