

---

## SCIENTISTS VIEWS ON TRENDS IN DIGITAL LIBRARY IN BANGLADESH AND INDIA

Thoudam Shyam Singh

Ch. Ibohah Singh

Th. Madhuri Devi

### Abstract

*Library and Information Scientists are dealing with digital library. Their views in respect of Bangladesh and India are analysed here to understand the scenario of Digital Library (DL) and its services in the two countries. Emphasis has been given on the technological requirements, DL Services rendered and the problems encountered. Concludes with the suggestions for the successful implementation of the DL.*

**Keywords :** Digital Library, Bangladesh; India; Scientists.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Over With the knowledge revolution came into the scene, there has been a sea change in the concept of library also. The beginning of the new millenium itself is the beginning of the new digital information era. The digital library, electronic library and virtual library have become most oftenly-spoken words today among the library and information scientists. The same has been in existence since last decade, even though not in full swing. India, becoming one of the pioneer countries in the software engineering in the world, has also introduced Digital Library (DL) in different institutional set-ups. INFLIBNET Centre, Ahmedabad is also playing a crucial role in this regard. Our neighboring sister country Bangladesh has also started DL in various educational institutions. The present paper attempts to have an idea about the scenario of the DL in the two countries.

### 1. METHODOLOGY

The Second International Convention, PLANNER – 2004 (Promotion of Library Automation and Networking in North Eastern Region) was held during 4-5 November,2004 in Manipur University, Imphal in which about 200 delegates from Bangladesh and India were attended. During the convention jointly organized by the INFLIBNET Centre, Ahmedabad and Manipur University, Imphal, views of the delegates were collected through a questionnaire to understand the present scenario of DL in the two countries. Most of the delegates were Library and Information Professionals, Scientists, Computer Specialists, Executives of high ranks in the field of Library and Information Activities. The delegates who have returned the questionnaires are being considered here as Library and Information Scientists.

### 2. ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### 2.1. Sample Characteristics

Altogether 50(fifty) questionnaires were distributed randomly among the scientists and received 38 (thirty-eight) filled in questionnaires. Three of the returned questionnaires were found incomplete which have summarily been rejected making the response to 35 (70.00%) only. Of the 35 returned questionnaires 06, (17.14%) are from Bangladesh and remaining 29 (82.86%) are from India. The personal identification of the scientists is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Personal Identification**

Scientists	Sex		Total (%)	Qualification		Total (%)
	Male (%)	Female (%)		P G (%)	Ph.D. (%)	
Bangladesh	05 (83.3)	01 (16.67)	06 (100.00)	04 (66.67)	02 (33.33)	06 (100.00)
India	17 (58.62)	12 (41.38)	29 (100.00)	20 (68.97)	09 (31.03)	29 (100.00)
Total	23 (65.71)	12 (35.29)	35 (100.00)	24 (68.57)	11 (31.43)	35 (100.00)

Source: Questionnaire

Male representation is higher than their female counterparts as seen and all the scientists under the sample study possess minimum Post Graduate Degree, 31.43% of them being Ph.D. holders. They are found to be associated with technical and academic institutions holding responsible posts and involved in the matters concerning digital information.

## 2.2 Existence of DL

The existence of DL in the institutions where the scientists are engaged is understood from Table 2. As responded only 40.00% of the institutions of the two countries exists DL, while it is 50.00% in case of Bangladesh it is only 37.93% in case of India. Table 2 also highlights that there exists no DL is full swing, 42.86% are in initial stage and 57.14% are in

**Table 2: Existence of DL & Its Stage**

Scientists	Existence of DL		Total (%)	Initial (%)	Stage of DL		
	Yes (%)	No (%)			Full (%)	Planning (%)	Others (%)
Bangladesh	03 (50.00)	03 (50.00)	06 (100.00)	02 (66.67)	-	01 (33.33)	-
India	11 (37.93)	18 (62.07)	29 (100.00)	04 (36.36)	-	07 (63.34)	-
Total	14 (40.00)	21 (60.00)	35 (100.00)	06 (42.86)	-	08 (57.14)	-

Source: Questionnaire

planning stage. Most of those DLs are also found to be launched since late nineties and beginning of the new century. The major problems behind the non-existence of DL in both the countries include :

- Lack of funds and interest;
- No interest in planning;
- Lack of manpower, resources, infrastructure; and
- Lack of coordination.

### 2.2.1 Planning to Introduce DL

Considering the essentiality of the DL, all those scientists engaged in the institutions where there is no existence of DL presently expressed that their parent organizations are planning to introduce DL, even though, it a matter of time only, as recorded in Table 3

**Table 3: Planning to Introduce DL**

Scientists	Yes	No
Bangladesh	03 (100.00)	Nil (0.00)
India	18 (100.00)	Nil (0.00)
Total	21 (100.00)	Nil (0.00)

N= 21

Source: Questionnaire

**2.2.2 Objectives of DL**

As opined by the scientists, the major objectives of the DLs, which are in existence in their respective institutions, include:

- To serve the users at door point ;
- To automate the library operations;
- To create databases of resources;
- To provide bibliographical services and indices;
- To make network among the academic libraries;
- To provide browsing facilities;
- To provide services quickly and economically;
- To share resources effectively; and
- To render services efficiently.

**2.3 Technological Requirements**

The availability and readiness of technical requirements for the development of DL are understood from the Table 4. Most of the requirements are found to be developed relatively in the two countries. The table is self-explanatory.

**Table 4: Technological Requirements: Readiness for DL**

Requirements	S C I E N T I S T S			
	B a n g l a d e s h (06)		I n d i a (29)	
	Yes (%)	NO (%)	Yes (%)	NO (%)
Locally Developed Database	05 (83.33)	01 (16.67)	21 (72.41)	08 (27.59)
Sufficient Number of Computers	05 (83.33)	01 (16.67)	27 (93.10)	02 (6.90)
Software and Its accessories	06 (100.00)	00 (0.00)	23 (79.31)	06 (20.69)
LAN facility	06 (100.00)	00 (0.00)	27 (93.10)	02 (6.90)
Network Connectivity	04 (66.67)	02 (33.33)	25 (96.20)	04 (13.80)
Internet Connectivity	02 (33.33)	04 (66.67)	25 (96.20)	04 (13.80)
Multimedia Kits	03 (50.00)	03 (50.00)	19 (65.51)	10 (34.49)
Well trained manpower	03 (50.00)	03 (50.00)	22 (75.87)	07 (24.13)

N= 35

Computer hardware	06 (100.00)	00 (0.00)	26 (89.65)	03 (10.35)
Facilities to coordinate, manage the entry, search and retrieve CD-ROMs, Floppies etc.	05 (83.33)	01 (16.67)	24 (82.75)	05 (17.25)
Digital Information resources	03 (50.00)	03 (50.00)	22 (75.87)	07 (24.13)
VSAT facilities	02 (33.33)	04 (66.67)	27 (93.10)	02 (6.90)
Digital Storage Media	02 (33.33)	04 (66.67)	28 (96.55)	01 (3.45)
	03 (50.00)	03 (50.00)	22 (75.87)	07 (24.13)

Source: Questionnaire

### 2.3 DL Services

The various DL services as experienced by the scientists are recorded in Table 5.

**Table 5: DL Services**

Services	S C I E N T I S T S			
	Bangladesh (06)		India (29)	
	Yes (%)	NO (%)	Yes (%)	NO (%)
Shared Cataloguing	01 (16.67)	05 (83.33)	20 (68.97)	09 (31.03)
Union Cataloguing	02 (33.33)	04 (66.67)	16 (55.18)	13 (44.82)
Access to Bibliographic Database	04 (66.67)	02 (33.33)	17 (58.62)	12 (41.38)
Online Catalogue	03 (50.00)	03 (50.00)	16 (55.18)	13 (44.82)
Access to subject gateways in specific disciplines	02 (33.33)	04 (66.67)	10 (34.49)	19 (65.51)
Subscribing to e-journals	03 (50.00)	03 (50.00)	27 (93.10)	02 (6.90)
Reference services provided by librarians and experts on the web	01 (16.67)	05 (83.33)	21 (72.41)	08 (27.59)
Links to web sites	01 (16.67)	05 (83.33)	23 (79.31)	06 (20.69)
Procuring e- reference sources	01 (16.67)	05 (83.33)	17 (58.62)	12 (41.38)
Documents Delivery Services	02 (33.33)	04 (66.67)	15 (51.72)	14 (48.28)
Online CAS	02 (33.33)	04 (66.67)	21 (72.41)	08 (27.59)
Digitization of library resources	04 (66.67)	02 (33.33)	27 (93.10)	02 (6.90)
Bulletin Board	04 (66.67)	02 (33.33)	20 (68.97)	09 (31.03)
Referral service	03 (50.00)	03 (50.00)	20 (68.97)	09 (31.03)
E-mail service	06 (100.00)	00 (0.00)	26 (89.66)	03 (10.34)
Consortia subscription	01 (16.67)	05 (83.33)	22 (75.87)	07 (24.13)
Web based OPAC	01 (16.67)	05 (83.33)	19 (65.51)	10 (34.49)

Source: Questionnaire

### 2.3.1 Feedback from the User

The feedback from the users of DL & its services in both the countries are listed here below:

- Users want to have their facility to use DL service;
- Users provide helps to selection process;
- Some users are not acquainted with DL services;
- More digital services are required by them;
- Some users are still ignorant about DL;
- To the users mostly in NE India the concept of DL is very new and they are digital phobia; and
- There is question of non-satisfaction to the services.

### 2.4 Problems and Prospects

The scientists of the two countries are found to be encountered with the management of DL & providing its services. Some of the specified problems are:

- Financial constraints;
- Shortage of skilled professional manpower;
- Lack of infrastructure;
- Non-awareness of DL by majority;
- Absence of Internet connectivity & VSAT facility;
- Poor IT knowledge;
- Disturbance of power supply;
- Lack of networking facility to share resources.

In spite of all these constraints, there are also prospects and benefits from DL as listed below as felt by the scientists

- DL enables to provide services quickly and economically;
- It can fulfill the interests and demands of the users;
- It opens scope for resource sharing;
- More users are attracted;
- Through DL services geographical gap can be bridged;
- It improves the quality of services; and
- It saves the space problems also.

As Suggested by them, the following points may be taken into account for the successful implementation of the DL in both the countries:

- Campaign for developing and growing interest among the planners;
- Making fund available to start with;
- Training of professionals for the purpose;
- Development and adaptation of a uniform system for sharing its resources;

- Education and training for the users community;
- Team work is required for their cooperative venture;
- Work culture on the part of library and information professionals requires to be developed;
- Convention like PLANNER should be organized continuously;
- A national policy on the matter requires to be chalked out; and
- Compilation of union catalogues requires urgently.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The present study shows us a number of indications on the emergence of DL and its services in Bangladesh and India. Eventhough, the sample size is small; we can assume that a trend has been developed to establish DL to serve the users in a more effective way to meet their requirements in the changing environment. It is quite encouraging with the views of the scientists that in both the countries, the planners and authorities are on the way to adopt this latest concept of library services in the near future. Agencies, like INFLIBNET in India can take a lead in this regard. Bangladesh is also expected to have a programme like INFLIBNET.

### ABOUT AUTHORS



**Thoudam Shyam Singh**, BSc, BLISc, MLISc and DOEACC "O" Level is from the Department of Library and Information Science, Manipur University, Canchipur, Imphal.

**E-mail** : shyam\_thoudam@yahoo.co.in

**Dr. Ch. Ibohal Singh**, from Department of Library and Information Science, Manipur University, Imphal, holds BSc (Statistics), BLISc (Gold Medalist), MLISc (2<sup>nd</sup> Rank, NEHU), Ph.D (Lib. & Inf. Sc.), PGDCA, NET (UGC). He is a life member of MALA, ILA, and IASLIC. He has about 30(thirty) papers and one book to his credit. His areas of interest include: IT Application, Information System; Users study Research Methodology & Statistical techniques and Information Resources.

**E-mail** : cisingh@indiatimes.com



**Dr. Th. Madhuri Devi**, holds BLISc(B.H.U) and MLISc (Delhi University). She joined the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for P.G Studies, Imphal in 1977 and she was appointed as Assistant Professor in the Department of Library and Information Science in November 1991. She is at present Sr. Grade Assistant Professor of the Department of Library and Information Science, Manipur University, Canchipur, Imphal.