Chapter – 7

CONCLUSION

7.1 FINDINGS

University library serves as an invaluable aid in the conservation of knowledge and ideas by acquiring and processing documents of various types and making the collection of recorded knowledge available to teachers, research scholars, students and other staff of the university. It is an integral part of the university, which assists in achieving the objectives of the parent institution. The need for research on document description practices in the university libraries in North East India is considered to be a very important area, as the present practice is to be re-assessed in the present age of constant technological revolution.

The findings of the study are summarized as per the objectives of the study as follows:

Objective – 1: To study the university library system in North East and to find out whether the present practices are providing satisfactory services to the users.

Study on users’ need is very essential which helps the library managers and planners to take necessary measures in order to improve the services of the library. The users study reveals that quite a large numbers of users have not enrolled
themselves as library members for availing library services. Daily average attendance of library users is not very encouraging. In an overall figure only 15.47% of users (2004-05) were daily attended to the library on academic working days. Some reasons of poor attendance are – inadequate library collection, users are not getting their essential documents in the library, a major percentage of library collection is occupied by the old stock – new books as per the new revised syllabus are very few in numbers, which is reflected from the users comment put forwarded in the questionnaire. Among other reasons – poor library services, courses are not library oriented, poor reading habit, users lack of awareness about the potentiality of the library services etc. may be considered for this poor daily turn out in the university libraries. Daily attendance figure during academic working days is found lowest in Gauhati University with 9.66% on an average. This is because of that the Gauhati University library still practicing manual system for technical operations and rendering services to the users and very few numbers of new books as per the prescribed syllabus are added annually to the collection.

The enrolment in university education in the North Eastern states is 6.4%, which is lower than the national average 7.2%. Some reason of lower enrollment in higher education in North Eastern states are – all North Eastern states, except Assam and Manipur, having only one university whether the states like Bihar, U.P etc. are having more than twenty universities, geographical isolation, obstacles in communications, lack of infrastructure facilities etc. are also considered to be other reasons of lower enrolment. As a result of availability of limited number of higher educational institutes without proper infrastructural facilities, a large number of
students from the North East are going outside the state every year for taking admission in the higher education courses.

A balance collection of a university library as per the academic programmes of the university is essential in order to provide required documents to the users. While the collection development of the university libraries in North East should be coordinated at various levels in order to rationalize the resources to avoid buying duplicate titles, the individual library itself should always try to develop its own collection as per the needs of the university community. Financial constraints, raising cost of publications and their phenomenal growth in each subject etc. are found to be the main reasons of poor growth of collection. In an overall figure only 2.25% of annual growth of collection at all university libraries of North East is found in this study. The Gauhati University library has the lowest annual growth with 0.29% and Mizoram University is having the highest growth with 10.3% annual growth.

Among the different categories of reading materials, books occupied the largest portion (82.27%) while current periodicals is the lowest with 0.15%. It is very discouraging to note that Gauhati University has not subscribed even a single copy of current periodicals in the year 2003 – 04. However, access to online e-journals through the INFLIBNET E-journal consortium under UGC-INFONET is now available in almost all the university libraries, except Mizoram University library, in North East. These online journals provide full text as well as abstracts of online articles covering many disciplines (Arts, Humanities, Social Science, Science), which immensely benefited the research scholars of this region.
Besides inappropriate library collection, disproportionate budget allocation in different heads made a negative impact on the overall improvement in library services, collection development and use of reading materials. As per the statistics on three university libraries of the region, a lion's share of the library budget has been spent for staff salary leaving very less amount for other heads, including collection development. The Gauhati University library has spent 92%; the Mizoram University library has spent 57% and the NEHU library has spent least percentage 33% for staff salary in 2003-04.

Both manual and automated library services are introduced in the university libraries in North East. The Gauhati university library, Tripura University library and Mizoram University library are following manual methods to carry out their technical operations. All university libraries, except Mizoram university library, are offering Internet and online access to e-journals services. OPAC is available in nine university libraries. Abstracting and Indexing service is providing only by IITG library. No university library of the region has introduced SDI and translation in their programmes yet.

Regarding library staff, only three universities, out of twelve universities, are having librarian and the rest university libraries are running by the In-charge librarian, which result sluggish development of libraries in all respect. The In-charge librarian usually does not want to shoulder the responsibility of a permanent librarian and on the contrary the university authority rarely shown interest for the development of the library in real sense. A detailed analysis of the study made has been given in Chapter – 5.
Objective – 2: To study the existing practices of document description in the university libraries in North East India.

Document description vis-à-vis library cataloguing is a process of listing and describing documents in the holding of a library or a group of libraries so that the user as well as the library staff can have access to documents available in the collection. This is an essential component of library infrastructure, which brings the library users with the contact of his/her required document/information pinpointedly, exhaustively, expeditiously and instantly. The university libraries in North East are practicing manual card as well as online catalogues (OPAC). The three university libraries in the region are still practicing card cataloguing, another three university libraries are extending fully automated cataloguing services to the readers while the rest six university libraries are extending the facility of automated catalogues for the documents already entered in the library database under the retrospective conversion process and at the same time these six libraries are also keeping manual card catalogues for the documents catalogued before the automation was introduced. As the retrospective conversion process has not yet been completed in these university libraries, both the cards and OPACs are made available for the users.

The three university libraries viz. Gauhati University, Tripura University and Mizoram University where manual card catalogues are available for users, many bottlenecks were found. These university libraries are neither prepares full catalogue entries nor they prepare all types of entries. The entries on the cards are not uniform, consistent and complete. They followed different codes for preparing catalogues and do not replace the catalogue cards already prepared following
another code earlier while they switched over to a new code. The conventional 
manual catalogues are incapable of satisfying the varied approaches of readers and it 
is found to be an un-suitable tool for retrieval of information. The act of searching 
documents in the card catalogue is very cumbersome which require a lot of time. 
Moreover, a single person can use a cabinet at one time and other persons have to 
wait till his completion. The cabinets themselves are occupied a large floor area of 
the library.

Preparation and filing of cards manually requires much time. Time lag 
between the arrival of a book in the library and making them ready for users is very 
vast.

The undergoing retrospective conversion process in six university libraries of 
the North East are found to very slow and duplication of works. In the retrospective 
conversion process, these university libraries are already carried out a lot of 
duplication works as each library has independently undertaken the process of data 
entry due to non-availability of appropriate tool for copying cataloguing data into 
their library databases. On the contrary, these university libraries are not maintaining 
any bibliographic standards for creating quality records in the databases, which is 
found to be a major barrier for introducing resource sharing and networking among 
the libraries. The INFLIBNET centre, an autonomous organization of UGC, has 
rightly suggested some measures for standardization of databases created by the 
university libraries in India. The university libraries of the region can take the help 
of such suggestions for preparing standard bibliographic record.
Objective – 3 : To identify the limitations of the conventional manual catalogues.

Manual card cataloguing practices have many limitations such as – it provides limited access points; preparation of cards take much time and these to be restricted to certain limit to avoid bulkiness; filing of cards is a tedious job; searching documents in the cabinet is very cumbersome; catalogue cabinet occupies a big floor area; a lot of time, manpower and money required for maintenance of card catalogues etc. On the other hand automated catalogues have many advantages over manual card catalogues such as – it provides multiple access points as per users query; duplication of works can be avoided; catalogues can be searched from many locations through remotely located OPAC terminals; filing is an automatic process and information can be searched and retrieved in any desired order using single term, Boolean logic etc.

Conventional manual cataloguing practice concentrates on listing the contents of the collection of a particular library and it retrieve only a small portion of the individual bibliographical items available in the collection. Preparation of multiple cards to provide different access points to users for a single book require much space in the catalogue cabinets. Besides, time required for preparation as well as filing of cards in the catalogue cabinets are the significant disadvantages of conventional manual catalogues.

The conventional card cataloguing still practicing in Gauhati University; Tripura University and Mizoram University are incapable of handling increased volume of information on one hand and users varied information demand on the
other. These libraries must re-invent their method of cataloguing in order to survive in the present age. The university libraries in North East should be well equipped with IT in order to move from giving access to limited resources to giving access to unlimited resources. The practice of conventional card cataloguing cannot fulfill the information needs of the university community and it is found to be an un-suitable practice in the environment of constant technological changes.

**Objective – 4:** To study the extent of users’ satisfaction from the existing practice of document description in the university libraries in North East in manual, partly-automated and automated environment.

As mentioned earlier, the university libraries in North East can be grouped into three different forms in respect of extending the cataloguing services to the users such as – manual, partly-automated and automated catalogues.

The users’ of the libraries practicing manual card catalogues are not satisfied with the preparation, maintenance and retrieval capabilities of card catalogues. A very small percentage of users (6.25%) are regularly using card catalogues and regarding the information retrieval capability of the card catalogues only 4.5% users had opined that the card catalogues are guiding them in locating their required documents. **Thus the conventional card catalogue has a very limited use by the users as it is reflected in the Chapter – 6 (Table 6.5 and 6.7)**

There are a wide range of variations are found in choosing access points for a document such as author, title, author and title etc. On the contrary, manual
card catalogue entries are needed to be restricted to a certain numbers, thereby limiting the access point as per readers’ demand.

Other six partly-automated university libraries of the region where both manual card catalogues and OPACs are available, only 6.6% users are consulted card catalogues regularly, on the other hand, 26.3% users are used OPAC for searching information regularly. However, it is noticed that though OPAC is available in these libraries, a large percentage of users are not using this tool for searching documents. This is because of that they are not aware about it and some users are not even know how to use computer for searching documents available in the library. For this, the university libraries should initiate user education programme in order to make them friendly in the changing automated environment.

The rest three fully automated university libraries where OPAC is available, a totally different picture regarding the use of catalogue was found. In these libraries 59% users are regularly use OPAC for searching documents and 73% users are expressed their satisfaction on OPAC which guide them in locating required information. Thus the automated catalogue is found to be sufficiently used by the library users and introduction of OPAC in the university libraries has improved the use of library resources as reflected from the observation made in Chapter – 6 (Table 6.9, 6.10 & 6.11).
Objective – 5: To study the current status of library automation and to suggest for implementing university library network for the North East.

Automation and networking of libraries have become a common task of present day for effective retrieval of information, sharing of resources and also to access network electronic resources over Internet. In this age, the traditional libraries where collection is dominated largely by print publications and access mechanisms are by and large manual cannot provide satisfactory services to the users. The university libraries of this region are needed to be shifted from the manual or partly automated mode to fully automated mode and from stand-alone libraries to networked libraries in order to provide users with seamless connection to access networked digital resources through Internet.

The process of library automation in the university libraries in North East is found to be slow. Three university libraries (i.e. G.U, TU, MZU) are yet to start the process of automation. Though the G.U library had introduced computer in the year 1994, a very small percentage (2.6%) of records were computerized using CDS/ISIS. Other two university libraries are yet to start the process of automated cataloguing.

The Arunachal University library, Tezpur University library and IIT library, Guwahati are fully automated while the rest six university libraries are continuing the process of retro-conversion. Among them, Nagaland University library (Kohima Campus) has already converted 73% records; NEHU has converted 71% records and Manipur University library has converted 65% records at the time when the survey
was conducted. The overall status of computerization of total library holdings available at all university libraries of the North East covered only 40.24% records which are converted into machine-readable form.

Out of the twelve university libraries studied, nine libraries having OPAC terminals; six libraries are using SOUL and four libraries are using LIBSYS package for library automation activities.

There is an urgent need to set up a network of university libraries in North East. The networking will promote and facilitate sharing of resources available within the university libraries of the region in order to provide maximum information to users, to lower operational cost, to reduce raising costs of publications and also to make optimum use of resources available in the university libraries in North East. However, to participate in the networking libraries are needed to be automated fully first.

With the advancement of technology, the information sources has gone through many changes – from textual printed materials to computer files with sound, images etc, which are becoming a very important library resources. In this technological age the manually operated old pattern university libraries are at crossroads. The application of new technologies for various library activities and handling of information make them under tremendous pressure. They are also under pressure because of their inability to handle the growing numbers of published printed, non-printed and networked electronic resources on one hand and readers varied information demand on the other hand.
The university libraries of the region should re-invent their methods for organization and dissemination of information and they should provide access to any document at any time available in any format anywhere in the world so as to fulfill the growing information need of the university community and also to survive in the present age of technological development.

7.2 SUGGESTIONS

1. University libraries in North East should complete the conversion of existing library collections in to machine-readable form as early as possible. By converting the printed manual catalogues of the available collection in to machine readable form, they could provide better services to the users as per their need.

2. Conversion of existing library collections into machine-readable form be carried out carefully adhering to the bibliographic standards. INFLIBNET Centre’s suggestion may be taken into consideration to maintain such standards.

3. Proper planning is necessary for the libraries undertaken the process of retro-conversion. Existing unused collection i.e. dead stock be kept separately and the record of which are need not be converted into machine-readable form as their inclusion will loss a lot of manpower, money and time.

4. The university libraries of the region have been performing the task of retrospective conversion independently which seems to be duplication of same work by each university as it is estimated that 45% of the documents available in the Indian universities are duplicate in titles (Prem Chand: 2003). Duplicate works can be avoided if proper retro-conversion tool, in physical medium form such as in CD-
ROM form, is available for importing cataloguing data in the database from some readymade sources prepared by a central agency preferably by INFLIBNET centre. INFLIBNET centre may take the initiative for developing a common retrospective conversion tool for the Indian university libraries in order to make the process of library automation faster, economic, and time saving and also to create quality records in the database.

5. Efforts should be made to develop union catalogues of university libraries of North East in machine-readable form to facilitate networking and resource sharing.

6. Weeding out of unused documents along with the catalogue cards of such documents should be carried out at regular intervals.

7. Emergence and use of modern technology in Library and Information centres have arose a big question of survival for the conventional libraries of the present age. In order to survive, the conventional university libraries in North East should adopt modern technology and convert themselves into automated library phase-wise.

8. University library network for the North East India be established for cooperation and resource sharing among the university libraries of the region. The network should offer shared cataloguing, co-operative collection development, reference service, manpower training etc.
9. Processing of documents should be done immediately after procurement. It will speed up the process of cataloguing and will minimize the time gap between procurement and making available such document to users.

10. The university libraries should initiate the process of making their library resources accessible through web OPAC enabling the remote users to search the library resources anywhere.

11. In-service training should be organized for the library staff on the application of modern technology for proper organization and dissemination of information by the university library authorities at regular intervals.

12. In order to educate users on how to use computer for searching OPAC, techniques of accessing online resources, user education programme be initiated. A publication in the form of booklet explaining the technique of searching library database as well as web documents should be kept near the terminals.

13. Demonstration on the use of MARC 21 format for creation of quality bibliographic record should be organized for the library staffs engaged in the creation of library database and cataloguing.

14. The university authorities should provide sufficient fund for modernization and networking of university libraries of the region in addition to the capital grants provided by the INFLIBNET Centre for automation of university libraries.

15. In this digital era, libraries need to integrate data from a variety of resources, and knowledge of metadata integration for the library professionals have
become more important than ever. Considering the importance of metadata, the Library and Information Science Departments of the region should organize workshop on metadata for the library professional of North East India.

16. The services of most of the university libraries of the region are affected immensely because of the non-recruitment of permanent librarian. Because of the continuation of the in-charge librarian, the library cannot equip to provide standard services including cataloguing services.

17. University libraries of the region should regularly be contributed the bibliographic data of their holdings to the INFLIBNET centre for inclusion into the union database of books, serials, thesis etc. in order to access them by the other universities in India.

18. A plan may be made for establishing library consortia at the regional level to avail the benefits of accessing resources from all libraries by the members.

7.3 CONCLUSION

As indicated in chapter – 1, the study has been made on the existing practices of document description in the university libraries in North East India in order to find out whether the library catalogues available in these libraries can really interpret the resources to the users as per their need and the study also aims to examine the users’ satisfaction from the existing practice of document description. The central concern of this thesis was to explore the possible impact of automated catalogues for the overall improvement in the functioning of university libraries in North East and
also to re-assess the existing manual practice of library cataloguing and their validity in the present age of information communication technology (ICT). In that context, the following three questions have been designed in order to find out the limitation of the practice of conventional manual catalogues and the usefulness of automated catalogues:

1. How, and in what aspects, the conventional manual cataloguing practice could satisfy the varied information need of the growing university community specially in the age where Information Technology is widely used for organization and dissemination of information?

2. What are the limitations of the conventional manual catalogue practice in terms of access/retrieval of information as per users need?

3. How the capabilities of computers and Information Communication Technology (ICT) have influenced the effectiveness of cataloguing practices? In terms of searching, retrieval and display of bibliographic data, do the features and capabilities of automated catalogues have any impact on manual cataloguing practices?

To address the above questions, the findings of the study reveals that the conventional manual card cataloguing practice could not satisfy the growing information needs of the university community. In fact, there is little place for manual practice for organization and dissemination of information available in the libraries specially in the present age of revolution in ICT. The libraries of the present century are moving very fast towards building of digital libraries. The library cataloguing is also moving from offline to online (OPAC) and from simple OPAC to
web OPAC through which users can access catalogues of any library from anywhere in the world over WWW.

In this age of technological revolution, the university libraries of the North East should first complete the process of automation of document description procedures and then they should move gradually in the process of digitization of their printed collections. The automated catalogues of each university library should then be placed over web in order to make them accessible by other university libraries of the region through the library networks.

The study reveals that the process of automated document description has been started by majority of the university libraries of the region of which three university libraries (including IIT library) have been completed the process of automation; six university libraries have been continuing the process of retro-conversion using SOUL but yet to complete the process of conversion of their total holdings into machine-readable form at the time the survey has been conducted and rest three university libraries are just planning to start the process of automation and are still in manual mode. The university libraries those are in completely manual mode or partly-automated mode, should properly plan and complete the retro-conversion of their printed collections into machine-readable form as early as possible. The bibliographic record in its machine-readable format is totally different from the traditional manual catalogues, which has many advantages over the conventional catalogues. The present day electronic web environment has provided the automated catalogues with many opportunities and potentialities to carry out more functions in a variety of operations in bibliographic work. The bibliographic record in its machine-readable form can carry out different functions more
effectively in the online environment. The development in IT and telecommunications have made the availability of large numbers of bibliographic files online or on-disk which increases the potentiality of bibliographic records to be used co-operatively in a variety of environment. This would ultimately bring standardization as well as economy in record creation. The electronic handling and exchange of bibliographic records will continue to play a significant role in effective access and transfer of information in the libraries. The university libraries of the region should move towards complete conversion of their collection into machine-readable form in order to avail all the advantages of automated cataloguing.

The establishment of a library network for the university libraries of North East for the purpose of co-operation and sharing of resources is found to be very essential. The network should be based on confederation of university libraries in North East and the network may be called as North East University Library Network (NEULIBNET). The NEULIBNET will be a computer communication network of university libraries in North East, proposed to improve the capability of resource sharing, co-operative collection development and information access to the academic community in the North East region. It will be a co-operative network, which will contribute in pooling, sharing, and optimization of resources, facilities and services of university libraries in the region. The basic aim of the NEULIBNET would be: to develop a programme towards the modernization of university libraries of the region; to minimize duplication of works; to provide all types of services to the users; to optimize utilization of available information resources; to optimize proper utilization of fund for overcoming the financial constraints faced by the university libraries of the region through co-operative collection development; to
request books and other documents on Inter Library Loan (ILL) from other participating libraries; to create union catalogue and exchange cataloguing data through the network; to have access to other national and international database through the network and also to integrate the database of the university libraries of the North East accessible globally through the Internet.

7.4 SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Considering the area of coverage and study made in this work, the scope for further study and research may be concentrated to some new innovative areas. The following are few vital areas which deserve the attention for further research:

- Practice of metadata description in the context of managing library and information centres in order to manage, organize and disseminate digital resources in proper perspective.
- Planning and designing of North East University Library Network (NEULIBNET) for its early implementation.