

Status of Library Automation in College Libraries of Lakhimpur District (Assam): A Study

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ABSTRACT

Information and communication technology plays an important role in modern library, particularly in the part of library automation. The present paper is showing the status of library automation in college libraries of Lakhimpur district (Assam). Study also describes the problems faced by librarian in each selected college while doing automation. The study presents that 44% of libraries are already fully automated. Majority of library states that lack of financial resources, lack of trained staff etc. are the main problem of automation. The study also gives a status view of the uses of software packages, areas of library automation in selected college libraries. The main focus of the paper is to identify the problems faced by the libraries of Lakhimpur district (Assam) in the process of automation and future plan of the librarian for developing their libraries.

1. Introduction

A well structured, well designed library is the foundation of modern education system. Information and communication technology plays an important role in modern library, particularly in the part of library automation. Library automation was started in sixties in the United States of America when MARC project was initiated by the Library of Congress.

Library automation may be defined as the application of automatic and semiautomatic data processing machines (computers) to perform traditional library housekeeping activities such as- acquisition, circulation, cataloguing, reference and serial control. Today "Library Automation" is by far the most commonly used terms to describe the mechanization of library activities using computers. (Uddin, 2009).

Today users don't want to waste time in case of searching information. They need required data within a minute. It is possible only in a well maintained computerized library rather than a traditional library. So, library automation is very much essential for day-to-day housekeeping operations of a library

which save the time of reader as well as the staff also and helps in case of smooth functioning of library services.

2. Objectives

- To study the status of automation in the college libraries of Lakhimpur district;
- To find out areas which are automated in college libraries of Lakhimpur district;
- To identify the barriers to automation in those libraries.

3. Methodology

The present study is based on comprehensive study carried out by the researcher. For this study a structured questionnaire was prepared and through which data from nine (9) colleges of Lakhimpur district data were collected.

4. Surveyed Libraries

From nine (9) college libraries of Lakhimpur district data are collected. Financial year 2017-18 is taken for data collection.

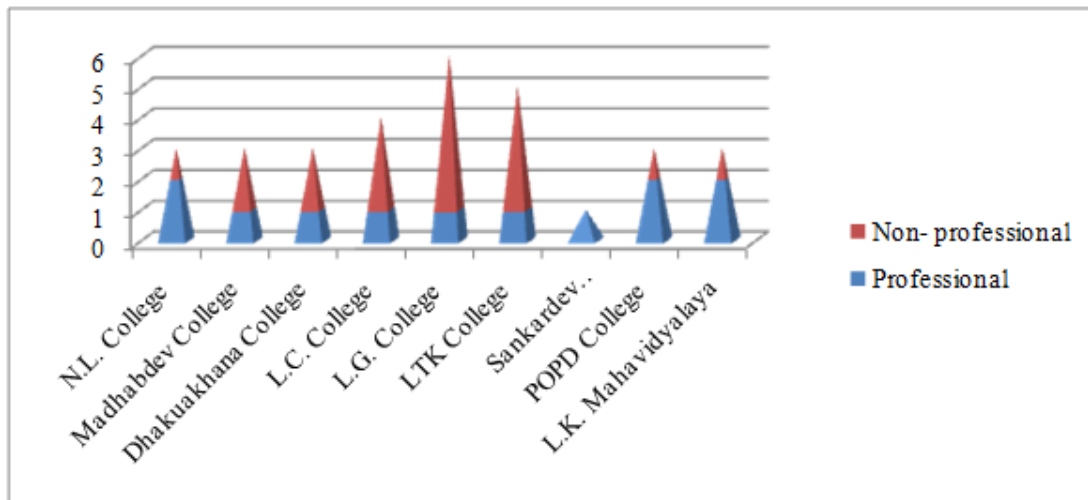
Table-1: Surveyed College Libraries of Lakhimpur District

Sr No	Name of College	Name of Library	Year of Establishment
1.	North Lakhimpur College	North Lakhimpur College Library	1952
2.	Madhabdev College	Madhabdev College Library	1964
3.	Dhakuakhana College	Central Library	1966
4.	Lakhimpur Commerce College	Lakhimpur Commerce College Library	1972
5.	Lakhimpur Girls' College	Central Library	1972
6.	Lakhimpur Telahi Kamalabaria College	Central Library Cum Museum	1977
7.	Sankardev Mahavidyalaya	B.K. Saikia Memorial Library	1982
8.	Panigaon Om Prakash Dinodia College	Panigaon OPD College Library	1984
9.	Lakhimpur Kendriya Mahavidyalaya	Mohan Chandra Roy Library	1992

5. Library Staff:

A library needs professional staff for smooth functioning of an automated library.

Figure-1: Details of staff in college libraries of Lakhimpur district

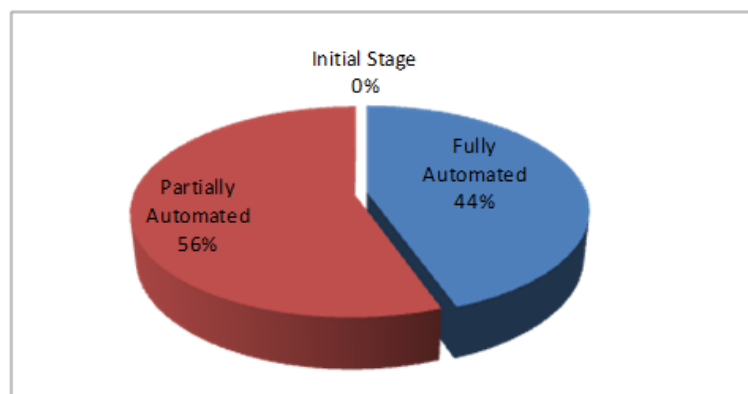


Form Figure-1 it is cleared that except Sankardev Mahavidyalaya, all libraries have both professional and non-professional staffs. We can see that 100% libraries have professional staffs.

6. Status of Automation

Figure-2 reveals that 44% libraries i.e. four college libraries are fully automated and five college libraries (56%) are partially automated.

Figure-2: Status of Automation



7. ICT Infrastructure Available in the Library

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays an important role in automation of a library.

Table-2: Details of ICT Infrastructure Available in Colleges Libraries of Lakhimpur

ICT Infrastructure	Frequency N=09	Percentage (%)
Computer	09	100%
Library Automation Software	09	100%
ICT Trained Staff	09	100%
Internet Connection	09	100%
Local Area Network	08	88.89%
Database Record	06	66.67%

The Table-2 depicts that all nine colleges have computer, library automation software, trained staff, and internet connection. Regarding database record, 66.67% colleges have database record and 88.89% colleges have LAN facility.

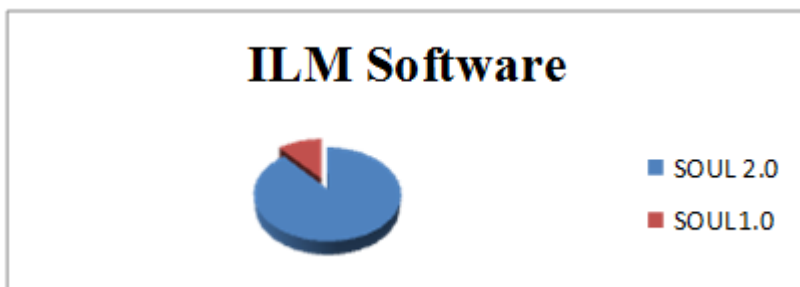
8. Software Used for Library Automation

During the study it is noticed that eight (8) college libraries presently using SOUL 2.0 Library Management Software package and only one library is using SOUL 1.0. SOUL stands

for Software for University Libraries which is designed and developed by The Information and Library Network

(INFLIBNET). SOUL is proprietary software. The latest version of the software i.e. SOUL 2.0 was released in 2008.

Figure- 3: Integrated Library Management Software Used in Selected College Libraries



9. Hardware Used for Automation

Table-3 reveals that all nine (9) are using computer and printer machine. Only three (3) colleges have Xerox machine

and two colleges are using barcode printer. All colleges have computers, which is an essential part of library automation.

Table-3: Hardware Availability in Selected College Libraries

Name of College	Computer	Printer	UPS	Scanner	Xerox Machine	Any Other
North Lakhimpur College	10	01	X	03	01	X
Madhabdev College	20	05	10	04	01	Barcode Printer
Dhakuakhana College	12	03	01	03	X	X
Lakhimpur Commerce College	02	01	X	X	X	X
Lakhimpur Girls' College	05	01	05	01	X	X
Lakhimpur Telahi Kamalabaria College	06	01	01	01	01	X
Sankardev Mahavidyalaya	05	01	03	01	X	X
Panigaon Om Prakash Dinodia College	05	01	01	01	X	X
Lakhimpur Kendriya Mahavidyalaya	03	02	X	01	X	Barcode Printer

10. Areas of Library Automation

Table-4: Automation in Various Library Modules

Areas of Automation	Frequency N= 09	Percentage (%)
Administration	06	66.67%
Acquisition	05	55.56%
Classification	07	77.78%
Cataloguing	09	100%
OPAC	09	100%
Circulation	08	88.89%
Serial Control	04	44.44%

From Table-4 it is cleared that 100% libraries are automated in the areas of cataloguing and Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). Only four (4) colleges have already automated in serial

control module. More than 55 % colleges are already automated in the areas of general administration, acquisition, classification, cataloguing, OPAC and circulation.

11. Barriers of Library Automation

Table-5: Problems of Library Automaton

Problems	Frequency N= 09	Percentage (%)
Lack of number of hardware	04	44.44%
Software is not user friendly	02	22.22%
Lack of financial resources	05	55.56%
Inadequate trained staffs	09	100%
Work culture is not developed by LIS professionals	04	44.44%
Lack of IT knowledge	02	22.22%
Lack of support from authority	07	77.78%

The Table-5 states that college libraries of Lakhimpur district are facing lots of problems in case of automation. All selected libraries need more trained staffs to work in automated library. Out of 09 libraries, 07 libraries are getting less support from authority in automation. Almost 05 (55.56%) colleges are facing lack of financial resources as a barrier of library automation. All

12. Future Plan

All selected college libraries are presently doing well in automation. They are providing automation based services to users. Almost six libraries (66.67%) are planning to do digital

selected libraries are using SOUL software, but according to 22.22% of colleges the particular LMS packages is not user friendly. Out of 09 libraries, 04 (44.44%) believes that they have to develop the work culture among LIS professionals. Hence, it is seen that majority of college libraries are facing lots of problems for their library automation.

their libraries. Two libraries (22.22%) are thinking to bring RFID technology and barcode technology in their library. According to the librarian of Lakhimpur Commerce College, they are planning to move open source software like Koha.

Table-6: Future Plan of College Libraries of Lakhimpur District

Future Plan	Frequency N=09	Percentage (%)
Digitization	06	66.67%
Barcode Technology	02	22.22%
RFID Technology	02	22.22%
Move to OSS	01	11.11%

13. Findings

Following findings are identified during the study:-

- It is observed that 4 libraries (44%) are fully automated and 5 libraries (56%) are partially automated.
- It is seen that all college libraries have computer, good infrastructure, library management software and internet connection.
- Out of 09 libraries, 08 libraries are using SOUL version 2.0 and only one library is still using SOUL 1.0 (old version). Again, one library is planning to move to Open Source Software (OSS).
- In case of areas of automation, all libraries have already automated in cataloguing and OPAC.
- It is noticed that majority of libraries are facing problem of lack of financial resources and inadequate staff in library automation.
- Majority of libraries are going to do digital their libraries and some libraries are planning to use RFID technology in their libraries.
- Lack of support from authority is another major problem of maximum libraries.

14. Suggestions

For introducing and developing an effective library automation system in college libraries of Lakhimpur district, following suggestion can be given:

- Libraries should have basic ICT infrastructure like computer with well security system, barcode technology, UPS (Online), good internet connection, scanner, Xerox facility for library automation.
- Remaining 56% libraries need to complete their automation part as soon as possible for the help of users.
- In case of choosing and operating library software (either commercial or open source) library needs proper guidance and well trained staffs.
- Library has to convince the authority for financial support and other required help.
- Conclusion:
- In a fully automated library the staff will be satisfied in case of working and providing services to user. Again, user will also get satisfaction while searching information. Some college libraries of Lakhimpur district are now fully automated but they are still not using some modules like serial control, acquisition etc. Hope, in future they will get benefit by using those functions. An automated library can provide better library services to users and can maintain the library in a systematic way which a traditional library can't do. The record storage systems and activities become very easy in an automated library. But the success of any library automation system depends upon its proper planning and execution.

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