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ABSTRACT

The financial crunch in the government funded academic libraries is making them face a recession in progress.   Library automation is rejuvenating the academic environment. The INFLIBNET programme is infusing new life into the academic libraries. This study made on university libraries situated at Tirupati (A.P.) covers the present state of automation in different libraries. Hardware, software, manpower facilities were studied through a survey. The study also extended to understand specific problems of the university libraries in automation..

KEYWORDS: University libraries, Library automation, INFLIBNET programme, Library network. Manpower development

0.   INTRODUCTION

Libraries are now universally recognised as important social institutions for diffusion of knowledge and information. No community, institution or organisation is considered complete without the support of a library and its effective services. University Grants Commission (UGC) is responsible for the development of University and college libraries both in physical as well as social terms. The UGC took the right action at the right time by creating pioneering INFLIBNET to create National Network System. The Project on information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) aims at the establishment of a national network of libraries and information centres in universities, colleges, research and development organizations, etc. in India.

INFLIBNET is a computer communication Network for linking libraries and information centres in Universities, Deemed Universities, Institutions of National Importance, UGC Information Centres, R & D Institutions and Colleges.

Though the UGC is responsible for over all development of the academic libraries in higher education, the INFLIBNET programme is a good initiative for rejuvenating the libraries by computerised operations and services. Otherwise the libraries may lose their importance in the present electronic environment.

1. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study, though small in sample covering only three Universities at Tirupati (A.P.), is unique in nature and shows that academic libraries are empowered by INFLIBNET programme, which is a boon to the academic environment. The study covers only the libraries which come under INFLIBNET Programme in Tirupati.

2. PLACE OF STUDY

Tirupati is a famous town in India, which is a religious centre for the Hindus. Three are two universities named S.V.University (SVU) and Sri Padmavathi Mahila Viswavidyalayam (SPMV) and two deemed Universities named Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth (RSVP) and Sri Venkateswara Institute of Medical Sciences (SVIMS) functioning at this town. There are a number of professional institutes like Engineering and Medical Colleges apart from a number of degree Colleges situated in and around Tirupati. It is the biggest Educational Centre in Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh.

3.   SAMPLE FOR STUDY

3.1   Sri Venkateswara University Library

This is one of oldest University libraries in Andhra Pradesh, established on 2nd September, 1954. The library building is a remarkable feature in the University campus. The first president of India Dr. Sarvepalli Radha Krishna called this Library building as Tajmahal of the South. The library contains 13 sections for different operations. It is extending services to 5,000 inmates of the University campus and thousands of students, research scholars belonging to the 5 districts namely Anantapur, Chittoor, Kurnool, Nellore and Cuddapah. The library started with only 6000 documents initially donated by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams

3.2   Sri Padmavathi Mahila Viswavidhyalayam Library

The university was established by the State of Andhra Pradesh on the lines of S.N.D.T. Women's University, Mumbai to provide more facilities and improve women education in the state. The vision came into existence on 14th April, 1983. The library was started with 389 books and 29 periodicals. This is one of the fast growing library with separate building and staff with professional competency

3.3   Rastriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth (Deemed University) Library

This is one of the special university of its kind in India, started as Central Sanskrit Institutions in 1961 by Ministry of Education, Government of India. In 1970, it became an autonomous organisation and in 1987 it was declared as a Deemed University. The Library building was named after Maha Mahodhya Pattabhi Rama Sastri Grandhalaya. It started in humble way, but soon progressed fast serving hundreds of students and research scholars of Sanskrit all over Andhra Pradesh. The library is developing fast with very good professional competitive staff and management.

The three universities were taken for specific study because all of them come under University Grants Commission. Data was also collected from one another University situated in Tirupati named Sri Venkateswara Institute of Medical Sciences (A Deemed University), which comes under All India Medical Council but was excluded from the study for want of uniformity in the samples altogether. The three universities have 6,61,639 documents serving 30,463 users. Usually around 900 users use the libraries per day. The libraries are work 356 days per year, 12 hours a day.

4.   METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted through questionnaire based survey. A structured questionnaire with multiple choices and open ended questions, designed according to the objectives, was distributed to the University Libraries with a request to fill it. They were properly filled and returned. The data in the questionnaire was analysed and interpreted in suitable manner.

5.   DATA ANALYSIS

Table-1

Number of Documents available in the University Library wise at Tirupati.

Libraries	No. of Documents	Back Volumes	Journals	Newspapers
SVU	3,18,000	50,000	360	15
SPMV	46,000	8,000	232	10
RSVP	62,000	10,000	150	12

The S. V. University Library is the biggest library among   libraries at Tirupati. It is extending services to all other universities, colleges and other Institutions in the region.

All the three University Libraries are having separate buildings for Library. But, RSVP Library expressed its displeasure on accommodation and other infrastructure facilities. Others are satisfied. They expressed that their infrastructure is sufficient and suitable for automation.

Table-2

Man Power in the Libraries

	SVU	SMPV	RSVP

Man Power	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Professional	6	5	0	6	2	0
Non Professionals	2	3	0	7	2	0
Supporting Staff	40	3	0	0	6	1

As per the data, all the University Libraries are suffering from lack of sufficient professional staff. Majority of the Universities are neglecting staffing of the libraries for one or other reason.

Table-3

No. of Persons technically qualified for computerized operations in the Library

Caders	SVU		SMPV		RSVP	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Management Cadre	1	0	0	0	1	0
Professionals	0	0	0	5	0	0
Non-Professionals	0	0	0	1	0	0
Supporting Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0

The data shows that no university library is fully equipped with trained staff for automation. The meagre staff available for computer operations is also due to the training programmes conducted by INFLIBNET periodically. The staff development programmes have to be increased to strengthen the staff technically to suit the changing environment.

Table-4

Hardware Availability Number of personal computers available

Processor Specification

Libraries	No. of Computers	080386	080486	Pentium
SVU	6	2	1	3
SPMV	8	0	1	7
RSV	7	0	0	7

The data shows that the hardware facilities also need has to be augmented in the libraries. The present hardware is not sufficient for networking environment and complete library automation.

Table-5

Other facilities available

Libraries	Fax	Cd-net	CD-WR	DVD	Xerox
SVU	X	X	%	%	%
SPMV	X	X	X	X	%
RSVP	X	%	X	X	%

Other facilities too need augmentation in all the University Libraries. The communication systems like Fax have to be provided on priority basis.

Table-6

Network Facilities

Libraries	LAN	WAN (any other)	INFLIBNET	Internet
SVU	X	X	%	%
SPMV	X	X	%	X
RSVP	%	X	%	%

The networking is in infancy in all university libraries. Some libraries are yet to be equipped even with internet facilities.

Table-7

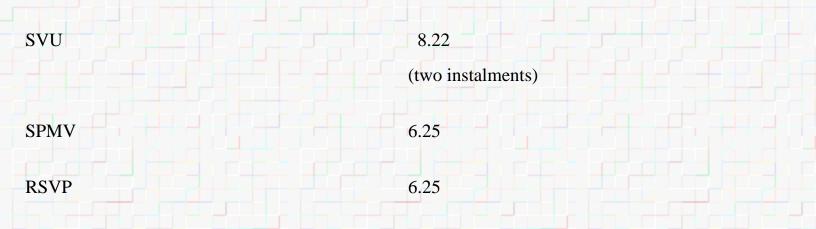**Software Packages using for Library Automation**

Libraries	Software package
SVU	CDS/ISIS
SPMV	SOUL
RSVP	SOUL

The software facilities are also available due to the assistance of INFLIBNET to all the University Libraries, other wise the situation might have been different.

Table-8

Grants Received from INFLIBNET

Libraries	Rs. in Lakhs

SVU	8.22
	(two instalments)
SPMV	6.25
RSVP	6.25

Though the financial assistance is small, but is encouraging. The new horizons of the libraries were opened with the above assistance

Table-9

No. of Records created in the computers

Library	Books	Journals	Theses & dissertation
SVU	30,000	2169	1914
SPMV	8000	00	00
RSVP	17500	00	00

The data entry work is in progress in all the universities. The SVU Library has involved the Library Science students in data entry and computerisation work. The students and faculty is working enthusiastically.

Table-10

Subscription/purchase of electronic documents

Library	Subscription	Format
SVU	No	No

| SPMV | Yes | CDs |
| RSVP | Yes | CDs |

No university library has any collection policy towards electronic documents. The present situation is discouraging. Emphasise on electronic document collection is necessary.

Table-11

Requirements of Library Automation

The Librarians of the Universities expressed their requirements for library automation as :

·   One server to each library

·   25 numbers of personal computers to the three university libraries

·   OCR and conversion software, scanners, Instructional software etc. to each library.

·   5 professionals trained in computerisation to each library.

·   Rs. 50,00,000 to each libraries.

6.   CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of data analysis, certain conclusions were drawn and are presented. Though the data aws collected from only three university libraries at Tirupati, majority of the academic libraries are   in the same condition all over the state.

It is evident from the records of the university libraries, that there is recession in the progress. Budget cuts, staff size reduction, delay in other resource allocations is the common feature. The academic libraries are far behind in providing technological and qualitative services to the users compared to others. The INFLIBNET programme is an Oasis in the dwindling future of libraries.

The strength of document resources is encouraging in the university libraries. Majority of the libraries have separate building for library accommodation. But, more infrastructural   facilities are required by the libraries for automation.

Manpower situation is discouraging in libraries.   The technical knowledge to library professionals has to be imparted on priority basis.

The requirement for hardware and software is high in university libraries. The present facilities are quite inadequate. The software packages need to be provided free of cost to the libraries.

The automation work in the library is at infancy, but, encouraging.

The university libraries should have suitable collection policy in the light of digital environment.

Regular Manpower development programmes have to be implemented for strengthening the university libraries.

To reemphasis, the INFLIBNET programme is a boon to academic libraries.

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BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF AUTHOR

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