

Information Technology Usage Scenario in Academic Libraries of Higher Education in Chhattisgarh: Challenges and Opportunities

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ABSTRACT

The Chhattisgarh State was formed in 2001 carved out from the then Madhya Pradesh. Ever since its establishment as a fully fledged state, a considerable number of academic institutions have sprung up. To promote education a Indian Institute of Management (IIM) and All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) have been established along with universities and colleges. As libraries are heart of any institution, present study attempts to analyse the status of libraries in various academic institutions of Chhattisgarh with emphasis on status of automation and ICT applications and use. Survey method was followed to collect the data and six libraries were selected for detailed analysis. There are one central university, one state university, one special university, one open university, along with NIT and IIM. The results indicate that all libraries are discharging their services with functional library buildings. However, their collection is uneven and staff strength is less. Most of the libraries are yet to develop any collection development policies and still collection of non-book materials is very less. Although most of the libraries have implemented automation either by using Libsys or SOUL, staff of the libraries have required skill to handle various bugs in using software. Digitisation of collection is not well adopted in most of the libraries. To excel in services, staff training and staff appointment seem to be urgent need of these libraries.

Keywords: Academic libraries, higher education, automation software, digitisation

1. INTRODUCTION

The word 'Chhattisgarh', is a combination of two terms, i.e., 'Chhattis' and 'Garh' means land of 36 forts. The State was formed on 1 November 2000 carved from Madhya Pradesh state.¹ Presently, Chhattisgarh has 27 districts with 5 divisions² and spread over 135, 190 sq-km. As per 2011 census the literacy rate of Chhattisgarh is 71.04 % which ranks 27th among the states in India³. This possibly may be because of less number of educational institutions in the State. The existing institutions are struggling to provide even basic infrastructure facilities like libraries to support learning. It is well known that the libraries are true learning centres of education, which support the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Nyamboga⁴ in his study reported that libraries and LIS professionals are great help in providing information literacy skills training to the users to use available resources in the library.

Libraries are an integral part of and have an imperative role in the functioning of an academic and research organisation. They provide academic support to the users of an academic institution. According to Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)⁵ report, 10.5 % of primary schools are don't

have a library, 63.3 % of schools have a library but are not being used by students in the State. There are only 26.2 % of schools that have library and are being used by students in Chhattisgarh. As per 7th AISES (2007) report 77.24 % secondary schools and 89.59 % higher secondary schools in India where library facility exists. In contrast, 33.05 % of secondary schools and 65.44 % of higher secondary schools in Chhattisgarh, library facility exists⁶. Presently, there are 106 AICTE-approved institutions (2014-15)⁷, and 175 government degree colleges.⁸ There are 12 state universities, 7 private universities and 1 central university⁹. Few institutions of national importance and some research institutions are working with the existence of libraries in Chhattisgarh.

The Chhattisgarh Public Library Act was enacted in 2008, however, it is yet to be implemented¹⁰. The Act has recommended establishing two state level libraries, i.e., State Central Library and State Reference Library in Raipur and Bilaspur respectively. It also states that every district should have a district library acting as apex body for district libraries. Finance is the key concern for public libraries. States like Tamil Nadu¹¹, Karnataka¹² collect library cess

on property tax. Kerala reserved 1 % of the total education budget for upliftment of public libraries; and Goa collects library cess on liquor. However, there is no provision of library cess in Chhattisgarh Public Library Act. There is provision of budget allocation for public libraries in five year plan and non plan budgets.¹³

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The library scenario of Chhattisgarh is not well discussed so far. While PSG Kumar¹⁴ explained the development and movement of public libraries in Chhattisgarh, Kaur & Walia¹⁵ mentioned that LIS schools are provided and have pro-vital role in development of skilled professionals in the State. In terms of different types of libraries, Chopra & Mukherjee¹⁶ argued the need of networking among academic libraries as an important step for overcoming the resource access barriers among libraries of the then Madhya Pradesh. However, lack of funds for establishing such network were identified as a hurdle. In terms of school libraries Bhandarkar¹⁷ discussed that condition of secondary school library are too poor in Chhattisgarh state. 33.0 % schools don't have any library set-up. In terms of special libraries, Pandya¹⁸ in his study mentioned that although agricultural libraries in the State are in initial stage of development, they are prosperous in the state. Ahmed¹⁹ in his study pointed that for a state like Chhattisgarh, the implication of ICT in libraries although leads to new horizon, lack of personnel skills, willingness among professionals and their training, support from the authorities to execute the policies are, however, few drawbacks. Ahmed & Tomar²⁰ in their study mentioned the usage of social networking sites to improve the conditions of libraries in a State like Chhattisgarh.

3. OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this study is to analyse the current status of libraries, especially academic libraries of Chhattisgarh in the area of ICT facilities available and use. Due to limitation of time, however, in the present study some selected academic libraries in the state have been analysed. The specific objectives are to:

- Compare the status of academic libraries in Chhattisgarh in terms of infrastructure, staff, facilities/ services offered, collection development strategies;
- Understand the extent of ICT facilities available in libraries; and
- Suggest possible improvements for the libraries in the state.

4. METHODOLOGY

To fulfill the objectives the websites of various

academic libraries of the State were scanned. However, because of the fact that most of the academic libraries in this region still don't have any individual webpage. it was difficult to expand the study in this direction.

Hence, for fulfilment of set objectives of this study, survey method was found suitable. A structured close-ended questionnaire were developed and distributed to all librarians of the academic libraries of higher education of Chhattisgarh. In spite of repeated efforts, only six libraries returned the questionnaires. The study is done on the basis of data received from six academic libraries.

Name of university/ library	Abbrev.	Type of university
Guru Ghasidas University	GGU	Central university
Pt. Ravi Shankar Sukla University	PRSU	State university
Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya	IGKV	Special university
Indian Institute of Management	IIM	
National Institute of Technology, Raipur	NIT	
Dr. C V Raman university, Kota	CVRU	Private university

5. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Infrastructural Facilities

Table 1 shows the available infrastructure of identified libraries. All identified libraries have separate library buildings to discharge services. Although, preservation and conservation of documents are essential aspects of maintenance, apart from PRSU, no other library has attached bindery for repair of damaged documents. This may be because of that the libraries are finding it suitable to outsource the job of binding.

Personnel are of significant trinity in the library. However, it is observed in the present study that human resources in the academic libraries of Chhattisgarh are not satisfactory. Almost 1/3rd (33.58 %) posts lying are vacant. In the present scenario when the users have diversified needs and libraries are attempting their best, shortage of staff may be the greatest hindrance towards performing quality service. Therefore, it is necessary that, the higher authorities of this institution should take necessary steps to recruit the vacant positions in the libraries. The highest number of personnel (29) is working in PRSU and lowest number (5) in IIM. It is also noticed from Table 1 that IIM and IGKV libraries are running with 44.44 % and 41.67 % shortage of staff respectively. Most of the working personnel are

Table 1. Infrastructural facilities available

Infrastructure	NIT	GGU	IGKV	CVRU	PRSU	IIM
Library building	Permanent	Permanent	Permanent	Permanent	Permanent	Permanent
Library with attached bindery	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Staff						
Working library staff	13	18	7	17	29	5
Additional library staff required	6	10	5	8	12	4
Percentage of vacant positions	31.58	35.71	41.67	38.89	29.27	44.44

Table 2. Facilities available and services offered by the libraries

	NIT	GGU	IGKV	CVRU	PRSU	IIM
Working hours	11 Hours	11 Hours	9 Hours	9 Hours	9.30 Hours	13 Hours
Average daily visitors	100-300	>500	100-300	>300	300-500	300-500
Classification adopted	DDC	DDC	UDC	DDC	DDC	DDC
Catalogue adopted	AACR	AACR	AACR	None	AACR	AACR
Type of catalogue used	OPAC/Web OPAC	OPAC	OPAC/Web OPAC	None	OPAC	Web OPAC
Facilities in library						
Reading room	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Shelf & bay guides	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Reservation facility	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Book lending	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Computer lab	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Photo copy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Printing	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Internet	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Online access to database	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Services rendered to the users						
Displaying new arrivals	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Pls*	Yes
Reference service	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lending of books	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Current awareness service	Pls*	Pls*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Document delivery service	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Inter library loan	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Referral service	No	X	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Translation service	No	Pls*	No	No	No	No
Abstracting and indexing	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

* Pls=Plan to start

either semi-professionals or non-professionals in these libraries and there is shortage of professionals in the library.

5.2 Libraries Facilities and Services

Table 2 reveals that the libraries are kept open for users at least for 9 hours (IGKV, CVRU) or up to 13 hours (IIM). The daily visitors of libraries varies widely from library to library and ranging from 100 to 500. This wide range is probably because of the registered user community are much

higher in general academic libraries than specialised academic libraries. For the purpose of classifying the documents Dewey Decimal Classification scheme (DDC) is adopted in NIT, GGU, CVRU, PRSU and IIM libraries. Whereas, IGKV, being a special library, uses Universal Decimal Classification (UDC). For the purpose of cataloguing the documents AACR is adopted in every library, except CVRU where no cataloguing scheme is used. For accessing library collection, OPAC is being used in GGU and PRSU, Web OPAC in IIM, and both OPAC and Web OPAC in

Table 3. Collection development (print and e-resources) policies and issues

	NIT	GGU	IGKV	CVRU	PRSU	IIM
Budget		1 Crore	1.04 Crore	20 Lakh	40 Lakh	2.56 Crore
Library budget in 2014-15 financial year	-					
Methods of collection development policies						
Selection by library staff	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Recommendations by faculty	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Demand of research scholars	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Request of students	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Demand from administrators	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Use of publisher catalogue	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Use of other institution Web OPAC	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Strength of reading material in library						
General books & text-books	>50,000	>50,000	>50,000	>50,000	>50,000	<10, 000
Audio books	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Reference materials	>1,000	>1,000	>1000	<1000	>1000	<500
Print periodicals	>80	>80	>80	<80	>80	<30
Databases & e-Journals (excluding access through consortium)	<15	<15	<15	<15	>15	>15
Back volumes	>2,000	>2,000	>2,000	<1000	>2000	<1000
Non-book materials	Nil	<500	>500	<100	>500	>500
Standards and reports	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	>100	>100
Theses and dissertations	<50	>100	>100	<100	>100	>100
Other materials	>500	<100	>500	Nil	>500	Nil

NIT and IGKV libraries. Common facilities like lending, reprography, and internet access are provided in all libraries. However, reservation of documents and printing facilities are not provided in few libraries. It is interesting to note that traditional services like display of new arrivals, current awareness service (CAS), reference service, lending of books are still in use in most of the libraries but document delivery service (DDS), referral service, abstracting and indexing services, and inter-library loan services are missing in services. The possible reasons may be inadequate staff.

5.3 Collection Development Policies and Issues

From Table 3, it is clear that the budget of IIM is more than double than that of central university (GGV) and the well developed state-funded (IGKV). The state-funded library PRSU has much less funds which is a matter of concern. Libraries like IGKV, IIM follow diverse policies to acquire collection and taking users' need from administrator to research scholars to build library collection. However, demand from research scholars and request of students are not considered for collection development in GGU & CVRU. So far, IIM has lower amount of collections (<10,000) than other 4 selected libraries. Possible reasons may be the IIM is comparatively newer

than other organisations. The amount of other collections like audio books, periodicals, databases & e-journals, and back volumes available in these libraries are mentioned in Table 3.

5.4 Status of Automation and ICT Use

The uses of information communication technology (ICT) in libraries enhances services in time to its users. As libraries are one of the important services sector of the society, an attempt has been made to know how far ICTs are implemented in academic libraries of Chhattisgarh, what extent the professionals (at least Assistant Librarians & above) are well accustomed with handling ICT, what type of support they are receiving for ICT enactment and what problems they are so far facing. Table 4 displays the status of ICT in academic libraries.

As indicated in Table 4, specialised academic libraries (IIM and NIT) are using commercialised LibSys software and general academic libraries using INFLIBNET's SOUL for their house-keeping operations. The open source software, KOHA, is being used in IGKV for library automation. It is important to note that, although library professionals are accustomed with day-to-day used software, personnel, however, are unavailable for handling linux, web designing, programming, etc. Presently, the day-to-day problems are being solved by getting technical support from

Table 4. Status of automation and use of ICT

	NIT	GGU	IGKV	CVRU	PRSU	IIM
Automation						
Is library automated	Yes	Yes	Yes	Pls*	Yes	Yes
Software used to automation	Libsys	SOUL	KOHA	-	SOUL	Libsys
Technical support received from supplier						
Installation	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
Maintenance	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
Data migration	No	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
Training of staff	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
Support from outsourcing	No	No	No	-	No	No
Personnel efficiency in ICT literacy						
Handling routine office jobs by using software	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Handling library software	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Data retrieval from databases	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Use of Linux or OS X	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Web designing	No	No	No	No	No	No
Programming languages	No	No	No	No	No	No
Constrains faced while using software						
Lack of manpower	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Lack of software knowledge	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Lack of training	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Lack of ICT skills	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Willingness to handle challenge	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Fearness	No	Yes	No	No	No	No

Pls=Plan to start

Table 5. Status of digitisation

	NIT	GGU	IGKV	CVRU	PRSU	IIM
Member of INFLIBNET or other digital consortium	INDEST	INFLIBNET	CERA	Plm*	INFLIBNET	INFLIBNET
Mode of access e-resources	IP**	IP**	IP**	PWD***	IP**	IP**
Number of journals accessible online	-	10000+	3500+	5000+	8500+	15000+
Member of Shodhganga project	X	Yes	No	Pls*	Yes	No
Number of thesis digitised so far	Nil	101+	3000	Nil	2354+	Nil
Number accessible through sodhganga	Nil	All	Nil	Nil	1327	Nil

* Plm=Plan to be member; ** IP=Internet Protocol-enabled; *** PWD=Password- enabled

suppliers and consultants. Outsourcing is yet to a phenomena in these libraries. Furthermore, the library staff of IIM don't have any constraint in using their LibSys software, however, staff of GGU has issue in using the software SOUL. Libraries showed their willingness to handle challenges, but lack of ICT skills and less manpower are major constraints while operating the software in libraries. However, training to staff are not conducted to overcome such constraints.

5.5 Status of Digitisation

No library in the world is self-sufficient. Because of diversified users' need enrolling a library under an existing network system, probably, overcomes problems of resource crunch to some extent. The same scenario is observed in libraries of Chhattisgarh where libraries are serving better being a member of either INFLIBNET or AICT or CERA and providing access to wide resource through IP authentication. However, the private university CVRU is yet to

enrol under any digital consortium. In Table 3 it is identified that IIM don't have considerable number of print collections, however, as indicated in Table 5, library have access to quite high number of (15000+) online journals. The progress of digitisation of theses and dissertations under Shodhganga project is less in case of GGU as compared to PSRU and IGKV. The possible reason may be the lack of staff.

6. FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The following findings are drawn:

- (a) Libraries of the most of the institutions function with basic infrastructure. However, scarcity of personnel is common. To excel in need-based services, it is important that staff should be adequate. For maintaining existing services and adding new services, skilled staff is essential. In spite of the fact that present day libraries become more virtual, staff is still needed for maintaining all services in addition to virtual set-up.
- (b) Budget is another important pre-requisite for enhancing library services, collection, etc. However, the budget provision of the state-funded universities is quite low of this region.
- (c) To develop balanced collections, recommendation from all sections of library users are essential. However, most of the universities follow proto-type policies for developing collections and they don't feel it essential to accept recommendation from research scholars, students or administrators. Most of the library have their collection mainly in books or back volumes of journals. Other resources such as non-book materials, standard and patterns, theses and dissertations, are very less.
- (d) Keeping pace with present needs, most of the libraries have already automated their libraries. Lack of software-handling skills, and fear of using software are common among staff of the libraries. To overcome such scenario, continuous training of library personnel is essential. Further, it is well depicted in the results that libraries using LibSys software have more facilities of automating library jobs while libraries using SOUL have limited options. Therefore, it is important that software provider should consider this issue seriously otherwise their demand will likely to be less in near future.
- (e) The number of accessible online journals is highest in IIM, probably because of that they do not have enough collection of print books.

This is followed by GGU and PSRU. Although, GGU is a central university and PSRY is one of the oldest university in the State, their access facility is still quite less. The university should take it seriously and should channel their budget more towards subscribing journals for their clients or approaching INFLIBNET to increase the accessibility of their online journal database. On the other hand, in digitisation of theses, IGKV is far ahead than other libraries like PSRU (2354) and GGV (100). Probably, non-adequacy of staff is one of the reason.

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Appendix I

S. No.	Name of Institutions	Est. Date	Type	Location
1.	Indira Kala Sangit Vishwavidyalay	1956	State	Khairagarh
2.	National Institute of Technology	1956	Central	Raipur
3.	Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University	1964	State	Raipur
4.	Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya	1983	Central	Bilaspur
5.	Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya	1987	State	Raipur
6.	Chhattisgarh Institute of Medical Sciences	2001	State	Bilaspur
7.	Chhattisgarh Council of Science & Technology	2001	State	Raipur
8.	Maharishi University of Management and Technology	2002	Private	Bilaspur
9.	Chhattisgarh University	2003	State	Raipur
10.	Hidayatullah National Law University	2003	State	Raipur
11.	Kushabhau Thakare Patrakarita Avam Jansanchar University	2004	State	Raipur
12.	Chhattisgarh Swami Vivekananda Technical University	2005	State	Bhilai
13.	Pt. Sundarlal Sharma (open) University	2005	State	Bilaspur
14.	Dr. C. V. Raman University	2006	Private	Kota, Bilaspur
15.	MATS University	2006	Private	Raipur
16.	Sarguja University	2008	State	Ambikapur
17.	Bastar Vishwavidyalay	2008	State	Jagdalpur, Bastar
18.	Ayush and Health Sciences University	2009	State	Raipur
19.	Indian Institute of Management	2010	Central	Raipur
20.	ICFAI University	2011	Private	Dhamdha, Durg
21.	Kalinga University	2011	Private	Raipur
22.	AIIMS Raipur	2012	Central	Raipur
23.	Bilaspur University	2012	State	Bilaspur
24.	ITM University	2012	Private	Raipur
25.	Chhattisgarh Kamdhenu Vishwavidyalaya	2012	State	Anjora, Durg
26.	Amity University	2014	Private	Tilda, Raipur