HR in Capacity Building of ODI Institute's Library

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Abstract

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system of education is becoming popular and receiving importance day by day as the scope and network spreads. The libraries belong to these institutions have been playing a vital role in fulfillment of its objective. Libraries are considered indispensable in every part of higher education. With the expansion of ICT, it has faced challenges. Only a well-trained professional staff can manage and utilize it to the benefit of user community. It is the manpower along with ICT which can build the libraries of ODL system, be it within the walls or without wall, and make the ODL system a meaningful one and successful throughout the nation. This paper discusses about the libraries belong to open and distance learning institutions (ODL) along with the services they provide, usage of ICT, staff strength etc. for good handling and better utilization of ICT and make the library efficient and user oriented. Effective library support to distance learners is mandatory for qualitative delivery of instruction and learning.

Keywords: ODL System, Capacity Building, Human Resource, ICT

1. Introduction

Beginning in early 60s in India, the Open and Distance Leaning (ODL) system has made a great performance in providing the educational opportunities to the masses. With the objective of equality (opportunity) and uniformity, it has gained the acceptance all over India. More than 42 million students have enrolled in the ODL system to continue their higher studies simultaneously with their occupation. It opens up a great chance to accomplish their goal, perform their ability in a better way and lead them to the door of knowledgeable world.

In India, there are about fourteen State Open Universities, one National Open University i.e.,Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) established in 1985 and 200 dual mode distance learning institutions which caters 25 percent of student in

higher education. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institutions in India use technology like multimedia technology, mobile technology, satellite technology and internet based environment for teaching and learning. Some dual mode corresponding institutions are using print technology and face to face tutoring.

In Assam, IGNOU has two Regional Centres, one at Guwahati and another recently opened at Jorhat in 2013. Under these two regional centres, it has more than 25 study centres. There is one State Open University i.e. Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU) with more than 220 study centres in different colleges of Assam and also in three jails i.e., Guwahati, Jorhat and Dibrugarh where prisoners can study free of cost. It offers various programmes like post-graduate, graduate, diploma, certificate, vocational course etc. Almost all the State Universities (general) including Tezpur Central Uni-

versity have their distance education centres which facilitate quality education to a large number of distance learners. Institute of Distance and Open Learning (IDOL) under Gauhati University has more than 1 lakh student enrolment and offer 25 different postgraduate, diploma, certificate programmes.

2. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to bring out the picture of human resource utilization in the Libraries of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institutions for capacity building of the libraries so that the very objective of distance learning institutions can be fulfilled to some extent. What is the present scenario of libraries belonging to these institutions, strength of professional staff employed, services/facilities provided, and extent of technology usage in the library etc. Role and responsibilities played by the library staff is very important for good delivery of library services to the distance learners, since these types of users need right direction with extra care due to their unconventional programme.

In today's digital environment, one can access e-resources from any location. Virtual library has changed the very concept of libraries, but we can't ignore a library within four walls. Learners from different rural and remote places will not have much access to technologies due to several limitations such as poor financial position, lack of network coverage, lack of operational skills etc. Therefore libraries attached to open and distance learning institutions should be well-equipped for both digital and manual environment. So the library personnel have to pay a great role to make the users access to the right piece of information. Because technology alone can do nothing, trained man power is also necessary to handle it. And human resources or man-

power development is the key requisite for capacity building in any organization.

3. Area of the Study

The study mainly covers the libraries of three Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institutions in Guwahati. They are –

3.1. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), Regional Centre, Guwahati. Under which there are four study centres- a) Gauhati University, b) Handiqui Girls' College, c) Govt. Banikanta College of Teacher Education and d) Teachers' Training College, Silchar. Later two are for B.Ed and M.Ed programmes. All four study centres have libraries, but they are not working properly. This study will not include these libraries.

3.2. Institute of Distance and Open Learning (IDOL) under Gauhati University

3.3. Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU).

All of them possess a good library attached to them.

4. Capacity Building: Definition

According to UNDP, capacity building can be defined as "a long-term continual process of development that involves all stockholders; including ministries, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, professionals, community members, academics and more. Capacity building uses a country's human, scientific, technological, organizational, and institutional and resource capabilities."

The goal of capacity building is to tackle problems related to policy and methods of development, while considering the potential, limits and needs of the

people of the county concerned.The UNDP outlines that capacity building can take place at individual, institutional and societal levels.

5. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Institutions in Guwahati:

There are good communications to reach all the three institutions. All the three institutions under study offer library facility to their patrons. They possess library from its inception though it was not in a full-fledged form. It seems from table below that IGNOU and IDOL library has completed more than fifteen years, whereas Central Library, KKHSOU is running on its ninth year.

The following table shows their address, name of the library along with their working hours and is arranged according to the year of establishment –

Table 1: Name of the institutions with address, year of establishment, name of the library & their working hours

Sl. No.	Name of Institution	Yr.of Estd.	Address	Name of the Library	Working Hours
1.	IGNOU, Regional Centre, Guwahati	1996	Christian Basti, Ghy– 5	IGNOU, Regional Centre, Guwahati Library	9.30am-5.30pm (every Mon to Fri)
2.	IDOL	1998	GNB Road, Jalukbari, Ghy– 14	IDOL Library	10am-5pm (all working days) 10am-4pm (every Sun)
3.	KKHSOU	2005	Head office: Patgaon, Rani Gate, Ghy–17	Central Library, KKHSOU	10 am-5pm (except every 1st, 3rd Sat & Wed)

6. Collection Available

The size of the collection, both printed and non-printed is not very large in IGNOU and IDOL library. Since Self Learning Material (SLM) has been provided to all students, the documents available are for reference only. IDOL and KKHSOU libraries have subscribed good number of printed magazines and journals of both national and international. IDOL library provide access to subscribed e-resources in full text and bibliographic databases and open access e-resources like e-journals, e-books, e-theses & dissertations. Central Library, KKHSOU has managed the Open Journal Access Search Engine (OJASE) where user can search the open access e-journals subject-wise. However magazines and journals in IGNOU library are supplied by the head office, New Delhi. Good number of local and national newspapers are available in all the three libraries.

Table: 2

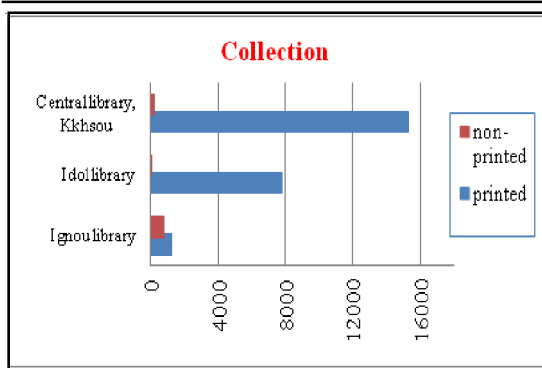| Sl. No.	Name	Collection	
		Printed	**Non-printed**
1.	IGNOU Library	1200	800
2.	IDOL Library	7549	36
3.	Central Library, KKHSOU	15300	176

Figure: 1

7. Services / Facilities offered

It is not easy for an open and distance learning institute's library to facilitate issue/return facility due to vast strength of users from variety of courses. Thus, IGNOU Library does not provide issue/return service. But they provide information to any query of the student from their Central Library, Head office, New Delhi. They make available access to the collection of Central Library by helping them to get membership and log in to the library e-resources. IDOL library restricts their lending service only for teaching staff. And Central Library, KKHSOUprovides circulation service to teaching, non-teaching and research scholars only. It has the e-search engine link coincide with library where distance learners can browse open access e-journals in their respective subject via internet. The Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institutions located in Guwahati mainly offer the following services/facilities in their libraries.

Services/facilities

Table: 3

Sl. No.	Name	Services Available
1.	IGNOU Library	Reading room, Reference & Information,Reprographic
2.	IDOL Library	Circulation(restricted to teachers only), Reading room, Reference& Information,Internet based service (E-resources),Reprographic
3.	Central Library, KKHSOU	Circulation (restricted to teachers, staff & research scholars only), Reading room, Digital Library, Reference & Information, Reprographic, Scanning, Printing

8. Usage of ICT

The following table has displayed the best practices of ICT in the libraries of Open and Distance Learning in Guwahati.

Status of ICT usage

Table: 4

Sl. No	Practices of ICT	IGNOU Library	IDOL Library	Central Library KKHSOU
1.	Software	No	SOUL 2.0	SOUL 2.0
2.	Barcode	No	Yes	Yes
3.	RFID	No	No	Processing
5.	OPAC	No	Yes	Yes
4.	Internet	Yes	Yes	Yes
5.	Library website/link	No	www.idolgu.in /IDOL_library	Yes
6.	Social networking Page/group	No	No	No
7.	Blog	No	No	Yes
8.	Web portal	No	No	Yes
9.	Others	No	No	No

Except IGNOU library, IDOL library and Central library, KKHSOU are using SOUL 2.0 library software since 2009 and 2010 respectively. And both have library link in their institution website. However, Central Library, KKHSOU introduces e-search

engine (*www.oajse.com*) which coincides with its library link provided for free browsing of open access e-journals all over the world according to subject.

9. Human Resource

Human Resource is the main factor for any kind of development, be it an industry, firm, or other organization. So is the case of a library since it is also an organization. Human capacity means the capability of individuals to perform a task to achieve the desired goals. Professional skill and expertise of a librarian is the key to the improvement of library services rendered for its users. The following table shows the total professional staff awarded with PhD, M. Phil & NET in the profession and number of semi-professional & non-professionals engaged in the library. Central Library, KKHSOU has the highest number of library personnel, i.e. four.

Table: 5: Library staff with qualification

Sl. No.	Name	Professional				Semi-professional	Non-professional
		Ph. D with NET	M.Phil	NET	Total		
1.	IGNOU Library	Nil	Nil	Nil	1-Semi Professional Astt. (SPA)	Nil	Nil
2.	IDOL Library	Nil	Nil	Nil	1-Librarian i/c 1-Library Astt.	Nil	1 (library bearer)
3.	Central Library,KKHSOU	1- (Astt. Librarian)	Nil	1 - Library Trainee	2	Nil	2 (library bearer)

From the above figures, it is revealed that the professional manpower engaged in the libraries of Open and Distance Learning institutions is not adequate corresponding to the strength of the distance learners it covers throughout the state and outside the state. The professional qualification is limited to post-graduate degree in both IGNOU and IDOL Library. However, the librarian i/c of IDOL Library is pursuing his Ph.D. On the other hand, Central Library, KKHSOU has two professional staff qualified with UGC NET, and one of them got PhD awarded.
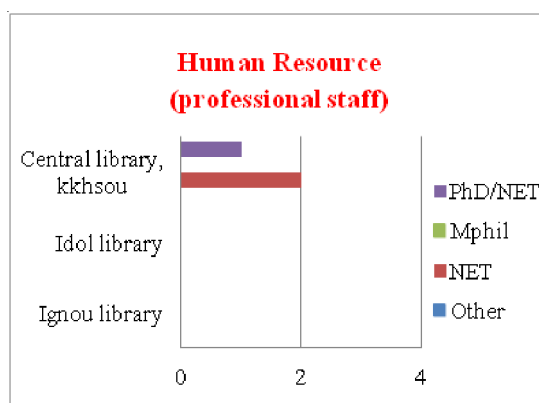
Figure: 2

IGNOU Head Office in New Delhi organizes training programmes, workshops from time to time for the library staff working in different Regional Centres to strengthen their professional competencies so that they can deliver better services to the distance learners. Central Library, KKHSOU has also been organizing various training programmes, workshops on library website design, library software etc. for professionals working in different parts of the state.

10. Future Plan

10.1. IGNOU Library

A proposal is under consideration to shift the IGNOU Regional Centre, Guwahati to a new site near IITG at North Guwahati where there will be provision for separate building for library with more resources and better services. Also IGNOU library is going to set up a computer section soon with internet facility for access to e-resources. Recently there is an increase in budget of Regional Centres from 25 to 50 percent for library book purchase. Thus library will be made available with rich and vast collection to cater its users' need.

10.2. IDOL Library

The IDOL library is planning for digital library. Also preparing for library blog for its user community so that the library can approach the distance learners efficiently and effectively.

10.3. Central Library, KKHSOU

The Central Library, KKHSOU is working on Institutional Repository which will be available at website: *www.kkhsouknowledgehub.in*. Moreover, it is working on RFID installation inside the library.

11. Suggestion

Following are some reasonable suggestions for improving the library services in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institutions –

11.1. There should be provision for separate building for library in the institutions with all necessary facilities.

11.2. Adequate and skilled manpower should be engaged in both professional and non-professional category.

11.3. Library must open on all week days. Working hours should be extended so that distance learners can find time from their unconventional schedule to visit the library according to their convenience.

11.4. There should be a library website/link, pages/ groups in social networking site that offers current information at least cost and keeps users updated about recent activities, events, new arrivals, and new services introduced etc.

11.5. There should be regular meet, talk, training programmes, workshops etc. among library staff for improved and healthier service.

12. Conclusion

In the age of information explosion and ICT where in every second new information comes up, the libraries of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institutions should take good care in rendering the library services to its specific category of user community. They should keep themselves ready for new innovation and technology promotion in the libraries. Good utilization of ICT inside the library must be experienced with skilled professionals. Digital library, free internet access must be implemented to

take the advantage of e-resources. A librarian, to function successfully, must be flexible to update his/her skills with ever-changing technology.

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