Library Automation in the College Libraries of Barpeta District in Assam: A Case Study

Kishor Sarma

[1]*Librarian, B.H.College, Howly, Assam - 781 316, India*
E-mail: sarma_kishor@rediffmail.com

Abstract – **Automation of the library change the total functioning of the library system, as it helps to keep the library professionals update in their activities. Automation condition of college libraries of Barpeta District are very initial stage. This paper discusses various issues related for the automation of college libraries of Barpeta District in Assam and find out its barriers and also to suggest some means for the development of college libraries through automation activity.**

Keywords: **Automation, Library**

I. INTRODUCTION

The world is moving fast towards the digitization of information resources and subsequently, libraries are preparing to use Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to provide information comprehensively to its clients. Libraries of today are being necessarily applying electronic devices to develop their services in one way or another. A library or information centres cannot be visualize without ICT application in an information age. As such library automation is one of the fundamental elements for the development of library and information centres of today. "Library Automation" may refer to the computerization of library activities to provide effective services to the users.

Barpeta district is the centre of Vaishnava Culture. The Neo-Vaishanavite movement gained wonderful momentum at Barpeta in 15th century under the leadership of Sankardeva and his disciple Mahapurush Madhabdeva. Thus it is the well known centre of vaishnava education and culture from 15th century. From the days of inception of Vaishanavaism the Namghar and Satras are functioning as the centre of culture and education. All kind of religious books are preserved in the Namghars and Satras. Besides religious propagation, these Satras serve as a centre of cultural activities. Here, both literates and illiterates were assembled to get the message of Satras. Thus the Namghars and Satras are used as the libraries by the religious minded people. But due to diversity of information needs of the people, the necessity of library as a separate institute has emerged in due course of time.

A. Prerequisites for Library Automation

Library automation demands the following prerequisites:

1. Willingness of the library committee and librarian.

2. Adequate finance.

3. Proper planning.

4. Hardware requirement, such as PC, UPS, Scanner, Printer, Storage media, etc.

5. Software requirement, such as operating system, system software, application software, etc.

6. Human ware, such as trained staff or manpower.

B.Areas of Automation

With the application of ICT in the area of libraries there has been tremendous improvement in the library services offered to the users by the libraries. Following are the main areas of library automation:

1. Library management.

2. Library house keeping operation, and

3. Information retrieval System

II. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Barpeta District comprises a geographical area of 3245 square kilometers with over 16 Lakh populations. The total number of literate population is 918,708, of which 512,330 are male and 406,378 are female. Literacy rate total 65.03 % where 70.72 % is male and 59.04% is female. At Barpeta, more than 80% of total population depends upon Agriculture and more than 95% live in rural areas. There are altogether 14 colleges in this district and the present study covers various issues related to library automation of college libraries of Barpeta District.

III. METHODOLOGY

The following methods are used for conducting the study:

1. Questionnaire method

2. Survey method

3. Observation method

IV. COLLEGE OF BARPETA DISTRICT

There are fourteen provincialise colleges in different places of Barpeta district in Assam. Most of the colleges of Barpeta district are in rural areas. Madhab Choudhari

TABLE I NAME OF THE COLLEGE LIBRARY WITH ADDRESS AND ESTABLISHMENT

Sl. No.	Name of the Library	Name of the College	Year of Established	Address
1	Kameswar das library	Madhab choudhary college	1939	Barpeta
2	Bajali college Library	Bajali college	1955	Pathsala
3	Barnagar college library	Barnagar college	1962	Sarbhog
4	B.H. College library	B.H. College	1966	Howly
5	Bapujee college Library	Bapujee college	1970	Sarthebari
6	Madhya kamrup college Library	Madhya kamrup college	1971	Chenga
7	Nabajyoti college library	Nabajyoti college	1971	Kalgachi
8	Bhawanipur Hastinapur Bijni college library	Bhawanipur Hastinapur Bijni College	1973	Sarupeta
9	Central library	Barpeta Girls College	1978	Barpeta
10	Hridaya-Nandan puthivaral	B.B.K college	1979	Nagaon
11	North-kamrup college library	North –kamrup college	1979	Baghmara
12	Central library	Nirmal Haloi college	1979	Patacharkuchi
13	Bhawanipur Anchalik college library	Bhawanipur Anchalik College	1982	Bhawanipur
14	Central library	Mandia Anchalic College	1981	Mandia

College is the oldest college of Barpeta district which was established before independent in 1939. The condition of the college Library of Barpeta district is not so good. There are lots of problem which is faced by the college libraries of Barpeta district. However, the study is limited to 10 colleges of the District.

Collections of any type of library reflect the types of services offered by the library to its reader. A balance collection selected on a judicious basis is a must to offer the appropriate service by the library. The college libraries have to acquire a wide variety of learning materials both in printed and non-printed forms. The Table II shows the

collection of different college libraries of Barpeta. It reveals that the collection of MC College has highest collection and NH College has the least collection. The table further reveals that 4 colleges are having non-printed material like CD-ROMs, DVD-ROMs, VCD, etc.

The colleges under the studies are having library facilities of different levels. The traditional services such as issue and return and reference service being common to most of the colleges a few of them are initiating the library automation to provide different modern information services to the users. The table III reveals the different services being offered by the colleges of Barpeta.

TABLE II LIBRARY COLLECTION

S.No.	Name of College	Collection		
		Printed	Non-Printed	Total
1	B.H. College	35299	20	35319
2	Bajali college	33875	------	35319
3	Bapujee college	13150	4	13154
4	Bhawanipur Anchalik college	35525	------	35525
5	Barpeta girls college	10022	1	10023
6	B.B.K collegea	16168	------	16168
7	M.C. college	47814	200	48014
8	Madhya kamrup college,Chenga	24942	------	24942
9	North-kamrup college	10005	------	10005
10	Nirmal Haloi College	9803	-------	9803

TABLE III SERVICES OF COLLEGE LIBRARIES

Sl. No.	Name of Colleges	IL	Book Bank	CAS	SDI	Internet	Reprography
1	B.H.College	----	Yes	-----	------	Yes	Yes
2	Bajali College	----	Yes	-----	-----	Yes	Yes
3	Bapujee College	----	Yes	-----	-----	Yes	Yes
4	Bhawanipur Anchalic college	----	Yes	Yes	-----	Yes	Yes
5	NH College	----	Yes	-----	------	-------	Yes
6	Barpeta girls College	----	Yes	-----	------	Yes	Yes
7	BBK College	----	Yes	-----	------	Yes	Yes
8	MC College	----	Yes	-----	------	Yes	Yes
9	Madhya kamrup college	----	Yes	-----	------	------	Yes
10	North-kamrup College	----	Yes	------	------	Yes	Yes

Automation is a process to make a system automated, i.e. self active. For this the electronic machine are used to automate the libraries. This covers usually all the housekeeping operations, acquisition, serial control, cataloguing, circulation, reference, etc. Library automation is a process that brought and will continue to bring profound changes to the library world, in terms of both technology and the involvement of people. Library automation refers to the processing of routine clerical function of the library with the assistance of computer or other mechanized or automation equipments. Actually it is nothing but the application of computer to the library operation.

From table IV it is seen that out of 10 College libraries, 5 college libraries are using SOUL software, while one college library is using locally developed software.

TABLE IV SOFTWARE USED

Sl. No.	Name of the Colleges	Library Software used
1	B.H.College	--------
2	Bajali college	SOUL
3	Bapujee college	SOUL
4	Bhawanipur Anchalik college	SOUL
5	Barpeta girls college	BOOK BANK
6	BBK college	--------
7	MC college	SOUL
8	Madhya kamrup college	--------
9	North-kamrup college	--------
10	Nirmal Haloi college	SOUL

There are various areas in automating a library which needs systematic plan and work for smooth and accurate information. The areas of automation taken up by the libraries is shown in the table V.

Barriers faced by the college libraries of Barpeta District in regard to library automation are shown below in a table format to present better clarity (Table VI).

TABLE V AREAS OF QUTOMATION

Areas	Bajali College	Bapuji College	Bhawanipur Anchalik College	Barpeta Girls College	M.C College	Nirmal Haloi College
Administration						
Acquisition						
Cataloguing	√	√	√	√	√	√
Circulation	√					
Serial Control						
Budget						
OPAC						

Success of Library Automation is mainly depend upon the professional staff having better computer knowledge. There are only single professionals in most of College

Library of Barpeta district i.e 8 college libraries have only one professional staff and only 2 libraries have 2professional staff.

TABLE VI BARRIERS IN AUTOMATION

Barrier	No. of Libraries
Insufficient fund	1 (10%)
Less Interest from Authority	3 (30%)
No Adequate Infrastructure	2 (20%)
Lack of Qualified staf	4 (40%)
Total	10

TABLE VII MANPOWER FOR LIBRARY AUTOMATION

Sl. No.	Name of the College	Professional	Non-professional	Total
1	B.H. College	1	3	4
1	Bajali College	1	3	4
3	Bapujee College	2	2	4
4	Bhawanipur Anchalik College	1	2	3
5	Barpeta Girls college	1	1	2
6	BBK College	1	2	3
7	M.C College	2	3	5
8	Madhya kamrup College	1	3	4
9	North-kamrup College	1	2	3
10	Nirmal Haloi College	1	3	4

V. Suggestions

1. In view of the tremendous development in the field of ICT, the professionals must undertake library automation in an effective way.

2. The colleges of Barpeta district should take the library automation in a systematic way.

3. Authority should not hesitate to encourage the librarian for undertaking library automation, as the prices of computer hardware as well as software are quite affordable by the college authority. Besides INFLIBNET is also giving financial support for this purpose.

4. Librarian and other professionals should visit any developed computerized libraries to have better idea and to train the staff of the library.

5. The library professionals should take the job of library automation in a challenging way and prove themselves to be real partner in the academic process of the library users.

6. The library professional should undertake library users' education to make the users aware of the emerging services offered by the library.

VI. Conclusion

A computer has its own advantages and libraries of today will have to take its help. To manage a computerized library is a complex task. To ease this situation a number of library management systems are available to manage the library and information services. College libraries as centre of educational information resources are neglected for very long time. As the world is being fast moving towards information generation, it needs to develop our libraries by taking latest ICT infrastructure to meet the challenges.

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