_____

USE OF ICT BASED LIBRARY SERVICES IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF ASSAM WITH REFERENCE TO GUWAHATI: A STUDY

Rubi Baishya
Research Scholar , Dept. of Lib & Info Sc. , Gauhati University.

.

_____

ABSTRACT :

   Effectiveness of library services are now largely depends upon the Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Application of ICT is the best and only alternative way for Open and Distance Learning (ODL) to replace the gap in the teaching learning process in between the receiver and the communicator. This paper mainly focuses on the use of ICT based library services in ODL institutions of Assam. The different library services viz e-book, e-journal facilities, use of library management software, various security measures etc.
of these open and distance learning educational institutions of Assam have been discussed here. It also throws light on the problems faced by the library professional for providing the ICT based library services in library.

KEYWORDS : *ICT, ODL, E-books, E-journal.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

   The Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Educational Institutions play a significant role in our education system as it covers a large number of people for imparting education. Distance education as a generic term used to define the field or distance learning is a mode of delivering education and instruction often on an individual basis, to students who are not physically present in a traditional setting such as a classroom. Distance learning provides "access to learning when the source of information and the learners are separated by time and distance or both". Distance education courses that require a physical on-site presence any reason may be referred to as hybrid or blended courses of study. ODL system of education is becoming popular and receiving importance day by day as the scope and network spreads. Massive open online courses aimed at large scale interactive participation and open access via the web or other network technologies, are recent development in distance education. The libraries belong to ODL institutions have been playing a vital role in fulfillment of its objective. Libraries are considered indispensable in every part of higher education. The rapid use of internet and other communication facilities have brought the open and distance education closer to the student community.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:
The main objectives of the study are:
1. To focus on importance of Library and information services in ODL system.
2. To find out the usage of ICT in libraries of ODL Educational Institutions of Assam for providing library services.

_____

_____

3. To find out the barriers of providing ICT based library services.

3. METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

This paper is based on a survey carried out by the author with an intention to access the use of ICT based library services in ODL Educational Institutions of Assam. For this purpose structured questionnaires were designed for the Librarians/ Library in-charge of ODL institutions which were used as a tool of survey. Some important data regarding the study have been also collected through interview method (Telephonic conversation).

There are different open and distance learning institutions in Assam which are running as study centers of other private as well as some government universities. The study mainly covers the libraries of three ODL institutions which are located in Guwahati They are – Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), Regional Centre, Guwahati, Institute of Distance and Open Learning (IDOL) under Gauhati University, Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU).

4. IMPORTANCE OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES IN ODL SYSTEM:

The Library and Information Services should play an important role and it should be provided to distance learner so that their various needs can be met effectively. The basic need for the library and information services distance learners are -
➢ Need of access to information resources, for eg: text, supplementary reading and reference services,
➢ Learning how to find the information they need from the information that is available,
➢ Development ways to apply the information gleaned and to make sound, information based decisions.

The distance education institution is responsible for providing convenient, direct physical and electronic access to library resources for distance learners. It provides services equivalent to those provided in traditional learning in sufficient quality, depth, number, scope, correctness and formats. Its main purposes are-
➢ To meet the students needs in fulfilling course assignments and enrich the academic programs;
➢ To meet teaching and research needs;
➢ To facilities the acquisition of lifelong learning skills; and
➢ To accommodate other informational needs of the distance learning community as appropriate.

5. ODL Educational Institutions of Guwahati, Assam:

IGNOU, Regional Centre Guwahati was established in 1996 with a total of 6 study centres and 35 programmes with approximately about 1100 learners. As on date Regional centre Guwahati has 30 learner support centres, 588 academic counselors and 68 academic programmes on offer (ignou Guwahati Regional Centre, 2019).

Gauhati University started distance education through its Directorate of Distance Education established in 1998. The Institute of Distance and Open Learning (IDOL), formerly known as Post Graduate Correspondence School (PGCS) was established in May 1998 with the objective to ensure the opportunity to pursue quality higher education to the large number of students who could not pursue higher education through conventional mode of education (Gauhati University Institute of Distance and Open Learning, 2012).

Now in Assam, Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU), first of its kind in the entire North East and fourteenth amongst the Open universities in India was established by the Assam Legislative Assembly by an Act (XXXVII of 2005) in 2005. It started its academic programme from January, 2008 (Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, 2018).

_____

Table 5.1: Name of the institutions with address, year of establishment, name of the library

Sl. No.	Name of Institution	Yr.of Estd.	Address	Name of the Library
1	IGNOU, Regional Centre, Guwahati	1996	Christian Basti, Ghy-05	IGNOU, Regional Centre, Guwahati Library
2	IDOL	1998	GNB Road, Jalukbari, Ghy-14	IDOL Library
3	KKHSOU	2005	Head office: Patgaon, Rani Gate, Ghy-17	Central Library, KKHSOU

Table 5.2: Collection of the libraries

Sl. No.	Name	Collection		Total
		Printed	Non-printed	
1	IGNOU Library	1200	200	1400
2	IDOL Library	8,010	5000+ (UGC-Infonet)	13,010
3	Central Library KKHSOU	18,154	100 (approx)	18,254

The above table-5.2 shows that the Central Library KKHSOU has the highest number of collection printed collections (18,154), where as IDOL Library has highest number of non-printed collections.

6. FACILITIES OFFERED:

It is not easy for an open and distance learning institute's library to facilitate issue/return facility due to vast strength of users from variety of courses. Thus, IGNOU Library does not provide issue/return service. But they provide information to any query of the student from their Central Library, Head office, New Delhi. They make available access to the collection of Central Library by helping them to get membership and log in to the library e-resources. IDOL library provide circulation service only for teaching staff and Central Library, KKHSOU provides circulation service to teaching, non-teaching and research scholars only. The following table shows the facilities offered by these three libraries.

Table 6.1: Facility available:

Sl. No.	Name	Facilities
1	IGNOU Library	Reading and browsing only at office hours
2	IDOL Library	Circulation(restricted to teachers only), Reading room, Reference & Information service, Internet based service (E-resources), Reprographic
3	Central Library, KKHSOU	Circulation (restricted to teachers, staff & research scholars only), Reading room, Digital Library, Reference & Information, Reprographic, Scanning, Printing

7. APPLICATION OF ICT FOR PROVIDING LIBRARY SERVICES:

The following tables show the use of ICT for different library services viz e-book, e-journal facilities, use of library management software, usage of Barcode and RFID Techology etc. of these ODL Educational Institutions of Assam.

_____

7.1 Library management software:

Sl. No	Name	Use of software	Name of software
1	IGNOU Library	No	----
2	IDOL Library	Yes	SOUL 2.0
3	Central Library, KKHSOU	Yes	SOUL 2.0

From the above table-7.1, we can see that out of 3 libraries, 2 libraries i.e. IDOL library and Central library KKHSOU are using SOUL 2.0 library management software. The IGNOU library does not use any library management software.

7.2 Usage of Barcode and RFID Technology:

Sl. No	Name	Barcode	RFID
1	IGNOU Library	No	No
2	IDOL Library	Yes	No
3	Central Library, KKHSOU	No	Yes

The above table-7.2 shows that The Central Library, KKHSOU is using only RFID technology whereas IDOL Library is using only barcode. The IGNOU library yet not introduced the barcode and RFID.

7.3: ICT based Library Services/facility:

Sl. No	Services/Facility	Name of the libraries		
		IGNOU Library	IDOL Library	KKHSOU Library
1.	E-book, E-journal	No	Yes	Yes
2.	Internet service	Yes	Yes	Yes
3.	OPAC	No	Yes	Yes
4.	Social Networking	No	Yes	Yes
5.	CAS/SDI	No	Yes	Yes
6.	Blog	No	No	Yes
7.	Institutional Repository	No	No	Yes
8.	Library website/link	No	Yes	Yes

From the above table-7.3, we can see that Central Library, KKHSOU provides all the ICT based library services/facilities i.e. e-journal, e-books facility, internet facility, OPAC, social networking, CAS/SDI, Blog, Institutional repository, library website/link. The IDOL library does not provide blog and Institutional Repository facility and IGNOU Library offers only internet facility.

7.4: Barrier of providing ICT based library services:

Particulars	Name of libraries		
	IGNOU library	IDOL library	KKHSOU library
Lack of computer	No	No	No
Lack of internet	No	No	No

_____

_____

connectivity			
Lack of power backup facility	Yes	No	No
Lack of trained staff	No	No	No
Lack of infrastructure	Yes	No	No

From the above table 7.4, we can see that out of 3 libraries, the 2 libraries have no barriers of providing ICT based library services except the IGNOU library which has lack of power backup facility and infrastructure.

8. FINDINGS:

From the study it is found that use of ICT based library services in Open and Distance Learning Educational Institutions of Assam are very much essential. Without its application it is not possible to render up-to-date information services to its clientele. In general there are no barriers visible from the study except a few i.e. IGNOU library where collections are not satisfactory. Only need of user awareness is required in all the libraries for its optimum utilization of resources.

9. SUGGESTIONS:

From the study it can be assumed that the following suggestion will be able to boost the further use and application of ICT in the ODL libraries in Assam
➢ Provision should be made for orientation on how to search, retrieve and use of e-resources.
➢ ODL libraries should possess higher bandwidth internet connectivity for prompt services.
➢ ODL libraries of Assam should organize awareness programmes on availability and benefit of using e-resources.
➢ Adequate and convenient e-resources should be provided to the users of ODL libraries.

10. CONCLUSION:

Use and Application of ICT in ODL libraries are the need of the hour. Its use must be encouraged among the users of ODL system. Open sources have brought revolution. Learners of ODL system are to be motivated towards the various importance of ICT and learners should be oriented for searching techniques for retrieval of information also. Then only in real sense the application of ICT will be visible among the learners of ODL system and library will be able to attract the new learners.

REFERENCES:

Chandra, R. (2005). Technology Use in Open Learning System. New Delhi: Kalpaz Publications.
Dhiman, A.K & Rani, Yashoda (2005). Learn Computer Basics and Its Application in Libraries. New Delhi: Ess Ess Publication.
Gauhati University Institute of Distance and Open Learning (2012). Retrieved on January 24, 2019 from www.idolgu.in
ignou Guwahati Regional Centre (2019). Retrieved on February 4, 2019 from rcguwahati.ignou.ac.in
Kakati, Manisha (2014). HR in Capacity Building of ODI Institute's Library. Retrieved on June 10, 2015 from ir.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/1944/1824/1/24.pdf.
Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (2018). Retrieved on Janue 4, 2019 from www.kkhsou.in
Nirmal Ranjan Mazumdar & Dipen Deka (2013) . E- Everything in Open and Distance Learning of Higher Educational Institutions in Assam: A Case Study. Retrieved on June 11, 2015 from ir.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/1944/1773/1/36.pdf.

_____