

Marching Towards Networked and Collaborative Culture: A Case Study

Vikram Singh Sahi

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1. Introduction

The State of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) has recently gained some pace by receiving the attention of the State Government for strengthening and expansion of Public Library system. Many New strategies have been adopted and implemented to strengthen, expand, and streamline the network of public libraries at the State, District, Tehsil, and Block levels. The State Government decided to use e-Granthalaya software, developed by NIC. *e-Granthalaya* is a library management software which is useful in the house – keeping operations as well as the user services. It can be used for networking of libraries where the libraries use the common/central database for just adding their holdings. Thus the catalogue records are created once for a book and the union catalogue is a by-product. Copy information of the participating libraries can become available over internet using the Web OPAC interface. The union catalogue provides real-time status of the copy from the holdings of the participating libraries. Using e-Granthalaya Software for networking and automating the collection of Public libraries is one such step in the modernisation of Public Libraries in J&K.

2. Research Area

Shri Ranbir Singh Public Library is the oldest and the first public library of the State which was established in the year 1879 in the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh, the Dogra ruler of the J&K State. By the year 1890, this library contained a collection 8,941 book in languages like English, Sanskrit, Persian, Bengali, Tibetan, Punjabi, etc. At present the library holds about **60,000** books including rare books as well as manuscripts. At present SRS Library is having about 14,000 members. The library has organised special facilities of reading for women and children. A separate Children Section is maintained in the SRS Library. The Children Section has about 5,600 books with about 1,200 children as its members. Efforts are on to make Children Section more attractive and useful. The Library is being managed by 18 Staff members.

3. Services Provided by SRS Library

The Library provides reading material to all kinds of users irrespective of caste, creed, colour, religion, sex, etc. The Library meets the requirements of its users, helping self-education and gainful use of leisure time, and helps broadening the understanding of its members. Book exhibitions and special functions are generally organised to attract attention of general public about the facilities and services being provided by these libraries. The current books and periodicals always remain on high demand in this Library. Besides above the following services are being performed:

1. Circulation Service
2. Reference Service
3. Provision of current Periodicals/Newspapers
4. Children Section Service.

4. Research Methodology

The present study has been undertaken to find out the effects of automation in public libraries using e-Granthalaya software. The study is based on both secondary as well as primary data. To gather the primary data, a survey has been conducted through a self structured questionnaire containing statements relevant to the study. The secondary data has been collected from the books, brochures, various websites, unpublished theses, etc.

5. Objectives

The study includes four broad objectives:-

1. To analyse the process of automation in Ranbir Singh public library using e-Granthalaya.
2. To access the pros and cons of automation in Ranbir Singh public library, Jammu.
3. To analyse the perceptions of the library users and staff about automation in general and e-Granthalaya in particular.
4. To present suitable suggestions for the smooth functioning of the automated system.

6. Data Analysis

Here an attempt has been made to study the users' attitude towards the automation of SRS Library, Jammu. The data has been collected from the questionnaire circulated to the various types of users, making use of the library resources. The response of the users is shown in table given below:

Table 1: Response of Users

Sr. No.	Users	No. of Questionnaire Distributed	No. of Questionnaire Received	Percentage
1	Employees	20	20	100
2	Students/Scholars/ Members	80	70	87.5
	Total	100	90	90

Above table shows that 100 questionnaires were circulated and 90 questionnaires were received back meaning a response rate of 90% which is quite good to carry on the study.

6.1 Users'/Employees' Attitude towards Library Automation

Table 2: Automation improves the quality of Library Services

Sr. No.	Users	No. of Respondents	Yes	No
1.	Employees	20	15(75%)	5(25%)
2.	Students/Scholars/ Members	70	70(100%)	Nil
	Total	90	85(94.4%)	5(5.56%)

The analysis of data reflects that 94.4% people agreed that automation of library improves the quality of services and declared that use of e-resources will fulfil their information needs. However, it is observed that still a category of employee are not ready for the change and that is why they responded negatively to this query.

Table 3: Automation improves the status of the Library & Saves lot of time

Sr. No	Users	No. of Respondents	Yes	No
1.	Employees	20	15(75%)	5 (25%)
2.	Students/Scholars/ Members	70	70(100%)	Nil
	Total	90	85(94.4%)	5(5.56%)

The above data reveals that majority of people strongly agreed that it will definitely improve the status of the Library and saves a lot of time. They also demanded for more computer terminals.

Table 4: Use of Software requires proper User Education/Training

Sr. No.	Users	No. of Respondents	Yes	No
1.	Employees	20	20(100%)	Nil
2.	Students/Scholars/ Members	70	65(92.8%)	5(7.14%)
	Total	90	85(94.44%)	5(5.56%)

Eighty five (94.44%) of the users wanted to get user education, on the emerging library technologies, so that they may take full advantage of library services.

Table 5: Library staff is skilled in Emerging Technologies

Sr. No.	Users	No. of Respondents	Yes	No
1.	Employees	20	10(50%)	10(50%)
2.	Students/Scholars/ Members	70	30(42.86%)	40(57.14%)
	Total	90	40(44.44%)	50(55.56%)

Most of the users were uncertain whether the library staff is skilled in emerging technologies. They suggested that library staff need proper training to handle this system.

Table 6: Does this software takes over the traditional way of information handling in the library

Sr. No.	Users	No. of Respondents	Yes	No
1.	Employees	20	14(70%)	6(30%)
2.	Students/Scholars/ Members	70	64(91.43%)	6(8.57%)
	Total	90	78(86.67%)	12(13.33%)

Due to present era of emerging technologies majority of people believe that automation in SRS Library using e-Granthalaya software will take over the traditional way of information handling, and improve the services provided by the library. They requested more frequent updating of databases.

Table 7: Online cataloguing and circulation system is more useful than the manual system

Sr. No.	Users	No. of Respondents	Yes	No
1.	Employees	20	12(60%)	8(40%)
2.	Students/Scholars/ Members	70	65(92.86%)	5(7.14%)
	Total	90	77(85.55)	13(14.44%)

85.55% users think that online cataloguing and circulation is more useful and beneficial then the old traditional way.

Table 8: e- Granthalaya offers effective ways of resource sharing

Sr. No	Users	No. of Respondents	Yes	No
1.	Employees	20	16(80%)	4(20%)
2.	Students/Scholars/ Members	70	55(78.57%)	15(21.43%)
	Total	90	71(78.89%)	19(21.11%)

Above table reveals that resource sharing becomes more easy and accessible through ICT as 78.89% of the respondents agreed with it.

Table 9: e- Granthalaya helps in making specific information available

Sr. No.	Users	No. of Respondents	Yes	No
1.	Employees	20	13(65%)	7(35%)
2.	Students/Scholars/ Members	70	62(9%)	8(21.43%)
	Total	90	75(88.57%)	15(16.67%)

88.57% of the respondents believe that information can be easily made available and without wastage of time, but 16.67% did not agree with it.

Table 10: Card Catalogue can be modified easily than OPAC

Sr. No.	Users	No. of Respondents	Yes	No
1.	Employees	20	15(75%)	5(25%)
2.	Students/Scholars/ Members	70	25(35.71%)	45(64.29%)
	Total	90	40(44.44%)	50(55.56%)

Majority of the library staff believes that changes can be done easily in card catalogue but most of the members did not agree with it

Table 11: Online database provides up to date information

Sr. No.	Users	No. of Respondents	Yes	No
1.	Employees	20	17(85%)	3(15%)
2.	Students/Scholars/ Members	70	67(95.71%)	3(4.29%)
	Total	90	84(93.33%)	6(6.67%)

Table 12: Data storage is highly risky in the library

Sr. No.	Users	No. of Respondents	Yes	No
1.	Employees	20	17(85%)	3(15%)
2.	Students/Scholars/ Members	70	67(95.71%)	3(4.29%)
	Total	90	84(93.33%)	6(6.67%)

Due to inadequate facilities in the Library, 93.33% believe that there is no safety in storage of data.

Table 13: Computer creates health & environmental problems

Sr. No.	Users	No. of Respondents	Yes	No
1.	Employees	20	11(55%)	9(45%)
2.	Students/Scholars/ Members	70	33(47.14%)	37(52.86%)
	Total	90	44(48.89%)	46(51.11%)

Some users were of the view that computer creates health and environmental problems.

Table 14: Work has become more complicated & monotonous.

Sr. No.	Users	No. of Respondents	Yes	No
1.	Employees	20	12(60%)	8(40%)
2.	Students/Scholars/ Members	70	22(31.42%)	48(68.57%)
	Total	90	34(37.78%)	56(62.22%)

Table 15: Low tolerance for change

Sr. No.	Users	No. of Respondents	Yes	No
1.	Employees	20	14(70%)	6(30%)
2.	Students/Scholars/ Members	70	54(77.14%)	16(22.86%)
	Total	90	68(75.56%)	22(24.44%)

It is a fact that it takes time to assimilate any change. So, a majority of the library staff believes that the work has become boring and complicated.

Table 16: Training & Knowledge of ICT

Sr.No.	Users	No. of Respondents	Yes	No
1.	Employees	20	20(100%)	Nil
2.	Students/Scholars/ Members	70	70(100%)	Nil
	Total	90	90(100%)	Nil

The above tables show that the library staff as well as the students /scholars /members have a positive attitude towards use and implementation of automation with a large majority agreeing about its usefulness. The results generally show that respondents have a positive response to all attitude items. The reason may include an understanding of the benefits of automation. In above tables the users as well as the staff reacted favourably to the advantages of automation rather than to any perceived negative impact. The result reveals further that the respondents recommended for adequate training and knowledge of staff in use of ICT.

7. Findings of the Study

In a short time SRS Library, Jammu made a good attempt to automate its operations and services. It has a good collection. It uses computers and also has a Local Area Network. It uses the software e-Granthalaya. From the above discussion it is clear that SRS Library is computerising the whole system but still needs to put in more efforts to quench the information thirst of their patrons. The system replaced the library's manual systems- cataloguing, circulation, holds and reserve loans – thereby dramatically changing the work of some of the library staff.

The study found that the integrated automated library system improved quality of working, efficiency of staff, improved job satisfaction, client relations, morale, the pace of work, and the control of organisational functions. Other aspects like staff involvement in the implementation of the system, staff training, and attitudes of staff towards the system received positive response.

8. Suggestions

During the survey some of the suggestions received from Users/Library staffs for improving library services are as under:-

- ◆ J&K Government should allocate sufficient funds for the up-gradation/modernisation/automation of public libraries in the state.
- ◆ Public libraries in the state should organise seminars, workshops, book fairs to create awareness among the library users.
- ◆ Library should provide SDI, CAS, photocopying services to users.
- ◆ In modern times, internet can play an important role in providing better services to the users and internet service should be provided to the users of the public libraries.

- ◆ Public libraries' association should be formed at District and State level for sharing of resources and for better coordination among the library professionals.
- ◆ Creation of a resource sharing network among all public libraries as limited budgetary sources is available for the public libraries.

9. Conclusion

It is predicted that in future the public libraries will become more attractive and will be accessed both virtually as well as traditionally. A flexible and dynamic system can only ensure the existence of public libraries and the affirmative role of workforce that is ready to adapt to changes and is willing to take up new challenges though constant up-gradation of their skills and knowledge is must for taking the public libraries to new heights.

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About Author

Mr. Vikram Singh Sahi, Computer Scientist-B, University of Jammu, J&K.

E-mail: sahi_vikram@yahoo.com