

Evaluation of ICT Based Services in the Academic Libraries of Manipur: A Study

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Abstract

With the advent of Information Communication Technology in our society, there is a sea change in all spheres of our life. Libraries globally have undergone a significant change due to the application of ICT in automated catalogue, online retrieval etc. The present paper highlights the present status of academic libraries of Manipur particularly of college libraries of valley areas on varied aspects like-ICT based services, automation status and others including problem in ICT application. It also disclosed some suggestions to improve the service conditions of the college libraries.

Keywords: Information Communication Technology, Automation, Academic Libraries, Library Services

1. Introduction

Information Communication Technology has been one of the major factor causing changes in the field of Library Science which people or user can communicate, retrieve and disseminate and used information. Today, the library scene is fast changing and automation activities are picking up. There is increasing awareness of information technology and its application among librarians. Library automation seems to be inevitable. In India, computerization of libraries has been a rather slow process until recently, largely because of the lack of trained manpower. However, in the late 1990s the situation has changed completely and more library professionals are getting trained in computer application. There are increasing numbers of training programs available for the purpose at different levels. Besides, the hardware and software have become more user friendly and a wide range of software packages are available suitable for the needs of most libraries. Automation activities in Academic Libraries in India slowly picked up with the support from INFLIBNET, UGC, NISSAT and other similar agencies combined with increase awareness of IT and its application among librarians. Academic librarians in India are beginning to use E-mail, CD-ROM, LAN, machine-readable catalog, etc. for resource sharing. This change in academic libraries is due to rapidly changing Information Communication Technology. Perhaps the key to change is the willingness to share resources and work together to bring a "change". The present paper is an attempt to study the existing scenario of ICT based services in the Academic Libraries of Manipur, especially in the colleges.

2. Objective of the study

The main objective of the study focuses on:

- ◆ to find out the existing scenario of ICT application in the college libraries of Manipur;
- ◆ to know the number of automated college libraries; and
- ◆ to suggest measures to provide better services and up to date information by using modern Information Technology.

3. Methodology

A survey was conducted in order to determine the existing position of ICT application in some selected college libraries located in the valley area of Manipur. Altogether, there are 72 colleges in Manipur including affiliated, Government aided and private colleges. Out of the total population, only the colleges in Manipur valley have been selected for the study. So, a total number of 30 questionnaires were distributed to the selected colleges of Manipur valley. Responses are received from 24 colleges (i.e 80% of the total number distributed). The survey was conducted during Feb 2007-May 2007.

4. Manifestation

4.1 Establishment of Library

Library Movement in Manipur came into existence in the early 1900s. As a result of this movement, there was the emergence of libraries and came to the actual stage of growth and development of Library. Most of the colleges in Manipur were established in late seventies and early eighties.

Table 1 : About Library Establishment N = 24

Sl. No.	Year of Establishment	Number of Libraries	Percentage
1.	1950 - 1960	3	12.5
2.	1960 - 1970	4	16.6
3.	1970 - 1980	9	37.5
4.	1980 - 1990	4	16.6
5.	1990 - 2000	3	12.5
6.	2000 - 2007	1	4.3
	Total	24	100%

Source: Filled in Questionnaire

Table 1 shows that majority of the colleges (i.e. 9 out of 24) in Manipur were found to be established during 1970-1980's. Again, it is observed that some of the libraries also established during 1960-1970 and 1980-90.

4.2 Qualification of the Librarian

A competent and a well qualified staff with IT knowledge is a much in this information oriented society. Regarding the qualification of Librarian, most of the librarians in the college library are not very well qualified and trained staff. The qualification of the librarian of different colleges located at Manipur valleys were shown in table 2.

Table 2: Qualification of the Librarian N = 24

Sl. No.	Qualification	No. of College	Percentage
1.	B.A. BLIS	4	16.6
2.	B.Sc. BLIS	3	12.5
3.	B.Sc. MLIS	7	29.1
4.	B.A. MLIS	2	8.3
5.	M.A. BLIS	6	25
6.	M.A. MLIS	2	8.3
	Total	24	100%

Source : Filled in Questionnaire

It is observed that 7 out of 24 college librarians, under consideration are found to possess B.Sc. MLISc degree. However, it is observed from the present study that most of the college librarians possess the professional qualification.

4.3 Library Staff

The staff is an essential link between library resources and library users. The college library has given important place in the scheme of higher learning. The standard of study and teaching heavily depends upon the qualitative and quantitative services rendered by the college. The staff pattern of the colleges is highlighted in Table 3.

Table 3 : Staff Strength of the Library N = 24

Sl. No.	Designation	No. of College	Percentage
1.	Professional	22	91.6
2.	Semi-Professional	8	33.3
3.	Non-Professional	13	54.16
4.	Clerical	4	16.6
5.	Others	10	41.6

Source: Filled in Questionnaire

From the above table, it is revealed that almost all the colleges have Professional staff (i.e. 91.6%). Out of 24 colleges, 8 (i.e. 54.16) college libraries, have semi-professional. Some colleges of about 41.6% have others staff.

4.4 Collection of the Library

Library collection is the most important work of a library. It is the backbone of library services. Every collection of library should have support to the educational programme and also can give effective strength and recreational requirement to the readers. The following Tables 4 shows the collection development in different college libraries in the valley area.

Table 4: Library Collection

Sl. No.	Collection Type	No. of College	Percentage
1.	Books	24	100
2.	Periodical	22	91.5
3.	Maps & Charts	6	25
4.	Microfilm	1	4.1
5.	C.D.	3	12.5

Source: Filled in Questionnaire

The present analysis revealed that most of the college libraries have their collection development on books. From the above Table 4, it is clear that most of the colleges do not have collection of Maps & Chart, microfilm and C.D. Only one college has Micro-film collection.

4.5 ICT Based Services

4.5.1 Status of Automation

Automation of libraries has helped the libraries to keep pace with the latest development. This has also facilitated accuracy, flexibility and reliability in the library and information centre. Automation of libraries reduces the repetitive work and save time and bring accuracy and speed. It also increase efficiency in technical processing of library material and improve the efficiency of library administration and manager.

It is revealed from the study that 3 colleges out of 24 colleges surveyed have fully automated. Even though 55.5% (i.e. 5 colleges) of academic college libraries in the state are not automated, it is quite remarkable to note that 50% (i.e. 8 colleges) of them have already submitted proposal for initiating automation work which were subsequently accepted by concerned authorities (table 5).

Table 5: Status of Automation **N = 9**

Status	No. of College	Percentage
Automated	3	33.3
Partially automated	1	11.1
Not at all	5	55.5
Total	9	100%

Source: Filled in Questionnaire

Table 5 (a): Proposal of Automation **N = 16**

Proposal	No. of College	Percentage
Accepted	8	50
Not accepted	3	18.7
Under consideration	5	25
Total	16	100%

Source: Filled in Questionnaire

4.5.2 IT Related Services (OPAC, Internet, E-Collection)

The present study observed that most of the college libraries located in the valley Area of Manipur are all recently automated. So, only some of those colleges which are already automated, provide few of the IT related services. Unfortunately, most all the college libraries in valley area of Manipur don't provide OPAC, Internet connection and other IT related services. Moreover they don't have E-Journal or E-collection.

4.6 Suggestions from the Librarian

Some of the suggestions given by different library professionals were:

- ◆ since ICT based services are very much needed in today's society, each and every library professionals should aware of it;
- ◆ qualified and competent manpower of the library and more funds are very much needed for the development of the library;
- ◆ the Government of Manipur should make a plan to develop the College library as University library. Since library bring better education in the country;
- ◆ application of SOUL software and expansion of library building;
- ◆ to organized the college library for library automation in collaboration with UGC (INFLIBNET);
- ◆ the Government should sanctioned separate fund for library development and enable to provide better service to the user;
- ◆ every library should be automated so that work of staff became easier and the user can get their information at right time; and
- ◆ library must employ modern library technique and device in its operation. So that it provide service in order to save time of library user and the staff because manual system is time consuming.

5. Conclusion

Library as a growing organism requires constant change in order to maintain high degree of relevance to the changing ICT environment. In fact, application of ICT is an indispensable part of modern library's information system development, organisations, management and services. Academic Libraries in the 21st century need to be learning organizations. Within the purview of Academic Library System, college libraries are playing an important role in disseminating information to various types of users such as students, teacher, researcher etc. Therefore, application of ICT based services in college libraries has become the need of the hour because it helps in managing diverse library resources and provides effective and efficient services to the users. However, the present study revealed that only 33.3% of the college libraries in the valley areas of Manipur provide ICT based services (i.e. automated). Most of college libraries in Manipur are not able to fulfill their obligation to the objective of higher education. Most of the librarians were not well qualified and adequate competent staffs were not employed to these libraries.

Therefore in order to improve the present situation in the college libraries of Manipur the following suggestions were made:

- ◆ The college authority should try to know the importance of ICT in today's IT based Society. So they should initiate and plan the library for automation. For this they can seek funds from UGC. Success depends on the decision taken by the authority of the college.
- ◆ A Committee is to be constituted to supervise and for proper utilization of the allotted grants to participate effectively.
- ◆ Adequate training (such as ICT Application) should be given to library staff and sufficient qualified staff should be employed to these libraries.
- ◆ Workshop, Seminar and other ICT awareness programme should be organise from time to time to know the staff regarding the trend in IT age.

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