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## APPLICATION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN SPECIAL LIBRARIES OF MANIPUR: A CASE STUDY

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### Abstract

*The paper highlights the problem of IT (Information Technology) in six (6) selected special libraries in Manipur. The main problems of application of IT in these special libraries were the lack of fund. The state Government is not in a position to provide adequate funds for automating these special libraries. The authors also discusses about the requisite of IT to improve the condition of the special libraries of Manipur state. It also mentioned the problems of IT application and also suggested some solutions to overcome the problems.*

**Keywords:** Information Technology, ITS, CAU, MIT, ITI, RIMS.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Information explosion, a phenomenon of the past few decades, resulted in the exponential growth of printed matters, which created problems of bibliographical control, storage and dissemination of information. This adversely affected the service to users who had by now become more conscious and appreciative of the value of information. Information is a vital resource for socio-economic development. It affects everybody and its role is so pervasive that it has become a common place in the present society. Due to the growth of Information explosion, its use becomes so wide spread and there is a greater need of applying certain technology to information works and activities to accelerate its use. It enables the storage, processing, retrieval and dissemination of information quickly and easily. The earlier libraries were open to their clientele for consultation within their premises. They have undergone radical changes and expanded their services over the years. The modern libraries offer a variety of services like circulation of reading materials, reference services to the users, local information services to their clients, getting reading materials for the users from other libraries on inter-library loan, on-line information services at national and international levels etc. Information Technology (IT) covers all activities and technologies that involve the handling of information by electronic means i.e. information acquisition, storage, retrieval, processing, transmission and control. IT has influenced simple business activity to high level research and development work. The quality of work and activities has been greatly changed by the presents of application of IT. With the introduction of modern information technology in libraries, the role of library and information science personnel is undergoing a qualitative change. It is becoming a vital component in the overall resource management of Library and Information Centers. The library environment has been leading towards digital and the concept of 'Electronic Library' i.e. paperless documentation and information services has been taking place. "Library Automation" is used to refer the extensive use of mechanical, electronic or microelectronic equipments to perform the functions and activities associated with libraries such as acquisition, serial control, cataloguing and circulation and also to Library and Information Services and Networking. The computers are of great significant with the advancement of telecommunication and reprography technologies facilitate information scanning and retrieval of details of micro and macro documents over vast distances in no time.

### 2. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study entitled "Application of IT in Special Libraries in Manipur: Problem and Prospect" covers only six (6) selected Special Libraries of Manipur i.e. (1) RIMS (Regional Institute of Medical Sciences) Library,

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Imphal; (2) CAU (Central Agricultural University) Library, Iroisemba; (3) Polytechnic Library, Takyelpat, Imphal; (4) MIT (Manipur Institute of Technology ) Takyelpat, Imphal; (5) ITI (Industrial Training Institute) Takyelpat; and (6) LMS (Lairenmayum Sheibyashachi Singh) Law College Library, Imphal. In this paper an attempt has been made to study the problems associated with the application of IT in different types of Special Libraries, and to provide suggestions for future improvement of IT environment in the Libraries of Manipur.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

A combination of questionnaire and interview method was used to collect data from the Librarians and Staffs of six (6) Special Libraries of Manipur.

### **4. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)**

According to ALA Glossary, "Information is the application of computers and others to the acquisition, organization, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information."

Now-a-days, the current era is known as 'Information Era', Information Industry and the Information Technology are the most widely known concepts in the scientific world. Information Technology in its strict sense is the new science of collecting, storing, processing and transmitting information. On the other hand, the meaning of Information Technology is the product of fusion of 'Information Science and Technology'. Information Technology is the study of processes, especially computers, telecommunications etc. for storing, retrieval and sending information of all kinds. It covers all aspects of arts or science of processing data to produce information. IT has transforming the human society to information society where information is the mainstay and life-blood of both individuals and organization.

The Information Technology Section (ITS) serves to promote and advance the application of Information Technologies (IT) to library and information services in all societies, through activities related to standards, education and training, research and the marketplace.

As defined in the 2004-2005 Strategies Plan, the goals of the IT Section are:

- To investigate, evaluate and communicate knowledge about new technologies that have significant potential for library services, but which have not been widely adopted.
- To investigate, evaluate and communicate knowledge about applicable IT for access to information resources, with special attention to needs regarding regions where telecommunication networks are of low capacity, or are not easily affordable.
- To identify and promote standards, guidelines and best practices for the management of information and IT resources and to improve efficiency and services level of library operations. This includes issues such as metadata and data structures, data manipulation techniques and long-term availability of electronic information.
- To promote data standards and protocols that will improve interoperability between systems and facilitate data exchange between libraries and other sectors of information creation.
- To encourage and supports projects within the scope of the strategic plan by maintaining close contacts with other IFLA sections and Core Activities, as well as with other international associations and organizations focused on IT. (<http://www.ifla.org/VII/s21/annual/sp21-04.htm>)

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## **5. IT IN LIBRARIES**

Information Technology can be used in Libraries and Information Centers for the development of new information services and computerized library services. IT is useful in a great extent. It is useful for:-

- Improving productivity and efficiency of library services effectively (i.e. acquisition, technical, processing, circulation etc.);
- Provision of quality information (e.g. CAS, SDI etc.);
- Saving the space using the electronic storage (e.g. CDs and CDROMs) and faster accessing of information;
- Provision of the extensive information and maintenance; and
- Improving of cooperation in sharing of resources (e.g. shared acquisition, shared cataloguing etc.).

## **6. IT CHANGED THE ROLE OF LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS**

Information Technology (IT) has changed the sources of information, delivery of information and access to information. The role and function of a Library and Information professional in the changing environment can be described as, he must facilitate information use, navigate knowledge systems and information sources. He should consult and advise on information problems and audit the optimal management of information resources. He must translate between the technical system and cultural resources and transform data and information flowing between systems. He should have the capability of offering information policy support for organizational strategies and provide resources for information literacy. The library professionals emerging role and functions brings closer to the needs of the users and therefore should have the capacity to evaluate the precise requirements of the users besides having complete access to the world resources.

## **7. WHY IT APPLICATION NEEDED TO SPECIAL LIBRARIES**

In present era, knowledge about nature had grown to such enormous dimensions that even specialized scientists were no longer able to grasp the whole range of experience falling within their specialized fields. The literatures were so vast that they were unable to read all relevant materials even when they were available. It was the information explosion that necessitated a more skillful method of exploitation of literature. The technique was found in the various applications of expanding information technology which made for increased precision and made possible complete, timely and up-to-date information exploitation, which satisfied the requirements of scientific research, based on fact rather than intuition.

Six (6) special libraries under Manipur Government were chosen for the application of IT because:

- Special library services were directed towards specialist of one form to another and not to the general public;
- Their collections typically were narrow in scope but richer in depth than those of other more general libraries.
- Special Libraries placed heavy emphasis on custom-tailored service to their clientele; and
- They were expected to provide high level of service.

## 8. IT AND SPECIAL LIBRARIES IN MANIPUR

Librarians who can effectively manage to computerized their library and information activities seem to have properly adopted Information Technology. In Manipur, from the survey, we found that there is negligible application of Information Technology (IT) in most of the Special Libraries of Manipur. Without proper infrastructure and well- trained staffs, application of IT in the Special libraries is impossible. The most important aspect in this regard is financial resource from the concerned authorities. The adoption of Information Technology (IT) in Manipur is depending on the following factors:-

- (a) Attitude and interest of Library authority;
- (b) Availability of enough knowledge IT trained professional in libraries;
- (c) Adequate funding from State and Central Government;
- (d) Evolving a policy on library automation.

## 9. SPECIAL LIBRARIES UNDER STUDY

### 9.1 Questionnaire Responded

Out of the 42 questionnaires distributed 30 questionnaires were responded and 12 didn't give any respond. 12 were collected out of the 20 questionnaires from RIMS Library, Agricultural University Library responded 5 out of 8, polytechnic Library responded 4 out of 5, MIT Library responded 4 out of 4, ITI Library 1 out of 1 and LMS Law College Library 4 out of 4. Form the questionnaire-collected table, it seems that most of the Special Library professionals are willing to respond questionnaire.

TABLE NO.1: - QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDED

Sl. No	Category	No. of questionnaire distributed	No. of questionnaire collected	No. of not-responded questionnaire	Total collection
1.	RIMS Library	20	12	8	12
2.	CAU Library	8	5	3	5
3.	Polytechnic Library	5	4	1	4
4.	MIT Library	4	4	—	4
5.	ITI Library	1	1	—	1
6.	LMS Law College Library	4	4	—	4
	Total	42	30	12	30

### 9.2 Age Group and Sex of the Respondent

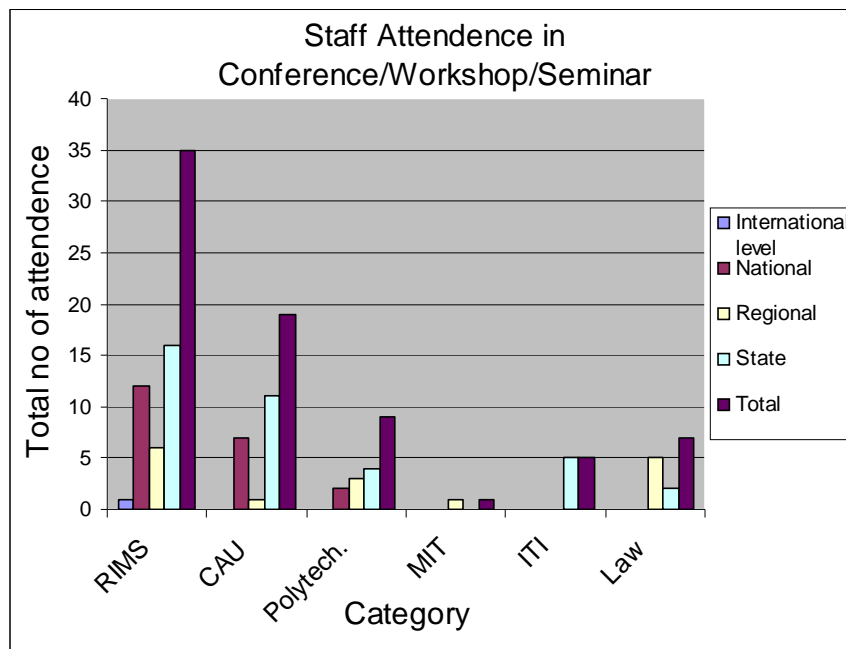
In regard to the age group and sex of the 30 questionnaires collected the age group between 41-50 years accounted for 46%, the age group between 31-40 years for 33% and 51-60 for 20%. However there were no respondent in between the age group of below 30 and above 60. Most of the staffs working in the Libraries are under the age group of 41-50. In respect to the male and female ratio, it comes as 50%-50%. It reflects that in these Special Libraries females are equally absorbed in the library services as the male does. One of the most interesting in this regard is that there are four (4) library personnels in the MIT Library (Manipur Institute of Technology library, Takyelpat) and only one (1) librarian of ITI Library (Industrial Training Institute, Takyelpat) who are all females.

TABLE NO.2: - AGE GROUP AND SEX OF THE RESPONDENT

Sl No.	Category	Age Group			Male	Female	Total	Ratio (m/f)
		31-40	41-50	51-60				
1.	RIMS Library	1	6	5	8	4	12	66%-33%
2.	CAU Library	2	2	1	2	3	5	40%-60%
3.	Polytechnic Library	3	1	—	2	2	4	50%-50%
4.	MIT Library	2	2	—	—	4	4	0%-100%
5.	ITI Library	—	1	—	—	1	1	0%-100%
6.	LMS Law College Library	2	2	—	3	1	4	75%-25%
	Total	10(33%)	14(46%)	6(20%)	15	15	30	50%-50%

### 9.3 Staff Attendance in Conference/Workshop/Seminar

The chart below shows the total number of conference/ workshop/seminar attended by the staffs in each library. The RIMS Library professionals attended in maximum number and minimum number in MIT Library. Out of the total of 76 numbers there is only one International level and the maximum number is in the State level.



#### 9.4 Area of IT Applicable in Library

The table below shows the respondents of library professionals, that in which area of their library the IT is applicable. Their maximum level of IT application in their opinion is the area of 'acquisition' and the average level is at 'cataloguing and circulation'.

TABLE NO.4:- AREA OF IT APPLICABLE IN LIBRARY

Sl. No.	Category	Areas						Total Respondent
		Acquisition	Cataloguing	Circulation	Serial Control	CAS/SDI	Database Creation	
1.	RIMS Library	12	12	12	4	2	3	12
2.	CAU Library	4	4	4	3	2	3	5
3.	Polytechnic Library	4	2	2	1	1	1	4
4.	MIT Library	4	2	2	1	1	1	4
5.	ITI Library	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
6.	LMS Law College Library	2	1	1	1	1	1	4
	Total	27	22	22	11	8	10	30

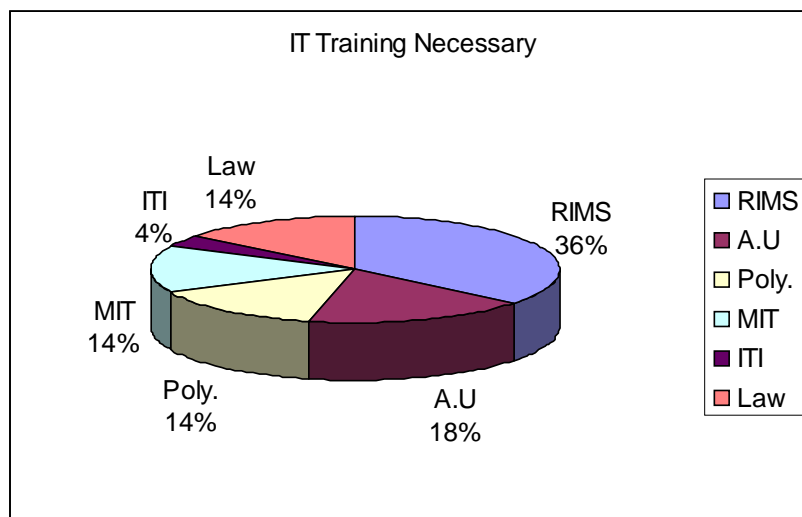
#### 9.5 Impact of IT Towards the Staff

Here the table shows the impact of IT towards the staffs. They mentioned their opinions that IT generate more interest, search and evaluation becomes easy, tedious work can be eliminated and the application of IT will improved the library services.

TABLE NO.5: - IMPACT OF IT TOWARDS THE STAFF

Sl. No	Category	Generate more interest	Search & Evaluation becomes easy	Tedious work can be eliminated	Library services will be improved	Total Respondent
1.	RIMS Library	11	10	8	11	12
2.	CAU Library	5	4	2	4	5
3.	Polytechnic Library	4	4	3	4	4
4.	MIT Library	4	4	4	4	4
5.	ITI Library	1	1	1	1	1
6.	LMS Law College Library	4	4	4	4	4
	Total	29	27	22	28	30

## 9.6 Staff Opinion On IT Training



In the changing IT environment, the library professionals take the role of intermediary between users and available resources. They must know about the potentials of technology to facilitate library services and to enhance their own effectiveness. They must also recognize as to how technological applications can create greater access to knowledge and information. The IT training is to be provided to library professionals to use the potentials of IT in library services to generate more interest and elimination of tedious work.

The above pie-chart shows the percentage of respondents who needs IT training in these Special Libraries of Manipur.

## 10. PROBLEMS

The Special Libraries of Manipur have the following problems in the application of Information Technology:-

1. Absence of adequate enthusiasm and attitude of library authority.
2. Library facilities in the Special Libraries of Manipur are inadequate and disorganized.
3. Most of the libraries functioned with inadequate no. of library professionals.
4. Lack of the proper training of manpower development and absence of IT education in the state.
5. Though the librarians and some other professionals are qualified they certainly lag behind because of lack of IT awareness.
6. Inadequate fund provision for computerization of libraries is the main cause responsible for under-employment IT.
7. Absence of right and appropriate technology and equipments for modernization of library.
8. Irregular and unpredictable power supply is also one of the main problem.

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## 11. SUGGESTION

The information Technologies (ITs) have the revolutionary potential to make the flow of information across the space possible. IT can be used in libraries and information centers 'To save the time of the users'. The library authority (i.e. librarians and staffs) of the Special Libraries of Manipur are also aware of the same in the state.

The following suggestions appear to be appropriate in terms of IT application in Special Libraries with special reference to Manipur:-

1. Special Library professionals need to accept the changes with the latest developments of IT application in libraries.
2. The library authority without any discrimination and delay should accept the adoption of IT in their library.
3. Special fund provision should be made in the annual budget for IT and utilized properly.
4. The Central Government should provide extra funds for the modernization of Special Libraries.
5. Internet facility should be made available in the Special Libraries so as to provide access to information for the users.
6. Special fund may be provided for development of subject oriented information centers (such as Agricultural College and Research Institute, Institute of Science and Technology, Medical Science, Law etc.).
7. Library Professionals in the State Government may be placed in good position with the scale of pay as recommended by U.G.C so as to motivate them to work effectively and efficiently.
8. The Government should formulate Information Technology policy for the State in which application of IT in libraries should have specific emphasis.
9. Library professionals should be given the professional freedom to work independently.
10. The Learned Societies/Associations should come forward for active co-operation for development of libraries and library profession.

## 12. CONCLUSION

From the above discussion we can conclude that the introduction of Information Technology would certainly offer the solution to many problems faced by the Special Libraries. It would improved library services and enhances the productivity and efficiency of library staff. In Manipur, the application of IT in Special Library is totally neglected and the primary reason for this is the inadequate provision of funds and lack of right attitude towards library development. The libraries have neither IT trained manpower nor the authorities are interested to make them trained. The application of IT in the libraries depends on many factors like management supports, adequate financial resources, staff-cooperation etc. and also lack of adequate training facilities and absence of IT education in the State for the library professionals is one of the reasons that reflects such a poor State of IT application in libraries.

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