Status of Library Automation among Al-Ameen Group of Institutions, Bengaluru: A Study

Vasantha M. C.*, Adithya Kumari H.**

Abstract

The present paper discusses the status of library automation among the Al-Ameen Educational Society's group of institutions in Bengaluru. The Al-Ameen Educational Society (AES) is one of the leading educational institutions in India. It has 50 plus years of legacy in the field of education. The present paper mainly focuses on the readiness of the library management software, applicability, utility, and services provided through LMS. All libraries in the AES group institutions are using modules like cataloging, circulation, and acquisitions. Fewer libraries are using digital resource management from the respective LMS, and they are yet to start DRM services for the users. It is found that even within the group of institutions using different library automation software, their level of satisfaction towards the software is excellent.

Keywords: Library Automation, Software Solutions, LMS and DRM Services

Introduction

The library management system of library automation refers to the use of computers for all in-house operations of the library. By utilising computers one can manage the library collections, as well as provide better service to the users. According to Bhardwaj (2000), use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in the library makes provision to provide the right information to the right reader at the right time in a right personal way. The focus of library automation has evolved from local to global concerns. Before reaching the current level, which addresses interoperability among systems and services, these aims progressed via three incremental phases: the effectiveness of internal operations, access to local resources, and access to resources outside the library.

According to the Encyclopaedia of Library and Information Science, "Automation is the technology concerned with the design and development of process and system that minimise the necessity of human intervention in operation." According to Webster's dictionary, "Automation is the technique of making an apparatus, a process or a system operate automatically."

This study depicts the status of library automation in college libraries of the Al-Ameen Educational Society's group of institutions. This paper covered the status of library automation in the Al-Ameen Educational Society's group of institutions and ways for improvement.

Review of Literature

In their research, Dhanavandan and Asokan (2016) discussed the opinion and problems in the application of ICT in academic libraries among the library professionals (N = 504) in engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu. The study revealed that lack of interest on the part of the users and lack of support from the administration in training library professionals are the major problems. Bhagachand's (2015) study in Maharashtra revealed that various ICT facilities, such as computers, printers, photocopiers, Internet connectivity, and so on, were easily accessible in the selected libraries in his study, based on Nasik and Malegaon's 14 college libraries. All libraries continued to use local commercial software despite the availability of open-source software like KOHA and Evergreen. In a study of the application status of virtual reference service

* Research Scholar, Department of Studies Library and Information Science, University of Mysore, Mysuru, Karnataka, India; Librarian, Seshadripuram Institute of Management Studies, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India. Email: vasanthamc@gmail.com

** Professor, Department of Studies Library and Information Science, University of Mysore, Mysuru, Karnataka, India.

in North-India, Panda (2021) describes that "libraries in India by-and-large have implemented ILMS (e.g. RFID) for their automation". Chaitra and Kumbar (2020) conducted a study to investigate library automation in first-grade college libraries of four districts in Karnataka. They suggested that college libraries must fully automate all the library automation software modules, because all the modules are interlinked. Raza et al. (2017) studied the management of information and access to the information resources with the application of mobile technology in the Maulana Azad Library of Aligarh Muslim University system through smartphones, tablets, personal computers, and so on (N = 175). According to the study's findings, a majority of students have smartphones and have no difficulty using a mobile device to access the library's website and information services.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the current status of the library automation at Al-Ameen Educational Society (AES) group of institutions.
- To know the success level of library automation in the AES group of institutions.
- To find the different software being used for automation.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

Al-Ameen Educational Society (AES) is a big education institution in the country. It has several branches across the country. The present study focuses only on four institutions, namely Al-Ameen Arts, Science and Commerce College; Al-Ameen Institute of Management Studies; Al-Ameen College of Pharmacy; and Al-Ameen Institute of Information Sciences. All four institutions are located in the main campus of AES, at the heart of the city of Bengaluru.

Methodology

The methodology used for this present comparative study of AES group of institutions is purely based on the survey method. For data collection, a questionnaire has been used as the major tool in this study. All four library professionals responded quickly to the study and gave their valuable time to provide the right information. For the study, quantitative research approach was adopted.

Evaluation of the Study

For this present study, primary data was collected using a questionnaire and casual interview tools; the collected data is analysed and interpreted using simple percentage (%) and presented in a tabular format.

Table 1: Library Automation Status

Library Automation Status	Frequency N	Percentage (%)
Fully automated	04	100%

Source: Primary data.

It is found that all four (100%) libraries are fully automated. It shows that Al-Ameen group of institutions give importance to the library and provide better service to the users through the library automation software.

Table 2: Types of Software

Name of the Software	Software Type	Nature of the Software	No. of Libraries	Percentage (%)
EasyLib	Commercial	Client/server	1	25%
NewGenLib	Commercial	Client/server	1	25%
NewGenLib	Open	Client/server	1	25%
Library	In-house developed	Client/server	1	25%

Source: Primary data.

It is observed that out of the four institutions, two (50%) are using NewGenLib (NGL) software. Of this, one institution's library is using open source NewGenLib, while the other is using commercial NewGenLib software. Both institutions are using client/server-natured NewGenLib software for their library. The remaining two (50%) institutions are using EasyLib commercial client server and in-house Web-/cloud-based software,

respectively. Table 2 shows that there is no uniformity followed by the Al-Ameen institutions in adopting software for its libraries.

From Table 2, it is clear that all four institutions' libraries are automated with different software. Based on this, we will try to understand the actual usage of the software. The reason behind the study is to know the areas of automation or modules being used in libraries.

Table 3: Areas of Library Automation

Areas of Automation	No. of Libraries	Percentage (%)
Administration and Acquisitions	04	100%
Cataloguing	04	100%
Circulation	04	100%
Serial Management	02	50%
OPAC/WebOPAC	02	50%

Areas of Automation	No. of Libraries	Percentage (%)
Digital Resources Management	01	25%
Visitor Management	00	00%

Source: Primary data.

It is found that all institutions' libraries are using modules like cataloging, circulation, and acquisitions. Two (50%) are using serial management and OPAC modules and only one (25%) library is using the digital resources management module. No libraries automated the visitor management area; they still use gate entry registers to monitor/maintain a record of daily visitors.

It is found that all institutions automated their respective libraries, and they fully automated selected areas of the library. Table 4 provides data on which and to what extent the institutions' libraries provide services using the library automation software.

Table 4: Service Provided using Library Automation System

Services Provision through LMS	100%		50-75%		25-50%		Up to 25%		Not at all	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
OPAC	02	50%	00	00	00	00	01	25%	01	25%
Reservation	01	25%	00	00	01	25%	01	25%	01	25%
Circulation	04	100%	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
Digital resources	01	25%	00	00	00	00	00	00	03	75%
No due certificate	01	25%	00	00	00	00	00	00	03	75%

Source: Primary data.

From Table 4, it is found that all the four (100%) libraries provide circulation services using the library automation software. Two (50%) libraries provide OPAC services through the software. One (25%) each of the libraries provides reservation and no due certificate services, respectively, using the library automation software. Three (75%) libraries are yet to start digital resource services that reach users' expectations by successfully implementing library automation.

Competency of Library Professionals

Information communication skills of the professional library staff are important to run a computerised library system. In this context, Table 5 defines the competency level of library professionals belonging to the Al-Ameen group of institutions.

Table 5: Competency of Library Professionals

Efficiency Level of Professionals (N = 04)	Response	Percentage (%)
All are efficient	04	75%
Majority are efficient	01	25%
No opinion	00	00
Majority are not efficient	00	00
All are not efficient	00	00
Total	04	100%

Source: Primary data.

It is found that all the four (100%) institutions have skilled, competent library professionals to run an automated library.

Table 6: **Satisfaction Level of Library Automation Software**

Level of Satisfaction (N = 4)	Response	Percentage (%)
Excellent	03	75%
Above average	01	25%
Average	00	00
Below average	00	00
Extremely poor	00	00
Total	**04**	**100%**

Source: Primary data.

It is found that even within the group of institutions using different library automation software, their level of satisfaction towards the software is excellent. They are suggesting their respective software for other institutions' libraries.

Results of the Research

- Al-Ameen Educational Society provides different library automation software for its institutions.

- It is found that all four institutions' libraries have computerised their respective libraries.

- All libraries of institutions are using modules like cataloging, circulation, and acquisitions.

- Fewer number of libraries are using digital resource management from the respective LMS, and they are yet to start DRM service for the users.

- All libraries have skilled, efficient manpower to run an automated library.

- It is found that even within the group of institutions using different library automation software, their level of satisfaction towards the software is excellent.

Suggestions

- Instead of client/server software, it is better to use Web-/cloud-based software for all institutions, because it is user friendly; using this, information service can be provided around the clock.

- In libraries where Web-based library management software provides WebOPAC, it is necessary to give orientation for users for maximum utilisation of the same.

- Many of the AES librarians are not using the digital resources management (DRM) module for providing effective service to the users.

- Request to the management of the AES to take initiatives to maintain uniformity and consistency in adopting LMS within their group of institutions.

Conclusion

The status of library automation among the Al-Ameen Educational Society group of institutions is good. Upgradation of LMS is required to provide better service to the users. For example, if they moved to Web-based software, they can provide digital resources to the users. This will enrich the users' academic needs without any interruptions. The professional library staff must prepare to fulfil the requirements of the users. They need to gain more knowledge about the features of the software. Continuous follow-ups on LMS is required for better implementation and meeting future requirements of the users.

References

Ajay, K., & Gurpreet, S. (2010). Status of library automation in the institutions of higher studies in Punjab. *Library and Information Science Compendium,* 1-11.

Bansode, S. Y., & Periera, S. (2008). A survey of library automation in college libraries in Goa state, India. *Library Philosophy and Practice,* 1-7.

Dhanavandan, S., & Asokan, L. (2016). Application of ICT in academic libraries: A study on opinion and problems by LIS professionals. *International Journal of Information Studies and Libraries*, *1*(1), 43-53. doi:https://doi.org/10.21863/ijisl/2016.1.1.005

Harinarayan, N. S. (1991). Concept of library automation. *Herald of Library Science, 30*(3-4), 176-177.

Jayamma, K. V., & Krishnamurthy, M. (2015). Automation of college libraries in Bangalore city: A study. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Computer Science and Management Studies, 3*(9), 32-40.

Kumar, T. S., & Kemparaju. (2017). Status of library automation in engineering college libraries in engineering college libraries in Karnataka. *International Journal of Information Movement, 2*(4), 22-31.

Naveen, C. L. (2016). *Status and problems of library automation in govt. first grade colleges of Hassan district, Karnataka: A study*. *5*(1), 28-35.

Nayana, J. (2019). A study on library automation status among the aided college libraries in Bengaluru. *Library Philosophy and Practice.*

Panda, S. (2021). Infrastructural overview of college libraries towards implementation of virtual reference service (VRS): A study of North-Western India. *Proceedings of the Two-Days International Virtual Conference on Library and Information Services on Library and Information Services: Past, Present and Future (IVCLIS 2021)*, pp. 86-96. Retrieved from https://ssrn.com/abstract=3913790

Takappa, R., & Reddy, K. R. (2017). Present status of library automation in polytechnic colleges in Karnataka state: A survey. *International Journal of Digital Library Services*, *7*(2), 87-98. Retrieved from www.ijodls.in

Raza, M. M., Samim, A., & Kumar, D. (2017). M-libraries: Smart access and management of information. *International Journal of Information Studies and Libraries*, *2*(2), 10-18.

Singh, Y. (n.d.). *Library automation in academic libraries in India: Problems and prospects attitude and initiative of the management,* 1-6.

Upadhyay, A. (2012). A review of status, problem and prospects of library automation in engineering colleges of Jabalpur city. *IOSR Journal of Computer Engineering*, *3*(5), 31-36. doi:https://doi.org/10.9790/0661-0353136