

Application of ICT and Related Manpower Problems in the College Libraries of Burdwan

Arup Kumar Mondal and Amit Kumar Bandyopadhyay*

*Burdwan Raj College, Aftab Avenew, Burdwan, West Bengal-713 104
E-mail: arupmondal1974@gmail.com*

**University of Burdwan, Burdwan, West Bengal-713 104
E-mail: amitkrb@yahoo.com*

ABSTRACT

Application of information and communication technologies in academic institutions in West Bengal has increased in the recent years. But the computerisation work of general degree college libraries of Burdwan Sadar (North and South) is very slow due to certain problems. Trained manpower is one of the major problems. This paper examines the situation of IT application and related manpower problems in government-aided general degree college libraries of Burdwan Sadar (North and South), West Bengal.

Keywords: ICT, cyberian, hybrid library, college library, human resource, manpower problem in college libraries

1. INTRODUCTION

An ideal college library with the advancement of information technology is becoming a hybrid library, a digital library or a virtual library. The future librarian may be designated as cyberian or cyber librarian, as he has to provide information service from a large number of documents published in digital form and available through Internet where a significant number of documents are available free of cost. It may not be far away when a large number of students will demand computerised service from a college library. So, libraries may think to reorient their activities with the help of information and communication technologies (ICT).

This has become essential for many reasons: for improved control over collections, for increased volume of library activities or workload, for improved control over operations, for improved quality services to users, user friendliness, regularity, etc., as also to prevent duplication of efforts, for cooperation and shared utilisation of information. Although IT application in college libraries is no doubt a boon, its implementation is a most challenging job, especially in government-aided general degree colleges in West Bengal as they face lot of constraints like shortage of manpower, lack of proper training, and personnel motivation.

This paper discusses several questions like, what is the present state of IT application in the college libraries at Burdwan Sadar, West Bengal; what kinds of problem do these libraries face; availability of skilled manpower, future plan of the libraries, etc.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are:

- ✂ The history of efforts in automating libraries in government-aided general degree colleges of Burdwan Sadar (North and South).
- ✂ The infrastructure available in the libraries for smooth computerisation.
- ✂ The areas of work automated/being automated.
- ✂ The automated services being provided by the libraries.
- ✂ The problems faced by the staff during the process of automation.
- ✂ The mode of acquiring IT skills by the staff.
- ✂ The manpower problem faced by the libraries and how to overcome it.

3. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A lot of work has been published in the field of library automation. Mahapatra and Padhi¹ studied the problem of IT application in Orissa libraries. Thapa and Sahoo² have reported the findings of a survey studying the present status of automation in special libraries of Jabalpur District in Madhya Pradesh. It aimed at understanding and analysing the various problems faced by the authorities and the staff during the process of automation and suggested ways and means to overcome these problems. Lohar and Kumber³ in their study on the present situation of college libraries in Shimoga District (Karnataka) have concluded that the situation do not meet the prescribed norms. Watane, Vinchurkar and choukhande⁴ studied the computer literacy and use of IT in college libraries of Amravati city covering IT awareness of the library professionals and IT application in libraries. Kannappanavar and Kumbargoudar⁵ studied different training programmes for the library professionals in India and concluded that most of the present training programs are general and theoretical in nature. Chakraborty and Maisal⁶ found library automation and networking do not depend only on the capacity of the computer or the networking server or even the software used since they are only tools. Much depends on the quality of manpower of the libraries and the perfection of the work they do. Sen⁷ studied on automation of a college library. According to her, entire library automation programme requires judicious decision making at various stages. Such decision may be related to 'do it' or 'buy it' services, selection of hardware and software platform, application software, types of services to be rendered, etc. Banerjee⁸ studied networking of government college libraries of West Bengal. The findings reveal that the networking of

government college libraries are in a conceptual stage and the idea comes to only one or two librarian. Ramesh Babu, Vinayagamoorthy and Gopalakrishnan⁹ examined the the extent and the level of ICT skills possessed by the librarians of these institutions in their study.

4. METHODOLOGY

The addresses of the general degree colleges of Burdwan Sadar (North and South) were collected from the Annual Report of the University of Burdwan¹⁰. Required data for the study was collected through survey using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaires were given to the librarians of the colleges personally by hand. The data collected was further supplemented by informal discussion with the librarians of these colleges.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Basic Information About the Colleges Surveyed

Eight colleges under Burdwan Sadar have been arranged chronologically by year of establishment in Table 1. Out of the eight colleges six (75 per cent) are evaluated by NAAC. One got B++, three B+ and two got B grade. Five colleges (62.5 per cent) have two shifts (Morning and Day), one college (12.5 per cent) has three shifts and two (25 per cent) colleges have only day shift. In Burdwan Raj College (BRC), the libraries of both shifts are treated as separate units. Therefore, data was collected for all the shifts.

The libraries of other colleges do not treat the Morning/Day/Evening shifts as separate units. There was no library system in Galasi Mahavidyalaya. So, no library-

Table 1. Colleges covered under the study

Name and address of the college	Year of establishment	Whether NAAC evaluated	Shifts (Morning/Day/ Evening)	Total No. of students
Burdwan Raj College (BRC), Burdwan	1881	N	Moming + Day + Evening	4618
Syamsunder College (SC), Syamsundar	1948	Y (B+)	Morning + Day	2065
M.U.C. Womens College, Burdwan (MWC)	1955	Y (B++)	Morning + Day	4200
Vivekananda Mahavidyalaya, Burdwan	1964	Y (B+)	Morning + Day	1922
Guskara Mahavidyalaya, Guskara, Burdwan (GKM)	1965	Y (B+)	Morning + Day	2424
Memari College, Memari, Burdwan (MC)	1981	Y (B)	Morning + Day	2893
Dr Bhupendra Nath Dutta Smriti Mahavidyalaya, Hatgobindapur, Burdwan (DBNDSM)	1996	Y (B)	Morning + Day	1715
Galsi Mahavidyalaya, Galsi, Burdwan (GM)	2007	N	Only Day	359

related information could be given for this college. Maximum number of students were in BRC (4618) followed by Shyam Sunder (4200). Minimum number of students were in GM (359).

5.2 Information About Availability of Staff

Table 2 shows that among nine libraries under study only 4 (44 per cent) have full-time Librarian/Assistant Librarian. In most cases, the number of existing staff was below the number of sanctioned posts. Five (55 per cent) college libraries were supported by contractual library professionals. But most of the colleges had all the library

clerks or library assistants, library attendant or library peon as per sanctions. So majority of the college libraries were suffering from lack of permanent professional staff.

5.3 Qualification of the Library Staff

Table 3 shows that librarians had a degree in an academic subject as well as in Library and Information Science. One of them has a PhD also. This means there was no lack of qualified library professionals in the libraries. Only one librarian has a Diploma in Information Technology Application (DITA).

Table 2. Number of professional and other staff in the libraries

Names of the colleges	No. of Librarian/ Assistant Librarian			No. of library assistant/clerk			No. of library attendant/peon			Total No. of existing library staff			
	Sanctioned post	Existing		Vacant	Sanctioned post	Existing		Vacant	Sanctioned post		Existing		
		Full time	Contractual/ Part time			Full time	Contractual/ Part time				Full time	Contractual/ Part time	
BRC (MS)	1	-	1	0	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	0	2
BRC (DS)	2	1	-	1	1	1	-	0	3	3	-	0	5
BRC (ES)	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	0	1	1	-	0	2
SC	2	2	-	0	1	1	-	0	2	2	-	0	5
MWC	3	1	1	1	3	2	-	1	4	3	-	1	7
VM	2	-	2	-	1	1	-	0	1	1	-	0	4
GKM	2	-	1	1	2	1	-	1	2	1	-	1	3
MC	1	1	-	0	1	-	1	0	2	2	-	0	4
DBNDSM	1	-	1	0	1	-	1	0	-	-	-	0	2

Table 3. Qualifications of the professional staff

Names of the colleges	No. of library staff having professional degree	Designation	Qualifications
BRC(MS)	1	Assistant Librarian	MBA, MLIS, MPhil (Doing)
BRC(DS)	1	Librarian	MA, MLIS, PhD
BRC(ES)	1	Library Clerk	BCom, BLIS, CITA
SC	2	(i) Librarian (ii) Assistant Librarian	MSc, MLIS, DITA MCom, MLIS
MWC	1	Assistant Librarian	MLIS
VM	2	(i) Librarian (ii) Assistant Librarian	MCom, MLIS MA, BLIS
GKM	1	Librarian	MA, MLIS
MC	1	Librarian	MA, MLIS
DBNDSM	1	Librarian	MA, MLIS

5.4 Infrastructural Facilities Available in the Libraries

Table 4 shows that all the libraries had computers for computerising the library while seven (78 per cent) of these were having printers. Only 2 (22 per cent) libraries had Internet connection for providing online service to the users, Four (44 per cent) libraries telephone facility and three (33 per cent) Xerox facility. So the basic hardware was present in most of the libraries, but LAN facility was very limited.

5.5 Availability of Computers for Library Staff and Users

Table 5 shows that number of computers available in the libraries vary from one to four, but the users were not allowed to use the computers in most of the cases.

5.6 Use of Computer in the Libraries

Table 6 lists the purpose of using computers in the libraries. Almost eight (88.9 per cent) libraries were using computers for performing some official work as well as for housekeeping operations (cataloguing, circulation, serial control, etc.). Only three (33.3 per cent) libraries were using computers for providing information retrieval service through internet.

5.7 History of Library Automation

Table 7 reveals that college libraries introduced computers during 2003-2009. Most of the colleges acquired library management software (LMS) and started data entry work more or less in the same year of acquiring the computers. Out of nine libraries, three were using priced LMS SOUL, three libraries were using Free

Table 4. Infrastructure available in the libraries

Names of the colleges	Telephone	Xerox	Computer	Printer	LAN facility	Barcode reader	Internet connection
BRC(MS)	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N
BRC(DS)	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
BRC(ES)	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N
SC	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
MWC	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
VM	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
GKM	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N
MC	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
DBNDSM	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Total	4	3	9	7	6	0	2
Percentage	44%	33%	100%	78%	67%	0%	22%

Table 5. Availability of computers for library staff and user

Names of the colleges	No of computers used by the library staff	No of computer used by the user
BRC(MS)	1	-
BRC(DS)	2	1
BRC(ES)	1	-
SC	4	1
MWC	1	-
VM	4	-
GKM	1	-
MC	2	-
DBNDSM	3	2
Total	19	4

Table 6. Purpose of using computers in the libraries

Names of the colleges	Office work	Housekeeping operations	Information retrieval through Internet
BRC(MS)	Y	Y	N
BRC(DS)	Y	Y	Y
BRC(ES)	Y	Y	N
SC	Y	Y	N
MWC	N	N	N
VM	Y	Y	N
GKM	Y	Y	N
MC	Y	Y	Y
DBNDSM	Y	Y	Y
Total Y	8	8	3
Percentage of Y	88.89%	88.89%	33.33 %

Table 7. History of library automation

Names of the Colleges	Year of purchasing computers for the library	Year of acquisition of library software	Name of the software	Year of starting data entry	Year when computerised information service started
BRC(MS)	2006	2006	SOUL	2006	-
BRC(DS)	2004	2005	SOUL	2005	-
BRC(ES)	2006	2006	SOUL	2008	-
SC	2004	2008	KOHA	2008	-
MWC	2003	2003	LOCAL	2003	-
VM	2009	2009	KOHA	2009	-
GKM	2005	2005	LOCAL	2005	2006
MC	2005	2005	LOCAL	2005	-
DBNDSM	2007	2007	KOHA	2007	2008

and Open Source Software (FOSS) KOHA and rest three libraries were using local made software due to financial impediments. Only two libraries had started providing computerised information services since 2006 and 2008.

5.8 Areas of Library work Automated/being Automated

Table 8 lists the areas of library operations automated. Only one library used computer for accounting and budgeting purpose. Almost seven (78 per cent) libraries were performing all the office works through computer. No library had automated the functions of serials control.

Dr Bhupendra Nath Dutta Smriti Mahavidyalya was the only library which performed the entire housekeeping operations except Budgeting and Serial Control through

computer. It may be concluded from the table that the computerisation work in the libraries was in the beginning stage.

5.9 Extent of Data Automated

Table 9 shows that out of nine only 3 (33 per cent) libraries had computerised all of their records of books. Rest of the libraries were at various stages of progress. It is also seen that no library had computerised the records of periodicals. Only one library computerised all the membership data essential for computerized circulation.

5.10 Mode of Library Automation

Table 10 shows that the full-time regular library professionals of three libraries were engaged in automation work. Four libraries were doing automation

Table 8. Areas of library work automated/being automated

Names of the colleges	Area of automation						
	Budgeting	Office work	Acquisition	Cataloguing	Circulation	Serials control	OPAC
BRC (MS)	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	-
BRC (DS)	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	✓
BRC (ES)	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	-
SC	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	-
MWC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
VM	-	✓	-	?	-	-	-
GKM	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-
MC	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-
DBNDSM	-	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓
Total	1	7	1	6	1	0	2
Percentage	11%	78%	11%	67%	11%	0%	22%

Table 9. Extent of data entry completed so far by the libraries

Names of the Colleges	Books		Periodicals		Members	
	All covered	Some portion	All covered	Some portion	All covered	Some portion
BRC (MS)	-	1700	-	-	-	-
BRC (DS)	-	8000	-	-	-	-
BRC (ES)	-	3482	-	-	-	-
SC	-	8000	-	-	-	1000
MWC	-	40	-	-	-	7
VM	-	125	-	-	-	-
GKM	✓	-	-	-	-	-
MC	✓	-	-	-	-	-
DBNDSM	✓	-	-	-	✓	-

work through in-house adhoc contractual staff on monthly wage basis. Table also shows that five libraries gave the tender of work to the outer agency. The automation work of four libraries was going on with the joint efforts of in-house staff as well as through outer agency.

5.11 Impediments in Library Automation

Library automation is an expensive, complex and continuous process involving various constraints faced in its implementation. To identify constraints faced by the college libraries of Burdwan Sadar, respondents were offered nine problems to choose. Table 11 shows maximum libraries faced problem of financial constraints as well as less interest of authority to upgrade IT skill of

staff. On the other hand, in a few libraries, lack of interest of staff in learning IT applications was the problem.

5.12 Training in Computer Applications

Table 12 shows that maximum number of library professionals acquired IT skills through self-study followed by formal education.

6. CONCLUSION

The government-aided general degree colleges of Burdwan Sadar, are still in the state of infancy with regard to IT applications in libraries. Out of the nine libraries only three had completed retro-conversion work while work was in various stages of progress. No library

Table 10. Mode of library automation work done by the library

Name of the college	By in-house staff			By outside agency	
	Regular staff	Ad-hoc contractual staff	Ad-hoc contractual staff on job completion (per book rate)	Within college library by using library computer	From outside
BRC(MS)	-	✓	-	-	-
BRC(DS)	✓	-	-	✓	-
BRC(ES)	✓	-	-	-	-
SC	-	-	✓	✓	-
MWC	-	-	-	✓	-
VM	-	✓	-	-	✓
GKM	-	✓	-	-	✓
MC	✓	-	-	-	-
DBNDSM	-	✓	-	-	-

Table 11. Impediments in library automation

Impediments in library automation	Names of the colleges									Total
	BRC (MS)	BRC (DS)	BRC (ES)	SC	MWC	VM	GKM	MC	DBN-DSM	
Financial problem	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	8
Overload of work	-	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
Lack of IT knowledge	-	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	-	4
Lack of interest in learning IT	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	✓	-	2
Higher authority is not interested to send library staff to upgrade their IT skills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	8
Lack of in-service financial/promotional reward	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	7
Lack of sufficient staff in the library	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
Lack of IT training facility	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	7
Existing staff not cooperative	-	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	4

had computerised the records of periodicals. Though Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) like KOHA was available, still one-third of the libraries used local non-standard software.

The college libraries of Burdwan Sadar face several hindrances in full-fledged IT application. The primary

factor was inadequate funds. Insufficient manpower, lack of IT skill among the library professionals and lack of right attitude of the authorities towards library development were some of the other problems. The authority should consider the need of improvement of the library condition with priority and make provision of adequate fund for IT applications. The government

Table 12. Mode of acquiring IT skill by the staff

Mode	Name of the college									Total
	BRC (MS)	BRC (DS)	BRC (ES)	SC	MWC	VM	GKM	MC	DBN-DSM	
Formal education	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓	5
Informal education	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	-	3
Through colleague	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Self-study	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓	6
Training at work place	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Outside computer training with sponsor	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Outside computer training without sponsor	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	1
Training by software supplier	-	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	3
Attending workshop/seminar	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓	4

should take steps to recruit the full-time library professionals, considering the manpower need in ICT environment.

The professional library staff may be given ample opportunity to work independently, so that they can prove their worth in automating the college libraries. The libraries had neither proper IT trained manpower, nor were the authorities interested to make them trained by sending them to reputed institutions. Since no opportunity was extended to the employees by the principals, the working library staff is languishing in their position. To improve the standard of work of the college libraries in terms of modernisation with specific emphasis on IT applications, the above factors may be taken into consideration so that the situation may improve and the college libraries of Burdwan Sadar may provide IT-enabled services to their students/users.

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About the Authors

Shri Arup Kumar Mondal is an Assistant Librarian in the Burdwan Raj College, West Bengal. He obtained his MBA in 2001. He was awarded University Gold Medal by the University of Burdwan for the first rank in MLIS in 2005. Shri Mondal has published two articles and is a life member of BLA and IASLIC.

Dr Amit Kumar Bandyopadhyay is Professor in the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Burdwan, West Bengal. He did BLIS, MLIS and PhD from Jadavpur University. He is in the faculty of Burdwan University for the last 21 years. Earlier, he served in different capacities at INSDOC, Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation and some other institutions. He has published three books and 40 research articles. He is the life member of ILA, IASLIC, IATLIS, and BLA.