LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE EDUCATION IN BIHAR: AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract :

The paper examines importance of Library and Information Science (LIS) education in Bihar and focuses purpose, objectives, and methodology of the study. It assess status of LIS education with the help of various indicators, i.e., growth of universities/LIS schools, status of universities, level of courses, mode of education and location of library schools of the state. The paper also finds out variations/discrepancies and suggests several measures for scientific growth and development of LIS education in the state.

KEYWORDS :

LIS Education, Universities, Govt. Women's Polytechnics, Bihar, India,

INTRODUCTION

Education for library and information science profession is an innovative process. The core of the curricula is the people in relation to the information itself and technology that enable the provision of this information. There is a need to produce library science graduates with sophisticated management and policy and planning skills and the vision to translate core values of today and tomorrow's information world. Due to the ongoing developments in information and communication technology sector, the information professionals trained in the latest information handling techniques would also become obsolete after a short time. In present environment, young people learned librarianship by working under the more experienced practitioners1. But, gradually the tasks performed by librarians became more complex and more dependent on technology. As a result, the study of library science has moved from the work-setting to professional schools in Universities/institutions.

Bihar is one of significant state in northern India. It is the 12th largest state in terms of geographical size at 98,940 km2 (38,202 sq mi) and 3rd largest by population. It is homeland for 103,804,637 people, which represents 17.90% of total population of India. The state has 63.82% literacy rate, and has made significant growth and development in the field of agriculture, industry, science and technology and Information and communication technology2. At present, there are 572 central, state, deemed, private universities and universities level institutions in India. Significantly, the country has also recorded tremendous growth in LIS education, which is being imparted from certificate to doctorate level by a number of institutions3.

Presently in India, Library and Information Science (LIS) education is imparted through more than 243 universities and institutions. Nineteen-Three universities/colleges at Bachelor's level and 89 at Master's level are conducting LIS education. While PhD (full time) is offered by 49 universities, PhD (part time) is also offered by three universities. Eight universities and 12 colleges offer certificate courses and six universities and six colleges offer diploma course under regular mode of education. LIS education is also being offered by the universities under distance mode of education. Five universities offer certificate and diploma courses4. Out of 17 universities that Bihar has 13 are offering LIS education.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This paper briefly reviews a few studies conducted on study of growth and development of library and information science education in Bihar in chronological order.

Siddiqui and Walia (2013)5 analyzed the status of library and information science post graduate courses in India and UK. The paper surveyed ten LIS schools from India and UK to study the library and information science post graduate courses through mail questionnaire. Keeping in view the need for updating the curriculum to make it relevant to the present day society, the problem chosen by the investigator intends not only to review the LIS courses being taught at Master's level in India and UK but also establishes a need to meet the future demands in the age of technological revolution.

Islam et al. (2011)6 focused a global scenario of e-learning in library and information science (LIS) programs. Consequences revealed that 85(nZ370) LIS programs (around 23%) are using e-learning systems for delivering education. They are embracing EL for overcoming the barriers of students who cannot enter into a traditional education system due to work load, family commitments, and geographical location. Blackboard/Blackboard Vista (25.89%) is the most frequently used of the EL tools and techniques. WebCT/WebCT Vista (10.59%) is also being used frequently and the majority (i.e., 73 of 85 LIS programs; 86%) is delivering their course contents asynchronously.

Walia (2010)7 conducted a study under the titled "Library and Information Science Education in North India". The result revealed in northern part of India, out of 16 LIS departments, only six changed their one-year BLIS and one-year MLIS courses to two-year integrated MLIS course. Rests of the departments are still continuing with the old pattern of LIS education. In 2001, UGC, Curriculum Development Committee in its report stated that LIS schools need to bring radical change in their syllabi in view of the overall impact of ICT on information storage, retrieval, and dissemination as well as users' information seeking behaviour.

Wilson et al. (2010)8 focused the fifty years of LIS education in Australia: academization of LIS educators in higher education institutions. The results shows that there has been a steady decline in the number of Australian LIS educators since the 1990s, the level of academic qualifications and percentage with doctorates have risen. The study of changed characteristics over time helps define who Australian LIS academics are, and additionally provides data that contributes to LIS academic workforce planning

Chakraborty and Sarkhel (2009)9 revealed that growth and development of the LIS education in India have been traced from its early inception up to today's scenario. This paper focuses different modes of LIS training have been delved. Authors also tried to map the resources used for teaching LIS by comparing syllabuses of different Universities and Institutes and to assess how far these resources co-relate in imparting LIS education with the today's market demand for LIS professionals. The basic issues to be addressed in this paper are the connectivity between uniting LIS education and manpower requirements to transform India of the 21st century into a knowledge society, as envisaged by the National Knowledge Commission (NKC). NKC has emphasized on trying to raising standards and promoting excellence in LIS education in the light of the country's manpower requirement. .

Gerolimos (2009)10 aimed to report a study designed to identify qualifications and skills developed through library and information science education. Consequences of the study identify 59 qualifications/skills that were central to graduation in the field of LIS. The paper also observed that the orientation of institutions that provide LIS programs and more importantly, the way that orientation is integrated into their programs of study.

Olaka (2008)11 carry out a study under the titled "library and information science education in Rwanda". The result of the study revealed that the growth and development of library manpower in Rwanda has been disordered. LIS education in Rwanda has not been well documented and particularly challenges in faced in establishing a formal library and information science program.

Johnson (2007)12 revealed that LIS professionals and educators in developing countries have a keen awareness of the problems besetting the profession the special issue on education for library and information science in developing countries. The paper contained on the need for LIS education to prepare graduates to become more involved in the economic and social development of their countries.

Yusuf (2007)13 analyzed to assess library and information science education in Uttar Pradesh. Author assess the status of LIS education with the help of various ways, such as growth of universities/LIS schools, status of universities, level of courses, mode of education and location of library schools of the state. The paper also determines variations/discrepancies and suggests several measures for scientific growth and development of LIS education in the state. Mahapatra (2006)14 conducted the study on core elements of a curriculum and a vision of LIS education in India. The paper also stresses the need for revised course contents and allied challenges for readiness of Indian LIS education in the digital era.

Rugambwa (2001)15 examined the trend of Information Science Education covered at various schools in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), with a view to assessing the present status, appropriateness, and future possibilities vis-a-vis the global trend. The study found that information science education has largely offered at the graduate level in SSA. The level of information technology (IT) being offered in the curricula, and the laboratory and library facilities available have been examined. The study outcomes were based on the UNESCO Modular Curriculum for Information Studies, with special emphasis on Information Science.

Wijetunge (1998)16 examined the library and information science education personnel in Sri Lanka those who teach LIS has undergone training in teaching methods. They use the methods which their teachers used. Short-term workshops, seminars and courses on teaching methods are recommended. Where manpower is not available within the LIS profession to teach non-traditional subjects, as a temporary measure, personnel should be drawn from other professions to fill the void.

Babu and Rao (1991)17 deals with the library and information science education is no longer education for the managers of information centers only. Rather, it has become education for the consumers of information from those centers. It is a change from managing libraries by librarians as professionals to managing the flow of information by one and all, and so it has to be treated as an integral part of education. Earlier, the trend was that people learned, and learners became librarians.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were:

· To trace and analyze growth of universities and LIS schools in the state.
· To assess present status of LIS education with the help of various parameters.
· To find out key factors responsible for unscientific growth of LIS education in the state.
· To suggest measures for scientific growth and development of LIS education in the state.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology can be stated as a set of procedures followed for carrying out any systematic investigation. The research methodology adopted for the study is investigative in which LIS courses at certificate/diploma to doctorate level in LIS schools in universities/technical institutes in Bihar have been explored by searching websites of various LIS departments. The research design for the present study includes such as literature search and review, online searching, survey method, telephonic interview, personal interview, and data analysis and interpretation. The time period of study was December, 2013 to January, 2014.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The data collected by different methods were analyzed and interpreted and presented here in tables and figures.

LIS EDUCATION IN BIHAR

Bihar has 17 universities but LIS education is being imparted in 13 universities/technical institutes only, which represents 76.47% of the total universities/technical institutes of the state. The details of these universities/technical institutes have been given in Table 1.

Table 1: Library and Information Science Education in Bihar

S.No.	Name of University/ Technical Institutes	Location	Type	Year of Estt.	Specialisation	Diploma/ Certificate	BLISC	MLISC	M.Phil./ Ph.D.
1	Patna University	Patna	State	1917	General		√	√	
2	B. R. Ambedkar Bihar University	Muzzafarpur	State	1952	General		√		
3	Tilka Manjhi Bhagalpur University	Bhagalpur®	State	1960	General			√	√
4	Magadh University	Bodhgaya	State	1962	General	√	√	√	
5	Lalit Narayan Mithila University	Darbhanga	State	1972	General		√	√	
6	Govt. Women's Polytechnics	Muzzafarpur	State	1985	Technology	√			
7	Govt. Women's Polytechnics	Patna	State	1985	Technology	√			
8	Jai Prakash University	Chhapra#	State	1990	General		√		
9	Bhupendra Narayan Mandal University	Madhepura	State	1992	General				
10	Veer Kunwar Singh University	Arrah	State	1994	General		√		
11	Nalanda Open University	Patna	State	1995	Distance education	√	√	√	
12	Maulana Mazharul Haque Arabic and Persian University	Patna	State	2004	Arabic, Persian	√	√	√	
13	Aryabhatta Knowledge University	Patna	State	2008	Technology		√		
14	Central University of Bihar	Gaya	Central	2009	General				
15	Central University of Bihar	Motihari*	Central	2013	General				
16	AMU Kishanganj	Kishanganj*	Central	2013	General		√	√	√
17	Nalanda International University	Nalanda	Central	2014	Postgraduate				

(#LIS course yet not started, *Upcoming), ® Two year integrated BLISc. Plus MLISc in library and Information Science

GROWTH OF UNIVERSITIES/LIS SCHOOLS OF BIHAR

Growth of 17 universities, which impart LIS education in the state over the years, has been given in Table 2.It indicates that 17 universities were founded during 1915 to 2015.The duration of 1986-1995 was the golden period because universities/technical institutions like Govt. Women's Polytechnics (GWP), Muzzafarpur and Patna, Jai Prakash University (JPU), Chhapra, Bhupendra Narayan Mandal University (BNMU), Madhepura, Veer Kunwar Singh University (VKU), Arrah, and Nalanda Open University (NOU),Patna were established. Normally one university was set up during the decade 1915-25 that is, Patna University, the first university in Bihar, was established in 1917 during the British statute, and is the seventh oldest university of the Indian subcontinent. But in the second and third decades (1926-45) not a single universities was set up. However, after independence, a large number of universities were established in various parts of the Bihar. This paper also focuses that Institute of Library and Information Science, Patna University are bearing BLISc as well as MLISc courses for one year. DDE, Patna University is also bearing BLISc courses for one year.

The study further emphases that LIS education is being impart in the state during 1925 to 2013. In Bihar thirteen universities/technical colleges has been set up library and information science courses as regular, distance and self-finance basis. The first Department of Library and Information Science (DLIS) T.M. Bhagalpur University was established in 1978.

During 1985-86 session Govt. Women's Polytechnics, Muzzafarpur and Patna was established. In 2012 Patna University has been instigated library and information science courses regular as well as through DDE.

Table 2. Growth of universities/LIS Schools of Bihar

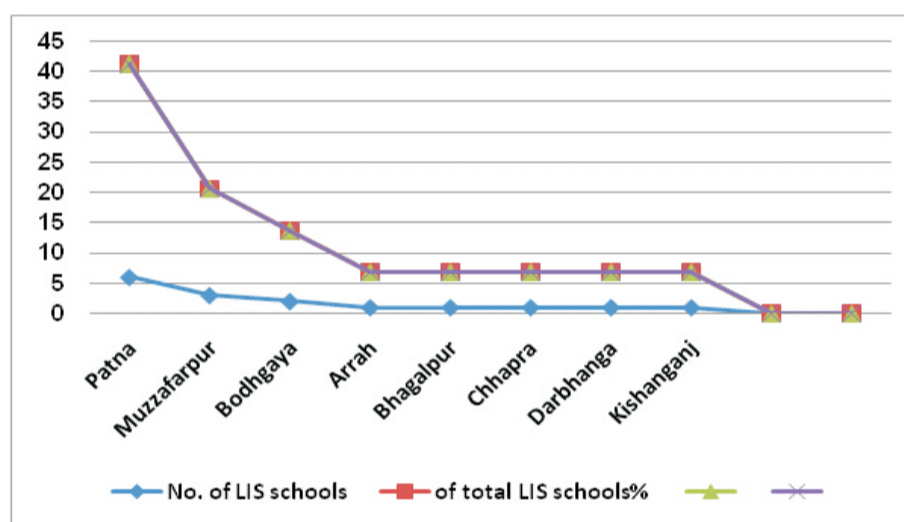| Period	Universities		LIS Schools	
	No. of universities	% of universities	No. of LIS schools	% of total LIS schools of Bihar
1915-1925	1	5.88	1	5.88
1926-1935	0	0.00	0	0.00
1936-1945	0	0.00	0	0.00
1946-1955	1	5.88	1	5.88
1956-1965	2	11.76	2	11.76
1966-1975	1	5.88	1	5.88
1976-1985	3	17.65	3	17.65
1986-1995	4	23.53	3	17.65
1996-2005	1	5.88	1	5.88
2006-2014	4	23.53	1	5.88

Fig.1.Growth of universities/LIS Schools of Bihar

LEVEL OF COURSES

Level of courses is one of the indicators to assess the LIS education in the schools. A number of courses of different levels have been included in the study. LIS education being imparted in the universities in Bihar is at four levels, i.e., diploma, bachelor, master and research (MPhil/PhD). DLIS having various levels of courses have been shown in the Table 3.

Table 3 emphases those five universities/technical colleges, i.e., Magadh University, Bodhgaya, Govt. Women's Polytechnics, Muzzafarpur and Patna, Nalanda Open University, Patna and Maulana Mazharul Haque Arabic and Persian University, Patna offers diploma/certificate courses. The duration of diploma course is one year after 10+2 and three years after 10th.

All universities except TMBU, GWP (Muzzafarpur and Patna), B.N. Mandal University, CU (Gaya & Motihari), and NIU impart LIS education of Bachelor's level that is 10(58.80%).Seven universities, that is 41.16% offer Master's degree. Duration of the MLISc is one year. BLISC is the minimum requirement for admission in MLISc. TMBU, Bhagalpur, has two-year BLISc plus MLISc course in library and information science with minimum qualification required is B.A./B.Sc./B.Com. It is remarkable that two universities have Ph.D courses in LIS, i.e. TMBU and AMU Centre Kishangang. The AMU Centre (Kishangang) will be PhD courses upcoming.

The full-time MPhil/PhD is provided to those who are offered a fellowship by the university or any other agency, and are registered with the university to pursue research degree courses on full time. The part-time MPhil/PhD is offered to the students who are employed. Duration of PhD is 2-3 years with MLISc or equivalent degree as minimum requirement for admission (Rawtani, 2002)18.

Table 3. Level of courses in LIS schools of Bihar

Level of courses	No. of universities/colleges	% of total no of universities
Diploma/Certificate	5	29.41
Bachelor's Degree	10	58.80
Master's Degree	7	41.16
M.Phil./Ph.D.	2	11.76
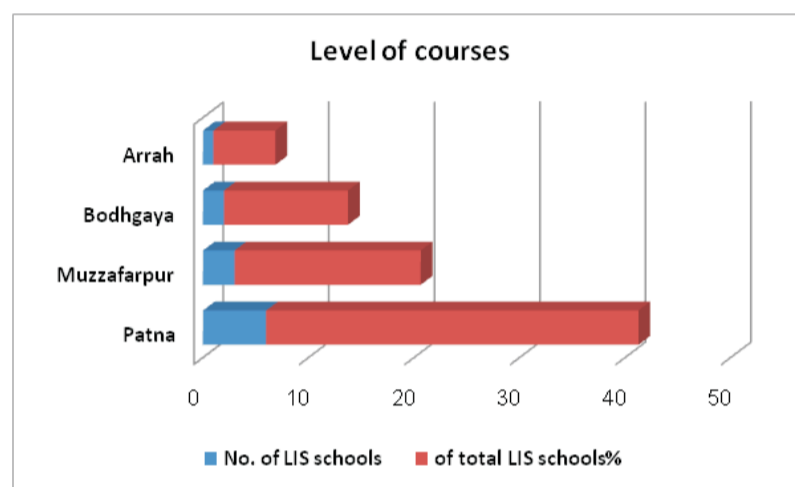
Fig.2.Level of courses in LIS schools of Bihar

MODE OF EDUCATION

Mode of education is an important aspect. LIS education is being imparted either in regular or distance mode education or in both. Mode of education of various universities/technical colleges is shown in Table 4. It shows that 10 universities/technical colleges impart LIS education in regular mode of education.

However, one university (College of Commerce, MagadhUniversity, Patna) impart it in regular mode of education but under self-financed system. PU offer regular as well as self-financed system. Institute of Library and Information Science affiliated to PU is also imparting BLISc as well as MLISc in regular mode. LIS education is also being imparted in distance mode by the universities and affiliated institutions affiliated to the universities. Only one university NOU, Patna offer comprehensive distance mode of education.

The affiliated institutions, i.e., Directorate of Distance Education, MU; Directorate of Distance Education, LNMU; Directorate of Distance Education, and Directorate of Distance Education, PU offers BLISc as well as MLISc under self-financed scheme.

Table 4. Mode of LIS education in Bihar

| Mode of education	No. of universities	% of total no. of universities	Universities/college
Regular	10	58.82	PU, BRABU, TMBU, MU, LNMU, GWP (Patna & Muzafarpur),VKSU, MMHAPU, AKU,
Regular (Self finance)	1	5.88	MU, College of Commerce, Patna
Institutions affiliated to universities (self-financed)	1	5.88	Institute of Library and Information Science, P.U. Patna
Distance education universities	1	5.88	NOU, Patna
Institute affiliated to the universities	3	17.65	DDE(MU),DDE(LNMU),DDE(PU)
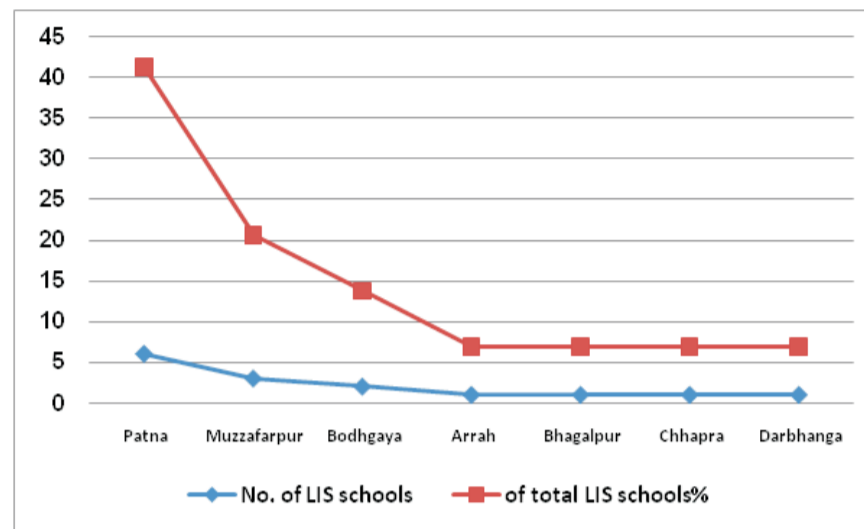
Fig.3. Mode of LIS education in Bihar

LOCATION OF LIBRARY SCHOOLS

Location of city/town plays a crucial role and highlights the importance of institution in geographical context. Locations of LIS schools in Bihar have been given in Table 5. From the universities/technical colleges' point of view, Patna is at the top. It has six universities/institutions, that is, PU, DDE (PU), GWP, NOU, MMHAPU, AKB, and COC (MU) which offer LIS education. Patna is the capital of the Indian state of Bihar. It is the administrative, industrial and educational center of the state. Muzzafarpur also has three significant universities/technical colleges, i.e., BRABU, LNMU, DDE (LNMU), and GWP. Gaya has two universities (MU, CUB). The city like Arrah, Bhagalpur, Chhapra, Darbhanga and Kishanganj has each one LIS schools.

Table 5. Location of LIS schools of Bihar

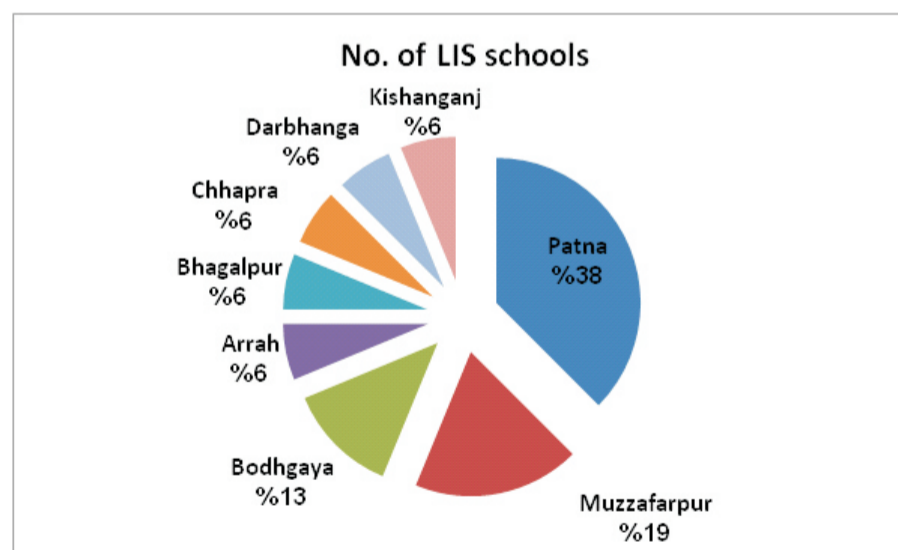| Place/City	No. of LIS schools	% of total LIS schools	Name of universities/ colleges LIS schools affiliated to
Patna	6	35.29	PU,DDE(PU),GWP,NOU,MMHAPU,AKB,COC(MU)
Muzzafarpur	3	17.65	BRABU,LNMU, DDE (LNMU),GWP
Bodhgaya	2	11.76	MU, DDE(MU),CUB
Arrah	1	5.88	VKSU
Bhagalpur	1	5.88	TMBU,
Chhapra	1	5.88	JPU
Darbhanga	1	5.88	LNMU,DDE(LNMU)
Kishanganj	1	5.88	AMU

Fig.6. Location of LIS schools of Bihar

VARIOUS FEATURES

In addition to above, there are several other features like medium of instruction, system of admission, adequacy of faculty members, infrastructural facilities, intake, etc. which affects LIS education. It has been observed that there are variations in the medium of education because of status of the universities. For example, two central universities (AMU, CUB) proposal will offer LIS education in English medium while state universities/technical colleges offer in both English as well as Hindi mediums. Central universities and GWP colleges have better resources in comparison to state/deemed universities. They have adequate faculty members, computer labs, library and furniture, and information technology oriented syllabus. It has been observed that the universities which offer LIS education under distance mode of education have not completely maintained quality of education. It has also been noticed that self-financed institutions have commercial motives so that they earn more and do not bother about the quality of professionals.

CONCLUSION

Bihar has unique position among 28 states and 7 union territories of the country. It is the 12th largest state in terms of geographical size at 38,202 sq mi (98,940 km2) and 3rd largest by populations. It is known for its demographical, geographical, political, religious, cultural, and historical characters and importance. Due to information society of Bihar, the state of India is developing at a fast pace and has recorded significant progress in several fields. Therefore, a large number of universities as well as institutions will need to meet the skilled and capable manpower of the state. To fulfill skill and competent expertise needs in the field of LIS, new LIS schools would be set up. However, for scientific development of LIS education, following strategies may be adopted:

1.Every state as well as central universities/technical institutions should be open LIS schools from certificate to doctorate level.
2.LIS schools without proper infrastructural facilities, that is, fully equipped computer labs, well-furnished library; cozy and comfortable furniture, etc. should not be allowed to come up.
3.LIS education under distance, self-finance, open universities scheme should be avoided.
4.LIS at diploma level in the universities and government polytechnics should be discouraged because concept of university starts at graduation level.
5.To follow the consistency in terms of topics of syllabus, admission policy and examination procedure, adequacy of faculty members, non-teaching staff, and infrastructural facilities should be as per the guidelines of UGC.
6.Coordination and cooperation among library schools and university libraries of the state should be encouraged achieving the goal of LIS education in a better way.
7.The LIS departments of the state should conduct more attractive programs such as seminar, conferences, workshop etc for the users to make maximum usage of state-of-the-art library services19.

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