APPLICATION OF IT IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY SERVICES OF JABALPUR (MADHYA PRADESH)

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Traces the need of networking among academic libraries by pointing out its basic targets. Highlights the situation of networking among academic libraries of Jabalpur before and after 1995. Discusses the need and usefulness of Local Area Networking within the university and other academic libraries/Institutions of Jabalpur and also indicates the hurdles in the smooth implementation of the networking project.

INTRODUCTION

It is needless to emphasise that in higher education, especially for colleges and universities, libraries play a vital role to activate a free flow of information. They facilitate utilization of information more precisely, exhaustively and pinpointedly in shortest possible time. All this could effectively be achieved by resource sharing through networks.

RESOURCE SHARING

Nowadays it has become enormously difficult for libraries to procure the required reading materials and extend their services specially when one considers the phenomenal increase in the price of publications and paucity of funds. The answer to the above problem is to go for resource sharing. The resource sharing can be achieved by inter-library cooperation by adhering to certain standard norms. This type of effort could now be achieved through library networks also.

WHAT IS ACADEMIC LIBRARY NETWORK?

An academic library network can be defined as a group of individual academic libraries that are interconnected through different nodes situated at different sites. Therefore, a common platform is created for sharing of resources for finding solutions to similar problems at less cost in least time and with much more efficiency.

WHY NETWORKING?

The literature growth in various disciplines is being noticed at an alarming rate and the rising prices of publications too has put great financial stress on the academic libraries. By now we are all well aware of this. Even with increased financial resources, libraries have not been able to meet the demands of its readers. Therefore, it has now been the endeavor of all academic libraries to some how make available the literature demanded by the users. However, such an effort could presently be achieved by creating viable library networks for promotion of resource sharing activities.

TARGETS OF LIBRARY NETWORKS

The main target of academic library network is to create an environment for effective use of resource service level to consumers at the individual level by automating library facilities like acquisition, serials control, cataloguing, circulation etc., user services and also maintaining library establishment records and funds accounting. Besides this, the library networks propose

a) to increase resource operations by producing in individual libraries direct approach to databases like bulletins, CAS, union catalogues and SDI etc.,

b) to introduce computerised services in the libraries for quick dissemination of information,
c) to inter-exchange duplicate publications if any,
d) to provide efficient and meaningful resource sharing in activities such as inter library user services, manpower training, refresher courses and access to national and international networks.
e) to standardise techniques, methods, procedures, hardware, software services and advocate for their adoption by all participating libraries so that optimum use could be obtained through networking,
f) to stimulate ways and means for closer contact with other regional, national and international networks for exchange of information and documents for the use of libraries.

**NETWORKING ACADEMIC LIBRARIES OF JABALPUR**

Jabalpur is one of the prominent district headquarters of Madhya Pradesh popularly known as Mahakaushal region. It has a cosmopolitan population of about 12 lakhs. There are a number of Defence Factories and a High Court. Presently Jabalpur has got two general universities, one agricultural university, one medical college, three engineering colleges and a few research and development institutes and about 43 colleges which are located very close to Rani Durgawati University. All the above universities, colleges and research and development institutions have their own library facilities.

**SITUATION BEFORE 1995**

Upto 1995, libraries irrespective of their status and needs were procuring reading material within the limited funds and were providing library services as per their potential.

Evidently all activities of the libraries were individualistic and manually operated. Hardly anything worthwhile was known mechanically in the realm of information storage and retrieval which is so vital for speedy information transfer. Thus there was not much scope for resource sharing networks.

**SITUATION AFTER 1995**

From 1995 onwards through the project of UGC and INFLIBNET, the idea of mechanization of library operations were visualized and Rani Durgawati University Library was one of the beneficiaries for automating the University Library System. During the 8th Five-Year Plan period, Rani Durgawati University, Jabalpur had received a sum of Rs. 8.50 lakhs from UGC/INFLIBNET for purchase of hardware and software for building of infrastructure for automating the university library. The university also got three of its technical staff initially trained by INFLIBNET at Ahmedabad for the purpose. The university library got the necessary hardware which includes one Pentium with 233 Mhz microprocessor, three 80486 and three dummy terminals under the main server and softwares, i.e., SCO-UNIX, DOS, WINDOWS, CDS/ISIS etc. The work was duly started in the year 1997-98 and technical obstacles were sorted out at Jabalpur itself by on the spot training by the INFLIBNET staff from Ahmedabad.

Ever since 1997, Rani Durgawati University has been preparing databases of current books being received, theses, dissertations and periodicals in standard format as per requirements of the INFLIBNET. The university library is in the process to start housekeeping operations like acquisition, circulation and bibliographical services etc. through ILMS software received from INFLIBNET. However the university library from the very beginning of the UGC programme has been providing INET and INTERNET services to the users. Probably this is the first university in M.P. to start such services for the library clientele.

**LOCAL NETWORKING**

In the second phase, it has been the endeavor of the university library to automate departmental libraries and link them with the university library system. By doing so, the university library will be able to provide integrated services to faculty members, researchers and post graduate students. For this purpose, university has received a grant of Rs. 8.50 lakhs during the 9th plan. The process of linking departmental libraries with university library has also been taken up on priority basis.
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LOCAL AREA NETWORKING OF ACADEMIC AND INSTITUTIONAL LIBRARIES

Rani Durgawati University has been trying to get VSAT established at the university and thereby plans to setup a local area networking (LAN) operational system for resource sharing among all the academic and institutional libraries in Jabalpur.

PROBLEMS IN NETWORK IMPLEMENTATION

Some of the problems in implementing this network include:

1. Lack of funds for automation of college libraries of Jabalpur.
2. Lack of interest on the part of authorities to automate the libraries.
3. Lack of trained personnel to do the job.
4. No assistance from the State Government for automating the library system.
5. It is desired of INFLIBNET, the main agency, to hold regional meetings to overcome the problems of academic libraries of particular region rather than holding UGC Review Committee Meeting alongwith CALIBER.
6. It is also desired that UGC should enforce execution process of automating and networking through its UGC Regional Office at Bhopal directly so as to make the individual college of university administrative setup aware that implementation of automating and networking programme is very essential to meet the challenges of information technology in the 21st Century.

CONCLUSION

Creation of databases is a time consuming task. It needs careful planning since it requires huge involvement of finances and trained manpower. But once such a situation (database) is created then automation in libraries follows suit and thereby networking becomes an easy proposition, as far as resource sharing among the libraries is concerned. If such a situation as we foresee is created in Jabalpur then there is hardly any doubt that a viable local networking system among academic libraries could come into being by means of newer techniques of IT in the field of Information transfer.

REFERENCES