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A Survey of Library Automation in College Libraries in Goa State, India

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Introduction

We live in an information age, and libraries are expected to use Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to provide information more expeditiously and exhaustively than before. Computerization of library “housekeeping” operations is an important activity in this context. “Automation,” when used in a library or similar environment, refers to the computerization or mechanization of activities (Kumar, 1987; Harinarayana, 1991)

Background to the Study

Goa University is the sole university in the Goa state, and is located in Taleigao. There are three engineering colleges and one medical college in the state. The Goa Engineering College and Goa Medical College are run by the state, whereas the other two engineering colleges are run by private organisations. The private engineering colleges are Shree Rayeshwar Institute of Engineering and Information Technology, Shiroda, and Padre Conceicao College of Engineering, Verna. There are also colleges offering pharmacy, architecture, and dentistry, along with numerous private colleges offering law, arts, commerce, and science.

Library automation began in the late 1970s in a few special libraries and has now reached most of the university libraries. It has yet to take off in college libraries in India owing to various problems. Many studies on library automation have been undertaken in the West, but few have been undertaken in India. This paper tries to identify the status of library automation in college libraries of Goa State.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To find out how many libraries have undertaken automation.
2. To find out which areas are automated.
3. To find out whether sufficient staff is available to carry out automation.
4. To find out the barriers to automation faced by libraries.

Methodology

The present study is a survey using a structured questionnaire as a tool. The address of institutions in the area were collected through formal and informal sources. A short structured questionnaire was sent to these institutions.

Analysis

Forty-three questionnaires were sent to college libraries affiliated with Goa University. Thirty-six libraries responded, a response rate of 83.7%.

Designation of Librarians

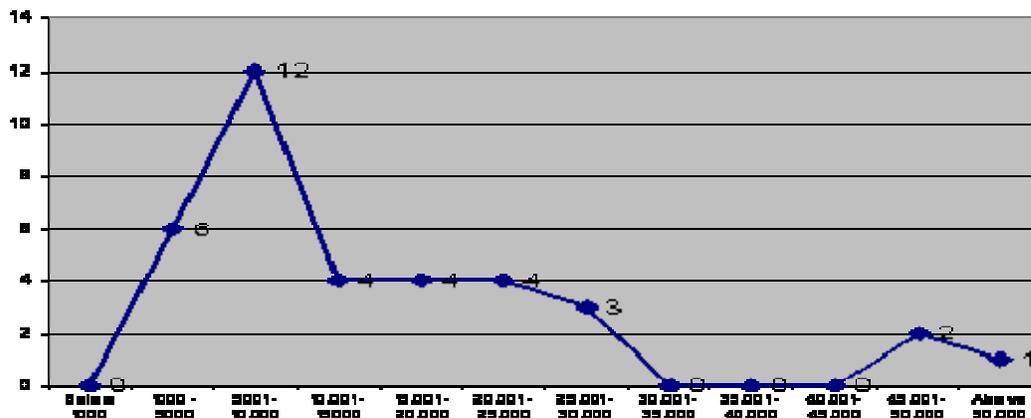
Twenty-eight (77.8%) of the college libraries are headed by a Librarian, while the remaining 8 (22.2%) are either headed by Assistant Librarians or by Non-professionals. This is generally owing the post of Librarian remaining unfilled by college administration.

Qualification of the Librarian

Twenty-three (63.9%) college librarians have a master's degree in library and information science; seven (19.4%) have a bachelor's of library and information science, and two (5.6%) have completed a certificate course in library science. Two (5.6%) have an M.Phil degree in another field, while one (2.8%) has a doctorate in library science, and one has no professional qualification in library science. Out of these 36 librarians only 6 (16.6%) have cleared their NET/SLET (National Eligibility Test/State Level Eligibility Test).

Total Collection of the Library

Figure No. 1. Total Collection of the Library



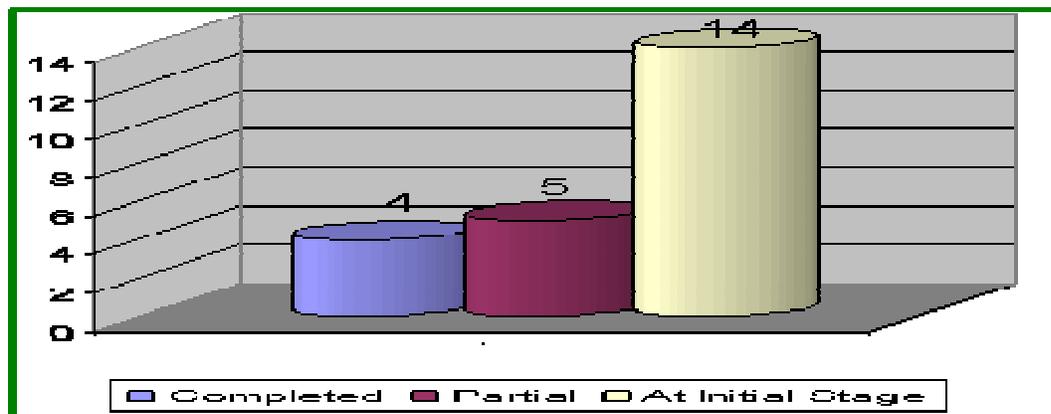
Twenty-two college libraries have a total collection below 15, 000, while 14 have developed a total collection above 16,000, 3 have a total collection above 45,000.

Library Automation

The data shows that 23 college libraries are automated. The 13 other libraries carry out their library operations manually and provide services to their users in a traditional way.

Status of Automation

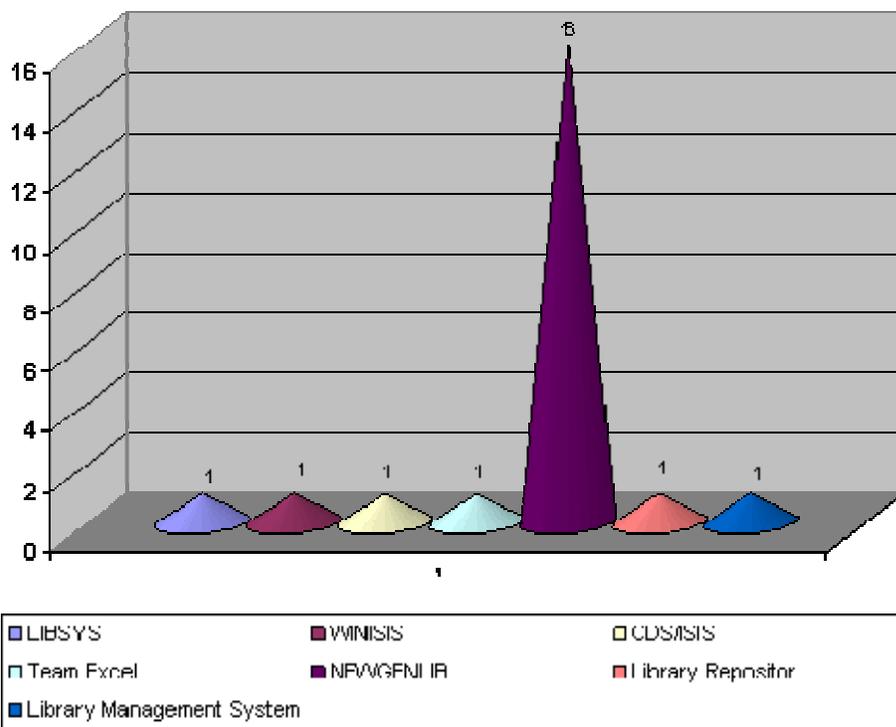
Figure No. 2. Status of Automation



The bar chart shows the status of library automation in the 23 college libraries that have undertaken automation. Of these, 14 are at the initial stage, 5 are partially automated, while only 4 are fully automated.

Software Used for Automation

Figure No. 3. Software used for Automation



The majority of college libraries in Goa state use NEWGENLIB, perhaps because Goa University Library uses it. NEWGENLIB supports all automation functions, and its cost is comparatively low. The Central Library of Goa University has installed the Networking/Consortium version of NEWGENLIB on its server. The plan is to build an Academic Library Network of the University and College libraries in Goa state.

Retrospective Conversion

Only 8 college libraries have completed retrospective conversion in the range of 95% to 100% of their total collection; followed by 4 college libraries completing this work in the range of 80% to 90%, while the remaining 11 libraries have completed their retrospective conversion in the range of 10% to 40%.

Areas for Automation

Table 1. Areas of automation

Areas	Neither Selected Nor Initiated	Selected	Initiated	Completed	Total
Acquisition	23	NIL	NIL	NIL	23
Cataloguing	NIL	6	8	9	23
Circulation	8	1	5	9	23
Serial Control	16	2	5	NIL	23
Budget	23	NIL	NIL	NIL	23
Administration	NIL	7	15	1	23
SDI	23	NIL	NIL	NIL	23
CAS	12	3	8	NIL	23
OPAC	2	4	15	2	23

The focus of the college libraries is on completion of retrospective conversion on computerized circulation. Nine college libraries have completed automation in cataloguing and circulation. Among the housekeeping operations, acquisitions is the least automated, perhaps because the acquisitions module of the software is complicated.

Outsourcing

None of the libraries surveyed are outsourcing their automation work to other agencies. They are trying to complete the work of automation with in the available resources in the library. Budgets can be one of the reasons that libraries are not outsourcing jobs such as data entry, generation of barcode labels, maintenance of hardware, etc.

Staffing

Sufficient staffing is essential. The required number of staff depends on the number of documents in the library and the number of library users. The following table shows the opinions of the librarians in the libraries that have automated on the sufficiency of staff.

Table 2. Sufficiency of Staff

Sufficient staff	Insufficient staff
4	19

Only four libraries out of 23 which have undertaken automation have sufficient staff.

Specialized Staff and Training

The following table shows the number of libraries which have recruited specialized ICT staff.

Table 3. ICT Specialized Staff

Specialized Staff	No Specialized Staff
1	22

Of the 23 libraries with automation, only one has specialized staff in ICT. These remaining 22 must depend on experts within or outside their college. A majority of the libraries surveyed do not send their staff to ICT training courses.

Intranet Services

Only 8 libraries have a LAN in the library to provide automated services in the library, and the services provided by these libraries are tabulated in the following table.

Table 4. Services provided

OPAC	CD-ROM Search	Internet	Online Database Search	CAS	SDI
07	04	08	07	01	02

Barriers Faced by the Library

Barriers to automation are tabulated in the following table.

Table 5. Barriers

Barrier	No. of Libraries
Insufficient funds	11
Inadequate staff training	22
Lack of staff coordination	06
Lack of user IT knowledge	10
Problems from higher authorities	02
Lack of space	12

Traditional barriers like insufficient funds, lack of space, and lack of training are the problems faced by many libraries.

Summary of Findings

- A majority of the college libraries do not possess qualified librarians as per the guidelines given by the UGC and the state government. Only 25% of the librarians are qualified for the librarian's position.
- Twenty-three college libraries have undertaken automation of the library.
- A majority of the libraries initiated their automation process in the year 2005 and 2006.

- Retrospective conversion of documents is a crucial activity in the process of automation. Very few college libraries have completed their retrospective activity.
- Libraries have focused on cataloguing and circulation.
- No libraries in the survey have done outsourcing of the work of automation.
- A majority of the libraries lack the staff required for automation.
- Goa state college libraries generally use the same library software used in Goa University, i.e., NEWGENLIB
- Traditional barriers such as insufficient funds, lack of trained staff, and lack of space are faced by a majority of the libraries.

Suggestions

- Colleges without qualified librarians should recruit them.
- Few college libraries are fully automated. The libraries in which automation has been initiated should try to become fully automated and the libraries in which automation is yet to start begin as soon as possible.
- Retrospective conversion of the documents and well as the other jobs related to automation may be outsourced to complete the automation of the library.
- Parent institutions should provide sufficient funds as per the norms given by Dr. S.R. Ranganathan (1965) or by Kothari commission (Gupta, 1992).
- Staff of the library should be sent to training courses to upgrade their IT Skills.

Conclusion

The status of automation in the colleges of Goa is similar to that of college libraries throughout India. Libraries, librarians, and college administrations must initiate automation in order to provide effective and efficient services to users. Library professionals must upgrade their skills in order to meet the growing expectations of users from libraries.

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