ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Institutes of higher learning in Assam are the active users of Library Software Packages both commercial as well as open source LMS like Koha, Libsys and SOUL 2.0 and making maximum use of all the modules available in the software packages. All the Institutes are trying their best to cope up with the modern information and communication technologies. Most of the surveyed Libraries of Institutes of higher learning in Assam are also putting their effort to maximum utilisation of serial control module. Peculiarity involved in serial control upsets the use of computers in serial control and hence the area is avoided most of the time at automation scenario. Again incompatibility of serial control modules offered by the library Management Software. The procedures developed by this software are so complex that sometimes it looks easier to use normal method rather than automation. Librarians have been largely faced difficulty in managing subscribed print journal, e-journal and bound journals. Track the arrival of journals, Manage late issues, skipped issues, and claims with the suppliers. Manage complex classifications, with delayed publications, publications out of sequence. Missing publications, received publications, collection can be displayed differently in the OPAC.

The purpose of the research is to study the use of Library Management Software Packages in the Libraries of Institutes of higher learning in Assam with reference to Serial Control Module. The study also aimed to find out the problems faced by the library personnel while using the serial control module.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** The methodology for conducting the study consists of librarian’s perspective survey through prescribed set of questionnaires, personal interview, observation and literature review. Literature review always helps in preparing the product and ideologies of diverse sides involved in carrying out a study. Documents like books, journals, articles, online resources, dissertations, theses and seminar papers dealing with LMS have been consulted. Search engines, Meta search engines, Wikis, Blogs, various Institutional Repositories, and Digital Libraries etc. are used comprehensively for searching online resources for the study. The geographic area
of the study is confined to the Institutes of higher learning in Assam. In the study LMS packages like Koha, Libsys and SOUL 2.0 are compared with each other used by the libraries of Institutes of Higher Learnings in Assam.

**Findings:** The study reveals that, in spite of putting the all-out effort by the Libraries of Institutes of Higher Learnings in Assam in maximum use and utilization of serial control module, still it is not yet accomplished by them fully. There are more to implement by them for the progress in Library automation area. The following are the major findings mentioned very briefly.

1. The researcher has found that all the 8 surveyed libraries are automated. Library staffs of all the surveyed libraries are doing their best to make the library automation successful which is also helping them to uplift the services they are offering to their patrons. Koha is found to be used by 3 libraries, Libsys is found to be use by 2 libraries and SOUL is found to be used by 3 libraries.

2. SOUL 2.0 is found to be more user-friendly software in terms of overall features. It may also be noted that for some individual features Libsys and Koha scores equally well.

3. 6 (six) surveyed libraries under the study are using serial control module. The Final average scores calculated for all the subsection of serial control like Acquisition Sub-system, Cataloguing Sub-system, Issue Management Sub-system, Back Volume Management Sub-system and Reporting Sub-system indicate that SOUL 2.0 stands out as the most user satisfactory and supportive LMS package than Koha and Libsys.

4. The problems in serial control module are Irregular Intervals, Missing Issue, Merger of serial Issue, Change of Journal Title, Journal entry in the database, Variation of contents, Lack of trained manpower, Advanced payment is made in case of serials which is difficult to maintain through the software, Irregular
Binding, Delivery time and misplacements of Serials, Decreasing number of printed journal subscription.

5. Measures like Regular binding, Assurance supply of serials, Claim notices, Training, Standard software documentation, New appointment of the trained manpower, Management interest etc. are put forward by the researcher.

**Research Limitations/Implications:** The entire survey of the study is based on the Institutes of higher learning in Assam only. This study is an effort to see the automation scenario of these libraries and to find out the problems faced by the surveyed libraries while using serial control module of the Library Management Software Packages.

**Originality/Value:** The research work will be of maximum value to academic communities, researchers, LIS professionals and Library Management Software (LMS) developers. In this study it is expected that it will also help the library personnel in sorting out the problems they face while using the Library Management Software Packages.

**Keywords:** Library Management Software, Serials, Serial Control Module, Integrated Library Systems, Library Automation, Institutes of Higher Learning, Koha, Libsys, SOUL 2.0

**Research Type:** Descriptive, Evaluative, Survey Based.