

Study on Traditional Library Management and Integrated Library Management Systems in Kolhan Region

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Abstract: Libraries have undergone significant transformation from traditional manual management practices to technology-driven Integrated Library Management Systems. Traditional library management, based on manual registers, card catalogues, accession records, and physical circulation systems, has played an important role in maintaining library resources for decades. However, increasing information resources, rising user expectations, and the demand for faster information retrieval have encouraged libraries to adopt automated solutions. This research paper examines the transition from traditional library management practices to Integrated Library Management Systems in the Kolhan Region of Jharkhand, with special emphasis on academic and institutional libraries.

The study explores the level of automation, availability of ILMS software, challenges faced during implementation, and the impact of automation on library services. The paper highlights the role of systems such as SOUL, Koha, and other library automation platforms in improving cataloguing, circulation, acquisition, serial control, and Online Public Access Catalogue services. The study concludes that ILMS adoption has enhanced efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility of library services, although infrastructure limitations, financial constraints, and lack of trained manpower remain major challenges.

Keywords: Traditional Library Management, Integrated Library Management System, Library Automation, SOUL, OPAC, Digital Library.

I. INTRODUCTION

Libraries are considered essential knowledge centres that support education, research, and community development. Traditionally, library operations were managed manually through accession registers, shelf lists, catalogue cards, borrower registers, and circulation files. Although these methods provided systematic control over library collections, they required considerable time, human effort, and physical storage space. The rapid growth of information resources and increasing demand for quick access to knowledge have created the necessity for automation and technological advancement in libraries.

Library automation introduced computer-based solutions for managing routine housekeeping activities such as acquisition, cataloguing, circulation, serial control, and report generation. Integrated Library Management Systems (ILMS) combine multiple library functions into a single computerized platform, enabling efficient resource management and improved user services. The development of ILMS has transformed libraries from collection-oriented institutions into user-centred information service organizations.

In India, several initiatives have promoted library automation, particularly through academic and research institutions. The Information and Library Network Centre developed SOUL (Software for University Libraries) to support automation requirements of universities and colleges. SOUL provides modules for acquisition, cataloguing, circulation,

serial control, administration, and OPAC services while following international standards such as MARC-21 and Unicode.

The Kolhan Region of Jharkhand, comprising East Singhbhum, West Singhbhum, and Saraikela-Kharsawan districts, has several universities, colleges, and educational institutions where libraries serve students, researchers, and faculty members. The adoption of ILMS in these libraries represents an important step toward improving information accessibility and institutional efficiency.

TRADITIONAL LIBRARY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Traditional library management system represents the conventional method of organizing, maintaining, and providing access to library resources through manual procedures without the extensive use of computerized technologies. For many decades, libraries around the world depended on manual systems for acquisition, cataloguing, classification, circulation, and preservation of documents. This system developed from the fundamental principles of librarianship, where librarians maintained systematic records of books, journals, manuscripts, and other information resources using physical tools such as registers, catalogue cards, accession records, and filing systems. Before the emergence of library automation and Integrated Library Management Systems (ILMS), traditional management practices were the primary mechanism through which libraries controlled their collections and delivered services to users. Traditional library operations involved labour-intensive activities, where library professionals performed most activities manually, including recording new acquisitions, preparing catalogue entries, maintaining borrower records, and producing statistical reports. These activities were time-consuming but provided an organized framework for managing library collections. Library automation later evolved to replace or support many of these manual activities by using computer-based systems for functions such as acquisition, cataloguing, circulation, and information retrieval.

In a traditional library management system, the collection development process begins with the selection and acquisition of books and other documents. Librarians manually prepared purchase orders, maintained vendor correspondence, recorded invoices, and entered details of newly acquired materials into accession registers. The accession register served as the permanent record of every document added to the library collection, containing information such as accession number, author name, title, publisher details, price, and date of acquisition. Although this method ensured systematic documentation of resources, maintaining large collections through handwritten records required significant time and effort. Any correction, updating, or searching of information involved physical examination of multiple registers and files. As library collections expanded, the limitations of manual acquisition procedures became increasingly visible, especially in academic and research libraries where thousands of new documents were added regularly.

Cataloguing and classification were among the most important activities in traditional library management. Librarians prepared catalogue cards containing bibliographic details of books according to established cataloguing rules such as AACR and classified documents using systems such as Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) or Colon Classification. Separate cards were generally prepared under author, title, and subject headings to enable users to locate required materials. The card catalogue system provided an organized approach to information retrieval and remained an essential feature of libraries for many years. However, searching through large numbers of catalogue cards was a slow process, and maintaining accuracy became difficult when collections increased. Any change in bibliographic information required modification or replacement of catalogue cards, creating additional workload for library staff.

The circulation system in traditional libraries was managed manually through borrower registers, membership cards, and book cards. When a user borrowed a book, librarians recorded details such as borrower name, membership number, book accession number, issue date, and due date. The return process required checking records manually and updating registers. Overdue books were identified by reviewing circulation records, and preparation of circulation statistics required considerable effort. While traditional circulation methods were effective for small libraries, they became inefficient for large institutions with thousands of users and extensive collections. Manual circulation also increased the possibility of errors, misplaced records, and delays in service delivery.

Reference services in traditional libraries depended heavily on the knowledge and assistance of librarians. Users approached librarians for help in locating books, journals, indexes, bibliographies, and other information sources. Librarians played the role of information intermediaries by guiding users through catalogue systems and reference collections. Although this personal interaction helped develop strong librarian-user relationships, access to information was limited by library opening hours and the availability of physical resources. Users could not independently search library holdings remotely, and information retrieval often required more time compared with modern digital systems. Traditional library management also involved manual maintenance of serial publications such as journals, magazines, newspapers, and newsletters. Librarians recorded subscription details, arrival dates, missing issues, and renewal information in separate registers. Managing serial publications was particularly challenging because of irregular publication schedules and the need to track large volumes of issues. Similarly, stock verification and inventory control were performed manually by physically checking each document on shelves and comparing it with accession records. This process required considerable manpower and often resulted in delays, particularly in libraries with large collections.

Despite several limitations, the traditional library management system had significant advantages. It was economical because it required minimal technological infrastructure and could operate without computers or specialized software. Small libraries with limited financial resources could effectively manage their collections through manual methods. Traditional systems also helped librarians develop strong professional skills related to classification, cataloguing, collection organization, and user assistance. The manual arrangement of resources encouraged direct interaction between librarians and users, creating a personalized service environment. In many rural, school, and small institutional libraries, traditional methods remained useful because of limited access to technology, electricity, internet facilities, and trained technical personnel.

However, the increasing growth of information resources created challenges for traditional library management systems. One major limitation was the slow speed of information retrieval. Users had to physically visit the library and search catalogue cabinets or consult librarians to locate resources. Another challenge was the difficulty of maintaining accuracy in large collections. Manual records were vulnerable to human errors, duplication, loss, and physical damage. Generating reports related to collection growth, circulation statistics, and user activities required extensive manual calculations. Furthermore, traditional systems could not provide online access, automated notifications, digital catalogues, or resource-sharing facilities that became essential in modern information environments.

The emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) significantly influenced library management practices. Libraries gradually moved from traditional systems toward automated and integrated approaches to overcome the limitations of manual operations. Library automation introduced computerized solutions that improved efficiency, reduced repetitive work, and enhanced information accessibility. Modern Integrated Library Management Systems combine different library activities through a shared database, allowing efficient management of acquisition, cataloguing, circulation, serial control, and user services.

In the context of the Kolhan Region of Jharkhand, traditional library management practices have historically played an important role in academic and institutional libraries. Many college and university libraries initially depended on manual systems for managing collections and providing services to students and researchers. However, with increasing enrolment, expansion of collections, and demand for faster information access, libraries in the region have gradually adopted automation technologies. The transition from traditional management to Integrated Library Management Systems represents an important development in improving library efficiency and user satisfaction.

Traditional library management refers to the manual approach of organizing, maintaining, and providing access to library resources. In this system, librarians perform all activities manually using registers, files, and catalogue cards. The major components of traditional library management include:

1. Acquisition Management

In traditional libraries, book selection, ordering, receiving, and recording were maintained through manual registers. Librarians had to maintain separate records for purchase details, invoices, and accession numbers.

2. Cataloguing and Classification

Catalogue cards were prepared manually according to cataloguing standards. Searching library materials required physical examination of catalogue cabinets, making information retrieval slow and inconvenient.

3. Circulation Management

Issue and return transactions were recorded manually through borrower cards and registers. This process often resulted in difficulties in tracking overdue books and generating circulation statistics.

4. User Services

Traditional systems provided limited access facilities because users depended completely on librarians for locating resources. Searching availability of books required manual checking of catalogue records.

Although traditional management systems were simple and economical, they suffered from limitations such as duplication of work, higher chances of errors, slow retrieval, and difficulty in generating statistical reports.

CONCEPT OF INTEGRATED LIBRARY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (ILMS)

An Integrated Library Management System is a computerized software platform that integrates various library functions into a unified system. It enables librarians to manage collections efficiently and provides users with faster access to information resources.

Major modules of ILMS include:

1. Acquisition Module

This module manages book selection, ordering, receiving, invoice processing, and budget monitoring.

2. Cataloguing Module

The cataloguing module enables electronic creation and maintenance of bibliographic records. It reduces duplication and improves accuracy.

3. Circulation Module

The circulation module manages membership records, issue-return transactions, renewals, reservations, and overdue notifications.

4. Serial Control Module

It manages journals, magazines, subscriptions, renewals, and serial publications.

5. OPAC Services

Online Public Access Catalogue allows users to search library collections through computers or online platforms without visiting the library physically.

Modern ILMS solutions have improved library productivity by reducing repetitive tasks and enhancing user satisfaction. Research studies during 2010–2022 have emphasized that automation improves operational efficiency, resource accessibility, and quality of library services.

GROWTH OF LIBRARY AUTOMATION IN INDIA

Library automation in India expanded significantly after the introduction of information and communication technologies (ICT). Universities, colleges, and research institutions increasingly adopted automated systems to manage growing collections and provide digital services.

The development of SOUL by INFLIBNET has played an important role in supporting Indian academic libraries. SOUL 2.0 introduced features such as multilingual support, OPAC, circulation management, and compatibility with international bibliographic standards.

Open-source software such as Koha has also contributed to automation by providing flexible and economical solutions for libraries with limited financial resources. The adoption of such systems has enabled libraries to move from isolated manual operations toward integrated information management environments.

LIBRARY AUTOMATION SCENARIO IN KOLHAN REGION

Libraries in the Kolhan Region are gradually shifting from traditional practices toward automated management systems. Universities and colleges have started adopting computer-based systems to improve library operations. The major areas influenced by automation include:

- Digital catalogue creation
- Faster book circulation
- Computerized membership management
- Online searching facilities
- Generation of library reports
- Improved resource monitoring

However, the level of automation differs among institutions due to variations in financial resources, technological infrastructure, and availability of trained library professionals.

Many smaller institutional libraries still depend partly on traditional methods because of limited budgets, inadequate internet facilities, and lack of technical expertise.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TRADITIONAL AND ILMS-BASED LIBRARY MANAGEMENT

Parameters	Traditional Library Management	Integrated Library Management System
Record Maintenance	Manual registers and files	Digital database
Searching Facility	Catalogue cards	OPAC/Web OPAC
Circulation	Manual issue-return records	Automated transactions
Accuracy	Higher possibility of errors	Improved accuracy
Report Generation	Time-consuming	Instant reports
User Access	Limited	Online access
Resource Management	Difficult	Efficient monitoring

The comparison indicates that ILMS provides significant advantages over traditional systems by improving speed, accuracy, and accessibility.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF ILMS

Despite its advantages, libraries in developing regions face several barriers in implementing ILMS:

1. Financial Constraints

Small libraries often lack sufficient funds for purchasing software, hardware, and maintenance services.

2. Lack of Skilled Personnel

Successful automation requires trained librarians with knowledge of database management, software operation, and digital technologies.

3. Infrastructure Problems

Poor internet connectivity, outdated computers, and inadequate technical support affect automation processes.

4. Resistance to Change

Some library professionals hesitate to adopt new technologies due to limited technical confidence and preference for traditional practices.

II. CONCLUSION

The transition from traditional library management to Integrated Library Management Systems represents a significant development in library and information science. Traditional systems provided basic control over library resources but were limited in terms of speed, accessibility, and efficiency. ILMS has introduced automation, integration, and user-centred services that improve overall library performance.

In the Kolhan Region, library automation is progressing gradually, with academic institutions adopting systems such as SOUL and other automation platforms. However, challenges related to funding, infrastructure, and professional training must be addressed for successful implementation. Future development of libraries will depend on effective utilization of ICT tools and continuous adaptation to emerging technologies.

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