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Librarians introduced to 'eGranthalaya'

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Librarians need to be aware of the many aspects of library management softwares and have a clear idea of the gaps in their library's requirements so that they can form a proper technological plan for computerising and upgrading their libraries, according to Ram Kumar Matoria, technical director of Library and Information Services Division of the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

He was speaking at a three-day seminar jointly organised by the Kerala Library Association (KLA) and NIC at LBS Institute of Technology for Women, Poojappura.

Speaking to the participants on the need and importance of library automation and networking in the digital era, he talked the participants through the technical details of various library management softwares and introduced them to 'eGranthalaya' - the free library automation and networking software developed by the NIC.

"Commercial library softwares like LibSys and ManLib are expensive, while in-house designs need a great deal of expertise, time and resources," he said. "This is where eGranthalaya comes in."

The software, he said, can help automate in-house activities and user services. Transactions like member dues, fines and due dates can be made available on the Internet or Intranet. That apart, scheduling of forthcoming issues of journals can be updated automatically, editing of records is possible and digital repositories of articles, newspapers and books can also be maintained.

While no concrete data is available, over 8,000 libraries in India have undergone automation, with 2,500 of them using eGranthalaya software. According to KLA general secretary S L Faisal, only about 50 of them are in Kerala, mainly those of University departments, Kendriya Vidyalaya and Navodaya Vidyalayas.

"This seminar is part of our initiative to support and promote open and free software among librarians here," he said. "The advantage of the software is that it can help interlink libraries using it and anybody can search the databases of various libraries and access the material through the net. Also, the digitising option in the software can help preserve rare collections, old newspaper articles, dissertations etc."

Forty librarians from Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu attended the seminar, which was inaugurated by M Wilscy, Head of Department of Computer Science at the University of Kerala.

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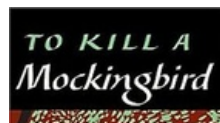
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