Chapter-1
Introduction
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The introductory chapter deals with small description about retrospective conversion, followed by origin of the research problem, selection of the problem, definition of the terms, objectives of the problem, scope and limitations of the study, need and importance of the study, research design and methodology.

1.1. Introduction

Nowadays, libraries and information centers are automating their activities and functions to meet the users' increasing needs efficiently and effectively. The first major bottleneck is the **Retrospective Conversion** of existing catalogue into machine-readable form. It may take years depending upon the size of the existing collection of the libraries or information centers. The smaller and new libraries have an advantage over the larger and established libraries because of the lesser quantity of data for retrospective conversion. The word "Retrospective" indicates that the process is only for already existing records, and the meaning of the word "Conversion" refers to the form and format of the records changing something from one form to another. Thus, retrospective conversion in library and information center means "changing already existing catalogue from existing traditional form to a machine-readable form." In other words one can say that Retrospective conversion is the process of conversion of printed catalogue of library holdings into machine-readable form, in a pre-defined format using accepted standards for making it searchable through machine. This process is a prerequisite for library computerization. Libraries cannot begin on-line transactions of other functions such as acquisition, cataloguing, circulation, OPAC and serial control etc. unless and until retrospective conversion is not fully done. Retrospective conversion is typically accomplished by one or a combination of two basic methods: matching and extracting machine-readable records from a resource file or keying records directly into a database.

According to Bryant Philip, "Retrospective conversion is one such area where once money has been invested, a permanent benefit is assured." Though the process is expensive, laborious and time-consuming, but all these can be justified in relation to the benefits it generates for the researchers community.
David Stoker observed that "retrospective catalogue conversion is a one-off cost which will ultimately result in savings in staff's time and efforts in the libraries concerned and will also convey tangible benefits to the library community as a whole."^4

In the Indian context, libraries have started gearing themselves to retrospective conversion to give the boost to more and more resource sharing among libraries, though in laggardly manner the challenges put forward by information and communication technologies, networking, electronic information, etc. In India there are more than 65,000 libraries. Out of these, an overwhelming 97 per cent are traditional libraries, not even 3 per cent are automated; there are only 300 electronic libraries. So inspite of all the hype, India is still very slow in embracing the benefits of modernisation. The University Grants Commission (UGC) has initiated efforts in this direction through its INFLIBNET Project. This project has made the beginning of computerization of academic libraries in India. The focus is to access information from anywhere and boost the concept of resource sharing among libraries. Under this programme about 142 university libraries have already been computerised so far.\(^5\)

1.2. Origin of Research Problem

The problem of retroconversion is not a new one. According to Avram (1990)\(^6\) the discussions were frequent during the early 1970s but the solution to the problem lay dormant until today. The lack of co-ordination is still a serious problem for bibliographic control in India. Retroconversion is still thought to be one of the most time and money consuming activities in the process of library automation. In any retroconversion process, there is the necessity for library management to make a number of decisions. Although there exists general guidelines, but that can always be translated to local situations. LIBER Library Automation group (1990)\(^7\) said that "Library and information automation is like a football where the both goal posts and rules keep changing". In the field of retroconversion, there are rapid technological developments and therefore the individual library has to translate the general guidelines available to local situations. The guidelines will help in the maximization of access to library collection by retroconversion. The present study will focus on different issues related to retroconversion, i.e, parameters of retroconversion, training, Process of retroconversion, hardware and software used and overall management of the retroconversion project etc. in selected libraries of New Delhi, i.e, Central Secretariat
Library, Zakir Husain Library, JMI and Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. This will help in developing a systematic conversion program at national and international level and hence proper bibliographic control.

1.3. Selection of the Problem

During last two decades of past millennium witnessed revolutionary changes in the information technology vis-à-vis library services. The libraries are experiencing the tremendous paradigm shift from ownership to access of information; and from informing to involving the users. In this context, automation of libraries has become the top most priority. Automation should be viewed as a means to increase efficiency, manage costs, improve library service and management or shortcomings of existing manual systems. It required a tremendous amount of planning and work, including preparing the staffs for the radical change in their work. In the age of Information Technology libraries are automating their activities and functions to meet the users, increasing needs efficiently and effectively. The first major concern is the retroconversion of existing catalogue into machine-readable form. Retroconversion of documents is an important aspect of the library. Retroconversion is the process of turning of libraries and existing paper catalogue record in to machine-readable form. Delsey (1990) describes retroconversion as the “straight forward encoding; and keying of pre-existing records from a card catalogue into a machine-readable database”. The basic reason of selecting this problem is to know the status of retroconversion, process and other aspect related to retroconversion. The basic objectives of retroconversion are to improve the library services, reduction in time for searching of the documents, to maximize to the collection, to create a database for the automation system, to improve library internal procedures and to maximize returns on automation expenditure. Retroconversion has the reputation of being one of the most time and money consuming activities in library automation. The prospect of the apparently endless quantity of extra work deters many librarians, who generally find themselves already copying with a low budget and trying to keep up with the routine activities of their library. However, retroconversion is an issue which every library must face sooner or later. To keep pace with the rapid developments made possible in library services and adequately to tackle the effects of the increase in, and diversification of demands for information, the automation of all library processes has become inevitable and retroconversion serves as an indispensible tool to reach such objective. Thus the
question is not whether a library undertakes retroconversion, but rather how it should be done.

The problem selected for the present study entitled “Retroconversion of Documents in Central Secretariat Library, Zakir Husain Library, JMI, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi: An Evaluative Study”. The problem deals with the criteria, priorities, guidelines, policy matter, hardware and software requirements, in-house training of library personnel, cost effectiveness in outsourcings, impact on users services and satisfactory level of users etc.

1.4. Definition of Terms

An adequate definition of terms is necessary, since lack of proper explanation can contribute to the problem. The term, Retroconversion, Documents, Central Secretariat Library, Zakir Husain Library, JMI, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi and Evaluative Study will be often used by the investigator.

Retroconversion: ALA Glossary of Library & Information Science defines ‘Retroconversion’ as “the process of converting the database of library holdings from non-machine readable form to machine readable form and that are not converted during day to day process” 10

Documents: An original or official paper relied upon as the basis, proof, or support of anything else, including any writing, book, or other instrument conveying information pertinent to such proof or support. 11

A written or printed paper that bears the original, official, or legal form of something and can be used to furnish decisive evidence or information. 12

Central Secretariat Library: Central Secretariat Library (CSL) under the Department of Culture is one of the largest tangible treasures of knowledge next to National Library, Kolkatta for Indian and foreign official document resources. CSL’s resources are an amalgamation of number of Secretariat Libraries of pre-independence India and many other old institutions including the resources of Imperial Secretariat Library, Calcutta that came into existence in 1891 as envisaged by Lord Curzon. Its existence was confirmed and validated by the Imperial Library Act of 1902. It has a large collection of printed and non-printed documents organized into different viable branches and divisions. It was intended that it should be a library of reference, a
working place for students and repository of material for the future historians of India, in which, so far as possible, every work written about India at any time can be seen and read. With shifting of the Capital, the library was also moved to New Delhi and since 1969 it is housed in a separate wing of the Shastri Bhawan Complex. 

**CSL comprises of –**

1. Central Secretariat Library, G. Wing, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi-110001.

2. Hindi & Regional Languages Wing (Tulsi Sadan Library), Bahawalpur House, Bhagwandas Road, New Delhi – 110001.


**Zakir Husain Library, JMI:** The library of Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) was established with the establishment of the Jamia in 1920. The library was started first with a small collection donated by Maulana Mohdl Ali Jauhar. The library was named Dr. Zakir Husain library in 1973 on the name of the former Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia and former president of India. Dr. Zakir Husain Library is the central library of the Jamia library system, which includes various faculty libraries. The old building of library covers an area of 22,900 sq. ft. A new central library building covered area of 1,06,850 sq. ft. The building has been designed to reflect the Jamia’s contemporary image and accommodate the ever-increasing demands of the modern library system.

**Nehru Memorial Museum and Library:** The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML) is located in the majestic Teen Murti House, the official residence of the first Prime Minister of India. The Government of India decided soon after Nehru’s death to dedicate the Teen Murti House to his memory and on 14 November, 1964, Nehru’s 75th birthday, the then President of India, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishna, inaugurated the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Later, on 1 April, 1966, the Government set up the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library Society to manage the institution as an autonomous body. The General Council and the President and the Vice President of the Society are nominated by the Union Government.
New Delhi: New Delhi is the capital of India. It is situated within the metropolis of Delhi and serves as the seat of the Government of India and the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi

Evaluative: The Librarian’s Glossary defines evaluation as “An estimate of the value of a work as a contribution to the literature of a subject”.16

Study: The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines ‘Study’ as “the act of considering or examining something in detail”.17 It is also applying the mind to learning and understanding a subject in order to discover new information.

1.5. Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to “discover answer to questions through the application of scientific procedures or any other adopted proved procedures” 18 The main objective is to find out the truth which is hidden and which has not been discovered yet.

The main objectives of the present study to examine the status of retroconversion, its process, hardware and software used, in-house training of library staff, cost effectiveness in outsourcing, impact on users services and satisfactory level of users etc. The present study attempts to achieve the following objectives.

1.5.1 To find out the status of retroconversion in selected Central Secretariat Library, Zakir Husain Library, JMI and Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

1.5.2 To find out the methods of retroconversion.

1.5.3 To study the hardware and software requirement for the retroconversion.

1.5.4 To establish the rational for setting priorities for retroconversion.

1.5.5 To study how best to accomplish the job of retroconversion.

1.5.6 To study the requirement and cost of manpower for retroconversion project.

1.5.7 To study the impact of retroconversion on library staff, users and library system as a whole.

1.5.8 To identify the training needs of staff for the process of retroconversion.

1.5.9 To study the skilled manpower available.
1.5.9 To study how retroconversion reduces the time for searching of a document.

1.5.10 To measure the user perception about the retroconversion.

1.6. **Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The present study includes in its scope the analyses of various aspects of retroconversion of documents of selected libraries of this study. The scope of the research entitled *Retroconversion of Documents in Central Secretariat Library, Zakir Husain Library, JMI, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi: An Evaluative Study* is limited to only three libraries of New Delhi namely: Central Secretariat Library, Zakir Husain Library, JMI, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. These libraries are well-established, well recognized and well reputed libraries in India as well as abroad.

It is necessary to draw some limitations specific to this research. The limitations are mostly based on these factors: time, geographical location and selection of library and area of study. This limitation was necessary to develop worthwhile norms towards the accomplishment of the present study. The investigator was able to identify some of the major limitations such as,

1.6.1 The limitation of time is associated with the period of research. In the other words, the time of gathering information from questionnaires takes more time.

1.6.2 The present study consists of three libraries of New Delhi. The questionnaires were distributed to Librarians/Directors and library users.

1.6.3 It is also necessary to narrow down the geographical areas of study because selecting a much wider area tends to defuse the results and findings in a research works; therefore, such a study will not be feasible if a much wider geographical area is taken into consideration. In view of these factors, the present study confines its scope and limitation to the three-selected libraries of New Delhi. The geographical area is restricted in New Delhi only.

1.6.4 The responses have been taken only from Librarians/Directors and library users those who are the part of the under study libraries and those who have been using library services and are regular users of library.
1.7. Needs and Importance of the Study

Retroconversion is an important essential activity to be undertaken in libraries in order to create machine readable records and to automate the library functions. Unless and until the library holdings are being retroconverted, full automation of the library can not be achieved. The conversion of database of library holdings from non-machine-readable form to machine-readable form is a pre-requisite to implementing an automated system. This database would become the foundation for other library activities such as on-line public access catalogue (OPAC), circulation, catalogue maintenance, resource sharing, etc. These records provide the means of generating statistics and other information that is needed to improve the existing services and introduction of new one.

Broadly the need and importance of the retroconversion can be meant for local, regional, national and international perspective.

The need and importance of this study are as follows:

1.7.1 It will maximize access to the material in the library collections.
1.7.2 It will facilitate better library management as a whole.
1.7.3 It will help in developing a national strategy for retroconversion.
1.7.3 It will help in providing better services to the users/ clienteles.
1.7.4 It will help in preserving and promoting cultural heritage of libraries.
1.7.5 It will improve the performance of internal library operations.
1.7.6 It will protect the library data.
1.7.7 It will help to share the bibliographic resources.
1.7.8 It will facilitate the mutual cataloguing.
1.7.9 It will contribute to the universal bibliographical control.

1.8. Research Design

The term ‘design’ means “drawing an outline” or planning or arranging details. It is a process of making decisions before the situation arises in which the decision has to be carried out. ‘Research design’ is planning a strategy of conducting research. It plans as to: what is to be observed, how it is to be observed, when/where it is to be observed, why it is to be observed, how to record observations, how to analyze/interpret
observations, and how to generalize. Research design is thus, a detailed plan of how the goals of research will be achieved or we can say that research design is a blueprint or a detailed plan for a research study. 19

According to Ronald R. Powel and Lynn s. Connaway defines methodology as, “How the study will be organized, details of techniques and tools that will be used to collect data. It should include a description of the kind of data that will be collected, including the criteria for admissibility of data and type of data collection method (questionnaire, interview) to be used to gather data.” 20

As there are various types of research techniques

- Historical
- Experimental
- Survey
- Case study

For this study the investigator used survey technique.

According to Busha and Harter defines Survey as, “Libraries surveys systematic, in-depth examination of libraries, library system, or networks of libraries. Typical comparisons are made in those surveys among various libraries.” 21

Methodology has its own implication and importance in scientific investigation because objectively any research investigation cannot be obtained unless it is carried out in a very systematic and planned manner. Scientific investigation involves careful and proper design, use standardized tools and tests identifying adequate sample by using sampling technique. There are several methods of collection of data for measuring the performance and quality of libraries. These methods can broadly be grouped into two, namely quantitative and qualitative methods and investigator used both. The quantitative methods include verification of library records, questionnaire, interview and qualitative methods comprising of focus group and observation. The tools used for the study were questionnaire, observation and informal interview. It is very difficult to get the view of all the users and staff due to the lack of time and resources, therefore investigator chose the sample on the basis of random sampling
method for collecting the data. The data collected through questionnaire were organized and tabulated by using statistical methods, tables and percentage.

1.9 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is composed of 7 chapters.

Chapter – 1
Introduction

The introductory chapter highlights small description about retrospective conversion, followed by origin of the research problem, selection of the problem, definition of the terms, objectives of the problem, scope and limitations of the study, need and importance of the study, research design and methodology.

Chapter – 2
Retrospective conversion

Chapter 2 starts by giving brief picture about library automation, followed by overall picture of retroconversion, history, its need, importance and process.

Chapter – 3
Review of related literature

A chapter 3 deal explains an overall review of studies conducted abroad as well as in India in a chronological order regarding the topic. The investigator reviewed only those studies, which were similar to the present study. The previously published literature related to the present studies were summarized.

Chapter – 4
Profile of Libraries

Chapter 4 deals with an overall introduction about the libraries under study, its collection, users, staff and services etc. in a systematic manner.

Chapter – 5
Research Methodology

Chapter 5 reveals the statement of the problem, hypotheses, methodology, sample population, variable taken, pilot study, tools used for the study and data analysis method.
Chapter – 6
Data Analysis and Interpretation

Chapter 6 highlights the analysis and interpretation of data collected through questionnaire.

Chapter – 7
Conclusion, findings and suggestions

Chapter 7 is indicates with conclusion, findings, tenability of hypothesis and suggestions for further research.

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