
College Library Automation in North East Region Using SOUL 2.0

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Abstract

Implementation of information and communication technology in the library has changed the working environment of college Libraries in the Country. There is no doubt about the fact that significant changes have taken place in libraries in the North Eastern Region too due to the application of information communication technology (ICT) in automated cataloguing, circulation systems etc. Most of the college libraries are using SOUL 2.0 software developed by INFLIBNET Centre for their library automation. The present paper is based on a survey undertaken by the author by selecting 5 college libraries each from 8 states of the North Eastern Region to understand the skills and competencies of the college librarians developed in the process and also providing efficient library and information services.

Keywords

Library Automation; College Librarian; North Eastern Region

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I. Introduction: There is a sea change taking place today in Library due to the impact of information and communication technology and its application of Computer in the Library works. We hear a lot of about Library Automation in College Library as well. Library Automation is nothing but application of machines such as Computers to the routine Library House Keeping operation like acquisition, serial control, cataloguing and circulation.

The Library plays an important role in Higher Educational institution, which is the hub of the teaching learning activities where students, researchers and teachers can explore relevant resources of Information. In the age of information communication technology, computers are being used for day – to – day Library works which save the time of users and the Library Professional, at the same time avoid duplication of works and make library service smooth and effective.

Nowadays, the information seeking behaviour of Library users has dynamically changed. They wanted relevant, authentic information very quickly within a short time. This concept has posed challenges for Library professionals for marching towards Library Automation.

The word Automation is derived from the Greek word, “automose”, which means something which is power of spontaneous motion or self-movement. The term was first used by D.S Harder in 1936.

1.1 Library Automation: In India, some Libraries and Information Centres made efforts to automate their library routine and information services in 1960's with punch card. After two decades, general computer was available at Kanpur and Bombay. INSDOC was the leader in experimenting with Computer for their application in documentation and information retrieval works in 1964.

In the Library scenario, Library Automation means using of Technical equipments such as Computer and internet accessibility, Printers, barcode scanner etc. in the Library. The automation of a Library pushes up the quality and standard level and time saving of user and staff.

Library Automation, Networking, Digitization and Website Development are fast changing towards improvement and quality of Library and Information services. With these automation and networking

activities, users get an easy access to large quantity of Library resources which consist of books, journals, research project, dissertation and thesis and many online e-resources. Therefore, it is imperative that libraries need to be automated fast so as to follow other operations and developmental activities. As told earlier, North East Region comprises eight states, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. The Library automation activities are changing very fast. Library professionals, Library authorities and Library users have realise its importance keeping in view the national and global scenario.

1.2 Library Management Software:

Several Library Management Software are available at International and national level, which are designed to manage different library routine work. Whereas users of the Library management software have different taste, popularity of the software also varied. Most of the software are integrated and have modules for the different activities or task carried out in the Library such as acquisition, cataloguing, circulation, serial control, administration and reports.

The Library management software is broadly divided into two by differencing in terms of money involved.

They are: Commercial software and Open source software.

1.3 Commercial Software: Commercial Software are generally designed and developed by reputed organization and firms. Many efforts and devotion by experts in the field of computer science and Library science are involved and hence it is more reliable for different woks carried out in the library. As the software is commercial, it requires paying the cost of the software. Many small libraries cannot afford to use due to financial constraints.

1.4 Open Source Software: Open source software for library management software is developed and designed towards public interest. It is available in the internet, downloadable freely by anyone. The source code and copyright can be obtained from the net, and it is freely allowed to be modified as per the users' convenience.

By clubbing together, some examples of the Library Management Software is mentioned in the proceeding table.

Table-1: Library Management Software

AGORA	GREENSTONE	MAITRYEE	SOUL
ALICE for windows	HINARY	MEMLIB	TINLIB
CDS/ISIS	ILM	MIDAS	TOTAL IT SOLUTION
DIGILIB	KOHA	NIRMAL	ULSIS
DOCUWARE	KULMARK	OARE	VIRTUA
EASYLIB	LABRARY PLUS	PALMS	VLTS
EDLS	LIBERTY 3	PHP My Library	WEBLIS
E-GRANTHALAYA	LIBINFO	PROTA/TEEAL	WINISIS
EGRARY	LIBSYS	SLIM	WYLISYS
GLAS	LMS	SOFTLINK	X-LIB

Source: <https://www.academia.edu.in>, <http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in>.

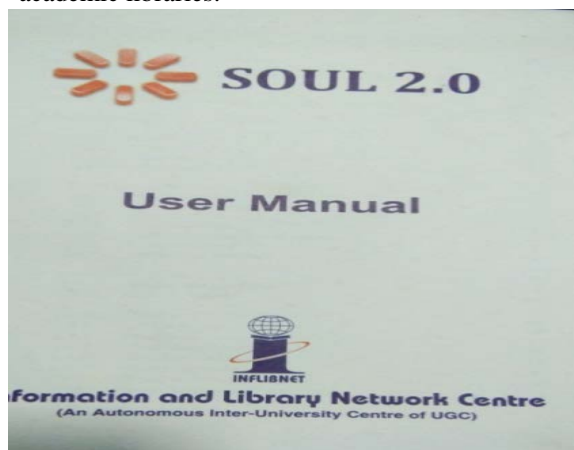
There must be other library management software available presently, of all these 40 numbers listed software, CDS/ISIS, GREENSTONE, and KOHA are open source software popular in the Indian context and of these, KOHA is mostly used by the Libraries as one private firm InKOHA, Kolkata based firm can provide service regarding customization as well as data migration works. Among the commercial software, LIBSYS, SOUL and TOTAL IT SOLUTION are commonly used in academic

libraries of India. Of them, SOUL developed by INFLIBNET, (an autonomous body of inter University Centre of UGC) is mostly used by the College libraries in India.

1.5 SOUL 2.0: Features:

Software for University Libraries (SOUL) is state-of-the-art integrated library management software

designed and developed by the INFLIBNET Centre based on necessary activity of College and University Libraries. It is a user-friendly software designed to work under client-server environment. SOUL 2.0 is compliant to international standards for bibliographic formats, networking and circulation protocols. On looking at the name of the SOUL, it looks suitable only of University library only, but it is nicely flexible enough to be used for automating all types of academic libraries.



The first version SOUL 1.0 was released during CALIBER 2000. The database of the SOUL 1.0 was designed on MS-SQL and was compatible with MS-SQL Server 7.0 or higher. The latest version SOUL 2.0 was designed for latest versions of MS-SQL and MySQL. SOUL 2.0 is compliant to international standards such as MARC 21 bibliographical format.

1.6 Library Automation scenario in North East India using SOUL 2.0:

The Library Automation scenario using SOUL 2.0 in the North East Region with special reference to College is steadily progressing. INFLIBNET Centre, Gandhinagar, Gujarat is the pilot agency for the development of Information and knowledge in the field of Library services.

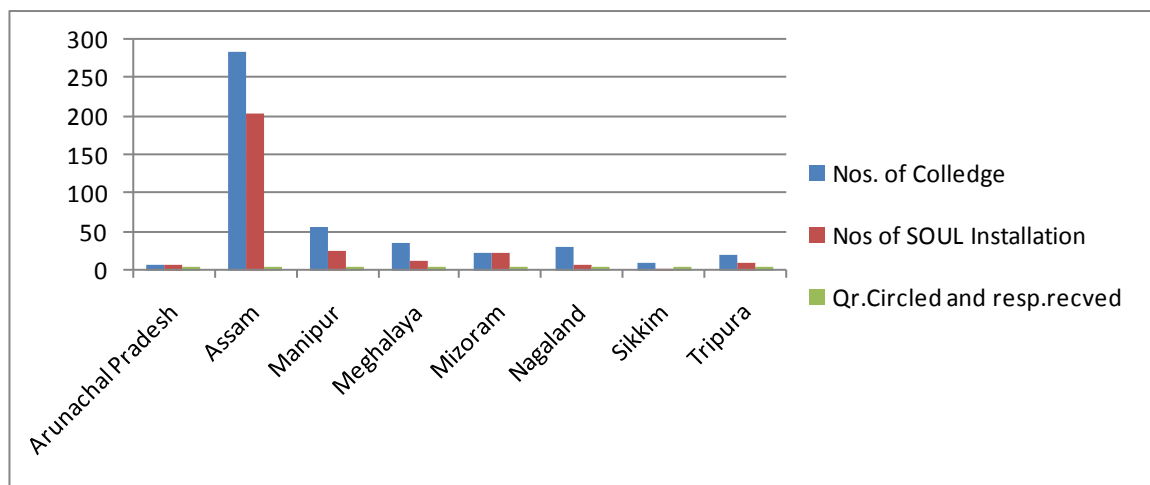
North Eastern Region comprising eight states is divided into two parts, four states in one group. To develop towards library automation using SOUL 2.0, INFLIBNET Centre appointed two SOUL Coordinators such as, North East I covering Assam, Meghalaya, Sikkim and Tripura. In the coverage area of **North East I** comprising 4 states, number of Colleges under Section 2(f) and 12B of UGC Acts, 1956, there are 350 colleges available, 230 Colleges are using SOUL 2.0 and the user percentage becomes 44.25.

Meanwhile, in the North East II covering Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland states, number of College available is 124 and number of SOUL users is 69 and the users' percentage becomes 64.5. In order to highlight an overview of Colleges in the North East Region, below mentioned table presents the total number of Colleges and their SOUL installation in the state-wise North East Region:

Table 2: Nos. of Colleges in North-east Region under section 2(f) and 12B of UGC Act 1956 and SOUL 2.0 installation status

SLNO	STATE	Nos. of College	No. of SOUL Installation	Questionnaire Circulated
1	Arunachal Pradesh	9	7	5
2	Assam	284	205	5
3	Manipur	56	25	5
4	Meghalaya	35	13	5
5	Mizoram	24	24	5
6	Nagaland	31	8	5
7	Sikkim	11	2	5
8	Tripura	20	10	5
	Total	470	294	40

Source : <https://www.ugc.ac.in>; <http://www.inflibnet.ac.in> - access on 10.4.2019



2 SOUL 2.0: Housekeeping Operation Modules:

SOUL 2.0 library management software has different Housekeeping operation modules according to their entity and nature. It has 6 main modules and various sub-modules as per area of operation. The SOUL 2.0 consists of the following modules. Each module has further been divided into sub-modules to cater to its functional requirements:

- 1) Acquisition
- 2) Catalogue
- 3) Circulation
- 4) OPAC
- 5) Serial Control
- 6) Administration

The in-built network feature of the software will allow multiple libraries of the same university to function together as well as access to the distributed databases installed at university libraries and union catalogue mounted at INFLIBNET using VSAT network.

2.1 Acquisition:

The first and important work which the Librarian has to do is Acquisition or procurement of books. Procedure for purchase of books is varied to one library to another. The module enables library staff to handle the entire major functions, such as:

- Suggestions Management;
- Order Processing, Cancellation and Reminders;
- Receipt, Payment and Budgetary control;
- Master files such as Currency, Vendors, Publishers etc.; and

- Reports.

2.2 Catalogue:

Catalogue module facilitates library staff to process of the newly acquired library resources. It also used for retrospective conversion of library resources. During the period of traditional library service, cataloging service was done manual and hand written. Modern library management software likes SOUL allowed printing of Catalogue cards in AACR2 format. The strong features of catalogue module are follows:

- Allows cataloguer to create their own templates for data entry of different library resources;
- Different templates for leaders and fixed fields of MARC21;
- Allows user-generated customized reports;
- Facilitates authority database of person name, corporate body, Subject headings and series name;
- Supports copy cataloguing in MARC21 format by using ISO-2709 standard;
- Master database of publishers;

2.3 Circulation:

This module takes care of all possible functions of circulation. Sufficient care has been taken in designing this module starting from membership management, maintenance and status of library items, transaction, ILL, overdue charges, renewals & reminders, search status and report generation according to the status of the items. The circulation module is fully compliant with the NISO Circulation

and Interchange Protocol (NCIP) version 2.0 as well as SIP2 for electronic surveillance and RFID based transaction of the items. Major functions of the circulation modules are:

- Membership;
- Transaction;
- Inter-library loan;
- Overdue charges;
- Reminder;
- Search status;
- Maintenance of the items such as binding, lost, replace, missing, withdrawal, etc.; and
- Report generation based on the various requirements.

2.4 On-line Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)

One of the major attractions of SOUL is its robust On-line Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). The OPAC has simple and advanced search facility with the minimum information for each item including author, title, corporate body, conference name, subject headings, keywords, class number, series name, accession number or combination of any of two or more information regarding the item. Major functions provided in the OPAC module are:

- Simple Search;
- Boolean Search;
- Advanced Boolean Search;
- Displaying and downloading of records in MS Excel, PDF or MARCXML; and
- Search support for the items that are in the acquisition process in the library.

2.5 Serial Control:

Managing serials is the most complicated job for a library. The module keeps track of serials in the library effectively and efficiently. The serial control module is developed based on the KARDEX system and the following functions built into it:

- Suggestions;
- Master databases;
- Subscriptions;
- Check-in of individual issues of journals;
- Payment, reminder, binding, and title history;
- Export / import by using ISO 2709 bibliographic exchange format;
- Article indexing of journal/book articles;
- Cataloguing of electronic journals; and
- Keeps track of the history changes of the journals.

2.6 Administration:

In addition to the features available in the Administration Module of the SOUL 1.0, some more features have been added to the administration module of the SOUL 2.0 as per inputs from the various SOUL users and requirements of the library staff. The module has been divided into three major sub-modules for accommodating the new features. These three sub-modules are User Management, System Parameters and Masters. The Administration Module provides the following:

- Grouping of users based on the policy;
- Transactional rights over the systems;
- Transaction level security to users;
- Various configuration settings such as labels, e-mail and other
- parameters related to the software use; and
- Common master databases being used in modules.

Here we can set rules and feed standard information for pre-defined entry needed for our LMS. Select Administration from the menu which, in turn, provides following options:

- 1) User Settings
- 2) System Settings
- 3) Acquisition Master
- 4) Catalogue Master
- 5) Circulation Master
- 6) Serial Master
- 7) General Master

3. Skills and competencies:

Installation and use of SOUL 2.0 by the College Libraries of North-Eastern Region have improved the skills and competencies of College Librarians and staffs on the key areas like:

- Acquisition
- Cataloguing
- Circulation
- Serial Control
- OPAC
- Administration.

The author of this paper conducted survey of 5 Libraries each from 8 North Eastern States (8x5=40) and based on my onsite visit and interaction with College Librarians, the following are the benefits of using SOUL 2.0.

1. Library Automation can be considered as one of the major criteria for the assessment of Institutional Library development.
2. Library Automation with bar-coding system helps the staff for less error in the circulation counter while doing issue and return of books.
3. Library computerization resulted time saving of users as well as staff.
4. Library Automation helps the staff to avoid repetitive works.
5. Creating user database and generating users' Identity card with the help of Library Automation help the staff for detection of unauthorised borrower. It also protected exceeding permitted number of books.
6. SOUL 2.0 is the most popular and most preferred Library Management software in North East Region.
7. INFLIBNET, the developer of SOUL software is the most reliable set-up body of Central Government in the Country who can organise periodic Training for the users. The developing scientists of SOUL are combination of Library Science as well as Computer Science.
8. It was known from the personnel discussion at the spot visit that College authority should give more importance to the quality development library as well as personnel development.
9. It is highly appreciable if the INFLIBNET Centre makes sanction for organising INFLIBNET Regional Training Programme on Library Automation for all North Eastern states. It will be better if INFLIBNET appoint SOUL Coordinator and Technical Assistant for all states of North Eastern Region.

4. Conclusion:

Implementation of SOUL 2.0 in the College Libraries of North East Region is a great boon to College Library staff in which Library management has become very easy in serving the users. INFLIBNET Centre has to come up with SOUL 3.0 version in which many social media tools can be integrated with the SOUL 3.0 software. Due to the internet connectivity and low speed, many Librarians are not able to provide web based services to its user. This is a great problem in most of the Libraries particularly the libraries located in remote places.

However, Library professionals are taking great interest in implementing SOUL 2.0 software which is one of the most effective criteria of NAAC assessment. Authorities are had started realizing its importance which contribute to qualitative development of the Colleges located in North East Region.

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