PREFACE

Library Management Software (LMS) is software that has been developed to handle basic housekeeping functions of a library. LMS is also known as Integrated Library System (ILS), because it separates software functions into discrete programs called modules, each of them integrated with a unified interface. Now a day, there are plenty of LMS packages available in the market or in the public domain. Most of them are web-based and client-server architecture based. In recent times, LMS are continuously improving, as they are integrating more and more features like track and process of interlibrary loan requests, online acquisition of documents from vendors, remote access document and patron management; and even Web 2.0 features.

In the last few years we have seen the development of a number of LMS products in the open source world. Avanti, Emlida, Evergreen, Koha, Newgenlib, OpenBiblio, OPALS-NA, PhpMyBibli, PhpMyLibrary, etc. are some examples of open source LMS packages. The major advantage of open source software is interoperability. Open source software systems cost nothing or very low cost to use, whether they have one or one thousand users. On the other hand few people are engaged with a commercial LMS package development, whereas a large pool of community developers are engaged with an open source LMS package. But, there is no vendor responsibility for the software support for open source LMS can vary, and often depends on the user/developer community’s commitment to the project. The level of technical knowledge needed to install and maintenance of open source software LMS packages can also be a barrier to its use for the LIS professionals.

Fortunately, although little late, in Assam, almost all the College and University libraries have adopted state-of-the-art library automation technology for making the library and information services faster and effective. The College Libraries of Assam are encouraged to use SOUL package by developed by INFLIBNET Centre, an Inter University Centre of UGC. On the other hand, the University and Institute of National Importance libraries of Assam are using different commercial packages like SOUL, LibSys, etc. for automation work. Among open source LMS, Koha is the first open source and broad-featured LMS licensed under GNU Public License. In North East India, North East Hill University (NEHU), Shillong, Meghalaya; Rajib Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam University, Silchar, Assam have successfully implemented Koha open source LMS for library
automation and converted the database from other proprietary package they were using earlier.

Keeping in mind, I discussed with my fellow professionals and respected teachers of LIS who have encouraged me to concentrate on the core issue of use of open source LMS in LICS. My teachers in DLISc including Professor Narendra Lahkar have also advised me for undertaking the topic for my PhD and Professor Lahkar has agreed to my request for guiding me for the study.

After continuing for these years on the study, I have got some input. The results on the core issues of prospects of using open source LMS in College and University Libraries of Assam, I am confident that these will be able to guide both research scholar and LIS professionals in meeting their knowledge thrust and further develop their knowledge to a desired height.

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