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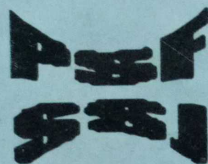# PSF
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Status of Library Automation in the College Libraries of Assam: A Survey of Bongaigaon and Goalpara District

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[**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to investigate the status of automation and the major barriers of automation in the college libraries of Assam. The study covers all the colleges under section 2(f) & 12(B) of the UGC Act 1956, which are located within Bongaigaon and Goalpara District of Assam. Survey method, based on collection of data through a questionnaire, was followed. Among the Nine College libraries, taken under this study, no library is fully automated. Six libraries are partially automated and three are yet to start automation process. Libraries partially automated, started its automation after 2007. These libraries are found improved in its functions and usage after automation started. Lack of skilled manpower, lack of time and lack of technology are the major barriers of automation for all the surveyed libraries. This paper is unique in its findings, about the status of automation in college libraries of Assam, with special reference to Bongaigaon and Goalpara Districts.

Key words : *Library Automation, College library, Assam*]

Introduction

The word "automation" has been derived from the Greek word "automose" means something, which has power of spontaneous motion or self-movement. The term "automation" was first introduced by D.S. Harder in 1936, who was then with General Motor Company in the U.S. He used the term automation to mean automatic handling of parts between progressive production processes. Automation is technology of automatic working in which the handling method, the process and design of professional material are integrated. We are living in the age of technology. Technologies are being used in every field of life to make our life more comfortable. The field of library is not the exception. To increase the efficiency and effectiveness of library functions and services, library automation has been introduced. Library automation in India was started in the late 1970s in few specialized libraries. Of course, today it has reached most of the academic libraries. Mechanization of library house-keeping operations predominantly by computers is known as library automation (Gove, 1986). According to Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science, "automation is the technology concerned with the design and development of process and system that minimize the necessity of human intervention in operation" (Kent, 1977). Thus, library automation is the appli-

cation of computer and communication technologies in library services.

Objectives of the Study

The study is motivated with the following primary objectives -

- To find out how many libraries have undertaken automation.
- To find out which areas are automated.
- To find out whether sufficient staff is available to carry out automation.
- To find out the major problems in library automation.

Methodology

The study covers all the colleges under section 2(f) & 12(B) of the UGC Act 1956, which are located within Bongaigaon and Goalpara District of Assam. It is a survey based study using a structured questionnaire as a data collection tool. The address of institutions in the area was collected from the UGC website. A short structured questionnaire was distributed among the librarians of the concerned colleges.

Scope of the Study

The study is limited to the following Nine Colleges of Bongaigaon and Goalpara District of Assam, affiliated with Gauhati University which are under section 2(f) & 12(B) of the UGC Act 1956.

- Abhayapuri College, Abhayapuri, Bongaigaon
- Birjhora Mahavidyalaya, Bongaigaon.
- Bongaigaon College, Bongaigaon
- Dudhnoi Colege, Dudhnoi, Goalpara
- Goalpara College, Goalpara
- Lakhipur College, Lakhipur, Goalpara
- West Goalpara College, Ambari, Balarbhita, Goalpara
- Habraghat College, Krishnai, Goalpara.
- Bikali College, Dhupdhara, Goalpara

Analysis

The data have been analyzed and interpreted according to the objectives of the study. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the analysis of data. All the seven libraries visited personally responded, with a response rate of 100%.

General Information of the Colleges

The table I shows the basic information of the colleges taken under this study.

Name of the Colleges	Place	Yr of Est.	Website	NAAC Rank
Abhayapuri College	Abhayapuri, Bongaigaon	1955	www.abhayapuricollege.org/	B (2004)
Birjhora Mahavidyalaya	Bongaigaon	1986	http://birjhoramahavidyalaya.org/	B (2004)
Bongaigaon College	Bongaigaon	1964	www.bongaigaoncollege.ac.in/	B+(2004)
Dudhnoi Colege	Dudhnoi, Goalpara	1972	http://dudhnoicollege.org/	B (2004)
Goalpara College	Goalpara	1955	www.goalparacollege.org/	B (2011)
Lakhipur College	Lakhipur, Goalpara	1981	-	B (2005)
West Goalpara College	Ambari, Goalpara	1981	-	B (2005)
Habraghat College	Krishnai, Goalpara	1979	Under construction	C++
Bikali College	Dhupdhara, Goalpara	1982	www.bikalicollege.org	C++

Table: I

General Information of the Libraries

The table II shows the basic information of the libraries taken under this study.

Name of the Colleges	Knowledge Resources	Number of users	Number of Staff	Nature	Lib Hour	Separate Lib Building
Abhayapuri College	25,157	2400	4	Open Access	9am to 4pm	No
Birjhora Mahavidyalaya	50,000	466	3	Open Access	9.30am- 5pm	No
Bongaigaon College	43, 372	3033	5	Open Access	8am to 5pm	Yes
Dudhnoi Colege	20,531	2320	2	Open Access	9am to 4pm	No
Goalpara College	45,522	2556	5	Open Access	9am to 4pm	No
Lakhipur College	12,173	524	2	Open Access	9.30am to 4pm	Yes
West Goalpara College	22,000	1045	3	Open Access	9am to 4pm	No
Habraghat College	14,575	931	2	Open Access	9am to 4pm.	No
Bikali College	13,856	2061	3	Open access	9am. To 4pm.	Yes

Table: II

General Information of the Librarians

Table III displays that majority of the librarians are female, professionally qualified, computer literate and having 10 to 20 years of working experiences.

Name of the Colleges	Gender	Age Group	Qualification	Computer Literacy	Working Experience	E-mail ID
Abhayapuri College	F	26-30	MLIS	Basic	3yrs	Yes
Birjhora Mahavidyalaya	M	51-55	MA, BLIS	Basic	23yrs	Yes
Bongaigaon College	F	46-50	MSc, MLIS	BCA	21yrs	Yes
Dudhnoi Colege	Vacant	-	-	-	-	-
Goalpara College	F	41-45	MLIS, MPhil	Basic	19yrs	Yes
Lakhipur College	F	51-55	MSc, BLIS	Basic	21yrs	No
West Goalpara College	F	46-50	MA, MLIS	Basic	19yrs	No
Habraghat College	M	26-30	B.Sc, MLISc M.Phil	ADCA	6-10 Yrs	Yes
Bikali College	F	31-35	BLISc, MA	Basic	21-25 yrs	Yes

Table: III

Technical Processing

Table IV presents that all the libraries are maintaining accession registers, and are using Dewey Decimal Classification scheme for classification of documents and AACR 2 for cataloguing. Moreover, majority of the libraries are still using card catalogue.

Name of the Colleges	Accession Register	Classification Scheme	Cataloguing Code
Abhayapuri College	Yes	DDC	AACR2
Birjhora Mahavidyalaya	Yes	DDC	AACR2
Bongaigaon College	Yes	DDC	AACR2
Dudhnoi Colege	Yes	DDC	AACR2
Goalpara College	Yes	DDC	AACR2
Lakhipur College	Yes	DDC	AACR2
West Goalpara College	Yes	DDC	AACR2
Habraghat College	Yes	DDC- 19th	AACR2
Bikali College	Yes	DDC-22nd	AACR2

Table: IV

Availability of Technology

Table V explains that majority of the libraries are using computer and communication technologies in the libraries. Moreover, some libraries are having CCTV cameras and scanners. But, no library is using Barcode or RFID technologies.

Name of the Colleges	Computer	Server	Scanner	Internet	Barcode	CCTV
Abhayapuri College	3	1	1	Yes	No	1
Birjhora Mahavidyalaya	8	1	0	Yes	No	0
Bongaigaon College	3	1	0	Yes	No	5
Dudhnoi Colege	-	-	-	-	-	-
Goalpara College	6	1	0	Yes	No	0
Lakhipur College	0	0	0	No	No	0
West Goalpara College	0	0	0	No	No	0
Habraghat College	2	0	1	No	No	0
Bikali College	2	2	0	Yes	No	0

Table: V

Traditional Library Services

Table VI describes that all the libraries are providing reference and circulation services. Majority of the libraries are conducting orientation programmes to fresher's and providing reprographic services in the library. Very less libraries are providing information literacy ad current awareness services. No library is providing inter-library loan, document delivery, news paper clipping and bibliographic services.

Name of the Colleges	Reference	CAS	Bulletin Board	Inf. Literacy	Library Orientation	Reprographic
Abhayapuri College	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Birjhora Mahavidyalaya	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Bongaigaon College	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Dudhnoi Colege	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Goalpara College	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Lakhipur College	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
West Goalpara College	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Habraghat College	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Bikali College	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes

Table: VI

Electronic Library Services

Table VII shows that very less libraries are providing Internet service and e-books, e-journals through the National Library and Information Services infrastructure for Scholarly Content (N-LIST) programme under INFLIBNET.

Name of the Colleges	Internet	N-LIST	E-Book	E-Journal
Abhayapuri College	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Birjhora Mahavidyalaya	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bongaigaon College	Yes	No	No	No
Dudhnoi Colege	-	-	-	-
Goalpara College	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lakhipur College	No	No	No	No
West Goalpara College	No	No	No	No
Habraghat College	No	No	No	No
Bikali College	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table: VII

Library Automation and Networking

Table VIII shows the picture of automation in the college libraries, covered in this study. In the table it is seen that majority of the colleges are partially automated. Moreover, Goalpara College has already completed its cataloguing part. Of course, Lakhipur College and West Goatpara College and Habraghat College have yet to start the automation process.

Name	Status of Automation	Automation Started	Automation to be Completed
Abhayapuri College	At the Initial Stage	2012	2015
Birjhora Mahavidyalaya	Partially Automated	2011	2014
Bongaigaon College	Partially Automated	2008	2016
Dudhnoi Colege	At the Initial Stage	-	-
Goalpara College	Partially Automated	2004	Completed
Lakhipur College	Not Yet Started	-	-
West Goalpara College	Not Yet Started	-	-
Habraghat College	Not Yet Started	-	-
Bikali College	Partially Automated	2007	No- comment

Table: VIII

Software Using for Automation

All the colleges started automation, are using SOUL 2.0 for library automation. All the librarians of these colleges have taken training on SOUL from INFLIBNET centre. According to them SOUL is very user-friendly and they are not facing any problem in handling this software. Moreover, they don't prefer any other automation software rather than SOUL2.0.

Status of Automated Areas in the Library

The table IX depicts that majority of the colleges started automation in cataloguing. Of course, Goalpara College has already completed its cataloguing process. Moreover, Goalpara College and Bongaigaon College are proving OPAC service to the users.

Name of the Colleges	Acquisition	Cataloguing	Circulation	Serial Control	OPAC
Abhayapuri College	No	Yes	No	No	No
Birjhora Mahavidyalaya	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Bongaigaon College	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dudhnoi Colege	-	-	-	-	-
Goalpara College	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Lakhipur College	No	No	No	No	No
West Goalpara College	No	No	No	No	No
Habrahgat College	No	No	No	No	No
Bikali College	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Table: IX

Changes in the Library Services after Automation Started

The following table proves that most of the libraries started automation have improved in library services after starting automation.

Name of the Colleges	Excellent	Very Good	Good	As Usual	Poor	No Comment
Abhayapuri College	-	-	-	√	-	-
Birjhora Mahavidyalaya	-	√	--	-	-	-
Bongaigaon College	-	-	√	-	-	-
Dudhnoi Colege	-	-	-	-	-	√
Goalpara College	-	-	√	-	-	-
Lakhipur College	-	-	-	-	-	√
West Goalpara College	-	-	-	-	-	√
Habraghat College	-	-	-	-	-	√
Bikali College	-	-	√	-	-	-

Table: X

Changes in the Library Usages after Automation Started

Table XI shows that most of the libraries started automation have seen improvement in library usages after starting automation.

Name of the Colleges	Excellent	Very Good	Good	As Usual	Poor	No Comment
Abhayapuri College	-	-	-	√	-	-
Birjhora Mahavidyalaya	-	√	-	-	-	-
Bongaigaon College	-	-	√	-	-	-
Dudhnoi Colege	-	-	-	-	-	-
Goalpara College	-	-	-	√	-	-
Lakhipur College	-	-	-	-	-	√
West Goalpara College	-	-	-	-	-	√
Habraghat College	-	-	-	-	-	√
Bikali College	√	-	-	-	-	-

Table: XI

Barriers of Automation

In the following table, it is seen that lack of Fund, Lack of skilled man-power, lack of time and lack of technology are the major barriers of automation for all the surveyed libraries.

Name of the Colleges	Lack of Funds	Lack of Man-Power	Lack of Time	Lack of Technology	Lack of Space
Abhayapuri College	-	√	√	√	√
Birjhora Mahavidyalaya	√	√	√	√	√
Bongaigaon College	-	√	√	-	√
Dudhnoi Colege	-	-	-	-	-
Goalpara College	-	√	-	-	-
Lakhipur College	√	√	-	√	-
West Goalpara College	√	√	-	√	-

Table: XII

Findings

Based on the analysis of the data collected, the following conclusions have been drawn with regard to status of library automation:

· All the libraries follow the open access system.

- Most of the libraries working hour is from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.
- Most of the colleges have no separate building for the library.
- None of the libraries is air-conditioned.
- Most of the libraries have more than 20,000 resources.
- All the libraries are using Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme for   classification and AACR2 for cataloguing.
- The majority of the libraries are still using card catalogue.
- Most of the librarians are professionally qualified, having at least MLISc Degree.
- All the librarians are computer literate.
- Majority of the librarians have 10 to 20 years of working experiences.
- Most of the librarians are attending seminars, conferences, workshops etc.
- The majority of the librarians felt that the staff members working in their libraries are not adequate to complete automation.
- All the libraries are providing reference and information services.
- Most of the libraries are conducting orientation programmes to freshers.
- The majority of the libraries are providing reprographic service
- Only three libraries are providing access to NLIST to their users.
- Very less libraries are providing information literacy and current awareness service.
- No library is providing inter-library loan, document delivery service, news paper clipping service, bibliographic service etc.
- No library is fully automated.
- Majority of the libraries are partially automated or just at the initial stage of automation.
- All the libraries are using SOUL 2.0 for automation.
- Majority of the librarians have got training on SOUL from INFLIBNET Centre.
- Majority of the librarian replied that they don't have any problem in handling the software.
- All the librarians replied that SOUL is user-friendly and they don't want any other software for library automation.
- Most of the librarians answered that they have found improvement in library services and library usage after starting automation.
- The main barrier of automation found here are lack of skilled man-power and lack of technology.

Conclusion

It is necessary to computerize the various operations in the library for retrieving information accurately and speedily. The study reveals that no library under this study is fully automated. The survey also indicates that majority of the libraries are partially automated or just at the initial stage of automation. Moreover, colleges like Lakhipur and West Goalpara are yet to start automation processes. The main reason behind this is lack of skilled man-power and lack of technology. Of course, almost all the librarians have formal training on the handling of library automation software, but s/he needs helping hand to complete the work within time. Hence, the authorities concerned, should take the necessary steps to provide outsourced staff for library automation. They should also take necessary steps to motivate library staff members to attend refresher courses, workshops, seminars and conferences relating to computer applications in libraries.

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