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Marketing of Information Products and Services through Library Websites: An Analytical Study of Indian Central University Library

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Introduction

The marketing of library services, in the past, might be an alien concept to the librarians as it is said that the earlier libraries were merely considered as a reservoir of knowledge, not meant to disseminate information to others (Saharkhiz et al., 2017) but as time passed, the nature of libraries has changed entirely. Nowadays, the library is considered as an information industry where information is produced, organized, processed, and distributed to the users as a product in time (Al-Suqri & Afzal, 2007; Ashrafi-rizi & Kazempour, 2012). A library plays a vital role as a repository of published information and a hub for accessing resources from across the world (Masuda, 1983). However, the management of collected documents in the library is not a big deal for library professionals, but the challenging task is how the available products and resources can be converted into user-oriented services (Islam & Hossain, 2014). As a matter of fact, over the last couple of years, this job has become more comfortable and productive for both librarians and users due to expeditious technological innovations particularly Information Communication Technology (ICT) and World Wide Web (WWW)(Okike & Oyeniyi, 2019). Haridasan & Uwesh (2014) carried out an study on content analysis of India Central University Libraries while Kumbhar (2017) accomplished a research work on content analysis of Maharashtra State Universities' library. Both the study are pertaining to content analysis but they did not cover library accessibility of library web pages over Web.

To analyze the fact, (the design, usefulness and effective to the clients for accessing information products and services of library and information centres), this paper intends to assess how effectively the Indian Central Universities' libraries disseminate the pieces of information and services through their websites in a digital environment.

Library Webpage

It has found that in present days, users prefer to use e-resources and services instead of visiting the library (Kaur, 2017). In this way, library websites are meant to render opportunities for patrons to make use of the information available on the respective websites to accomplish their needs (Detlor & Lewis, 2006). Four fundamental purposes of library websites as listed by Brower (2004) are "promotion, information about services, guides and help facilities, and gateways to information resources"(p 413). The user's ability to navigate these websites fluidly may have an impact on important research and education activities. A well-designed library website should inculcate electronic reference services, search tools

(OPAC/WEBOPAC), certain specific features such as virtual bookshelves, customized home pages and most importantly should have the "qualitative and quantitative contents". So that it can function as a subject gateway and can guide users to satisfy their desires (Detlor and Lewis, 2006).

Information Marketing

Marketing is an essential aspect irrespective of profit-making and non-profit making organizations (Ramadevi, 2018) and the library is not an exception to it. Marketing of library is a two-way process of giving and taking of some products or services between the library and its clientele, which administers the users' goal, requirements, or demands. In other words, it sells information-based products and services. It also creates awareness about the products and services of the library and establishes a relationship among its stakeholders (Rowley, 2003). Marketing is a kind of matching process which emphasizes on: i) what we have and what we can do for the users/ customers; and ii) how to meet the growing demands and requirements of the clients (Islam & Hossain, 2014). Thus, marketing is an essential component for libraries to make the best use of library resources and services optimally.

Objectives

In order to fruitfully accomplish the study, this paper intends fulfill the following objectives with the help of eight research questions:

To know the present set up of the Indian Central Universities' Library websites.

The study tries to evaluate to understand how the websites have been designed; and

Up to what extent library promotional activities are incorporated.

Significance of the Study

Websites have become a powerful tool to search the unsearched ocean of information with plenty of sources conveniently to fulfill the changing needs of the users. There are several works have been done on the marketing of information products and services in the developed countries (Kaba, 2011), but a very few studies were noticed in this area, particularly in the developing countries like India. Hence, this study will reasonably be useful to know the status of Indian Central University Libraries' websites. Furthermore, this study poses high value because this is the era of technological innovation and particularly after the development of WWW library and Information centers have undergone a sea change in the modes of dissemination of information (Baquee & Palla, 2019).

Literature Review

For a smooth and better understanding the thematic concept of this study, it breaks its primary concept into two core parts, such as library websites analysis and marketing of information.

Brower (2004) examined 41 health science library websites and found that a handful number of websites utilized pull down menu. Most of the library websites had a feature of 'contact us,' and it revealed that around fifty percent of the library websites were linked with the parent body. The study also showed that the library catalogue is the most valuable resource, which was accessible through the Persistent Navigation Tools (PNTs). Detlor and Lewis (2006) evaluated 107 ARL (American Research Library) member library websites in the US and Canada, suggested a codebook to measure the websites quantitatively. Gardner et al. (2008) assessed the position, language, contents, and technological features of 69 academic library websites with the help of checklist where they found more than 75 percent of library websites were one or two clicks away from the parent organization's homepage. Apart from this, it also pointed out that the websites were found to be significantly useful to assist in teaching and research activities. Kaba (2011) evaluated 29 academic library websites of UAE and observed that a few libraries disseminated the services of online users' education, users' awareness services, live support, chat, library newsletters, and links to other libraries and institutions. It emphasized that libraries were supposed to improve the awareness of the library resources and services among the stakeholders. After critically analyzing 57 UGC accredited university library websites in Bangladesh, it was found that the library websites were not well designed in terms of marketing of library services Islam & Hossain (2014). Further, Wilson (2015) analyzed 24 academic library websites of Alabama and indicated that private universities had a comparatively weaker web design and presence against their public counterpart. Added to it, the study explored that in the case of web accessibility, online suggestion, e-journal database, the private libraries had improved. The private institutions beheld a bit slower improvement, whereas public institutions had seen a rate of 28 percent increment. Forty percent of institutions still had lacking the use of web 2.0 tools. Stachokas (2016) reviewed Association for Research Library (ARL) webpages where e-resources such as EBSCO, ProQuest were mostly used libraries' resources by the alumni. In the study of Al-Qallaf & Ridha (2018), they investigated 110 library websites in six Gulf Cooperative Council (GCC) countries with special regard with navigation tools, general information, web-based library services, library resources, web contents, and web 2.0 tools. It extracted that in GCC countries, most of the libraries used a basic navigation system. There

was an absence of virtual reference service and web 2.0 tools. They also added that libraries should adopt user-oriented techniques to attract end users. Apart from this, it was suggested that library websites should have "millennial-friendly and mobile-friendly" in nature.

Marcial (2007) highlighted the concept of library and information marketing, which was not new, but indeed, a lot of improvement took place. It also needs to be fixed for sound marketing of library services and products. Over the last few decades, different technology came into the market, which helped the library and information centers to upgrade their facilities, promotional activities, and to make the library more visible. Garoufallou et al. (2013) examined 151 central and departmental academic libraries across Greece. They observed that the marketing of information products and library services were limited to some extent as compared to other countries. They also acknowledged that the "fundamental operational problem" is as their central obstacle to improve the quality of marketing. Further, they apprehended the importance of library marketing. The article by Kutu & Olabode (2018) had been testified to the public libraries in the South and West Nigeria. The libraries marketed their services and resources by making available of lending service, referral service, reading list, bibliographies, indexing and abstracting, and user education programs. The two strategies, display and exhibition, were adopted as a primary marketing tool. Ramadevi (2018) surveyed 120 academic library staff from several university libraries in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia. Her study revealed that the library staff of educational institutions had a constructive perception of the marketing of library services and resources. The library staff was aware of this concept, which helped to upgrade the library services and to satisfy the users' demand. The lack of financial support, library management support, and proper knowledge were the main hindrance for worthy information marketing. Kaur (2009) reported that the libraries of Malaysia universities were neither sufficient enough to the promotional activities nor library websites were utilized up to the required level. Due to these reasons, the libraries were unable to reach the wider community. Kaur (2017) explored that academic library websites in the marketing of library resources and services were highly significant and usable, particularly in the age of shrinking fund to the libraries. Garoufallou et al. (2013) revealed that the librarian's misconception and misunderstanding were found as a primary reason for ineffective marketing of library resources and services, which led to dissatisfy the end-user requirements. The study also pointed out that over the last couple of years, marketing of library resources and services "witnessed an incredible growth of interest" among the non-profit making organizations, notwithstanding, the negative attitude of librarians.

Methodology

The study aims to assess only Indian central universities' library websites. To analyze the library websites, researchers have delicately examined several articles to build up a concrete idea about *how to do and what to do*. Besides, the authors have prepared a checklist (Appendix-2) based on the concepts, perceived from the earlier studies (Al-kindi and Al-Suqri, 2013; Brower, 2004; Detlor and Lewis, 2006; Gardner et al., 2008; Islam & Hossain, 2014). The checklist has eight sections: Link; Language; General information; Web-based resources; Contact Us; Web-based services; links to other institutions and links of Web 2.0 tools which in turn reflect the process of analyzed the library websites. According to the Central Universities (2019), India has forty-nine central universities, and the library websites have been checked and evaluated multiple times to ensure the reliability of the result. But Indira Gandhi National Open University, a central university could not include because the nature and policy of this institution are different from the other institutions. On the basis of earlier mentioned-checklist (Appendix-2), research data has been collected from the library websites, 15th March 2019 to 10th April 2019.

Results and Discussion

Indian Central Universities' library websites have been analyzed and observed with the help of checklist (Appendix-2), and the findings of each research question are presented in the following sections:

RQ-1: Visibility of University Library Websites

To classify the websites' visibility, the researchers use the direct and indirect link. Researchers considered the 'direct link' to those library webpages, links are found as the main menu in the menu bar, while the indirect link referred to the links of the library webpages that are available as a dropdown option inside the menu bar like services, facilities, etc. Apparently, Table 1 points out that out of 48 universities, only 23 (47.92%) university libraries have the direct link, and 17 (35.42%) university libraries have the indirect link, but 8 (16.66%) university libraries have no link to their library web page. Similar result has come from the study of Verma & Devi (2015) in case of the direct and indirect links. They said more than half of the libraries' websites have the direct link and remaining have indirect links.

Table-1: Visibility of University Library Websites

Sl. No.	Criteria	Number (N=48)	Percentage
1	Direct Link	23	47.92
2	Indirect Link	17	35.42
3	No Link	8	16.66
Total		**48**	**100**

RQ-2: Language of Webpages

Based on the result shown in Table 1, only 40 websites are considered for future analysis because eight libraries don't have any links to their websites, which is prerequisite for detailed analysis. From Table 2, it has found that 40 university library web pages deliver their contents in English language only. Surprisingly, it is noticed that no university library webpage provides the contents either in Hindi or any other Indian regional languages. On the other hand, 15 university library websites are available in both English and Hindi languages. However, the findings of Kaba (2011) support our results more or less in a similar way.

Table-2: Language of Webpages

Sl. No.	Language	Number (N=40)	Percentage
1	English	40	100
2	Hindi (Regional)	0	00
3	Both	15	37.5

RQ-3: General Website Information

Table 3 indicates the availability of general information of the Central University Library websites. The results show that out of 40 websites, 30 (75%) websites provide the basic information on 'Policy/Guidelines.' Data regarding the 'Library Hours' is available in 29 (72.5%) websites, followed by 'Collections' (67.5%), 'News and Events' (50%), and 'New Arrivals' (35%). Surprisingly 'Site Map' and 'Virtual Tour' are considered the most important information of library websites which are noticed in 4 (10%) libraries and 1 (2.5%) library respectively. The findings of the current study exactly coincide with the outcomes of Islam & Hossain (2014), while the results of Al-Qallaf & Ridha (2018) are found almost a similar way to the current study.

Table-3: General Website Information

	General Website Information		
Sl. No.	**Criteria**	**Number (N=40)**	**Percentage**
1	News/Events	20	50.00
2	Library hours	29	72.5
3	New Arrivals	14	35.00
4	Virtual tour	01	2.50
5	Site map	04	10.00
6	Collection	27	67.5
7	Policy/Guidelines	30	75.00
Total		**Mean= 17.85714286**	
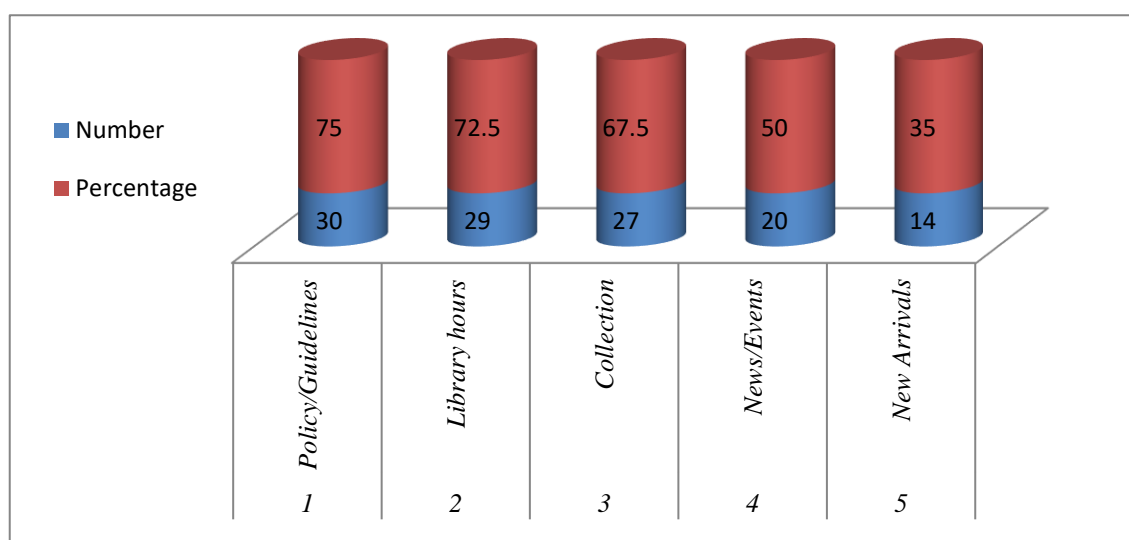
Fig-1: Top five (5) General Information
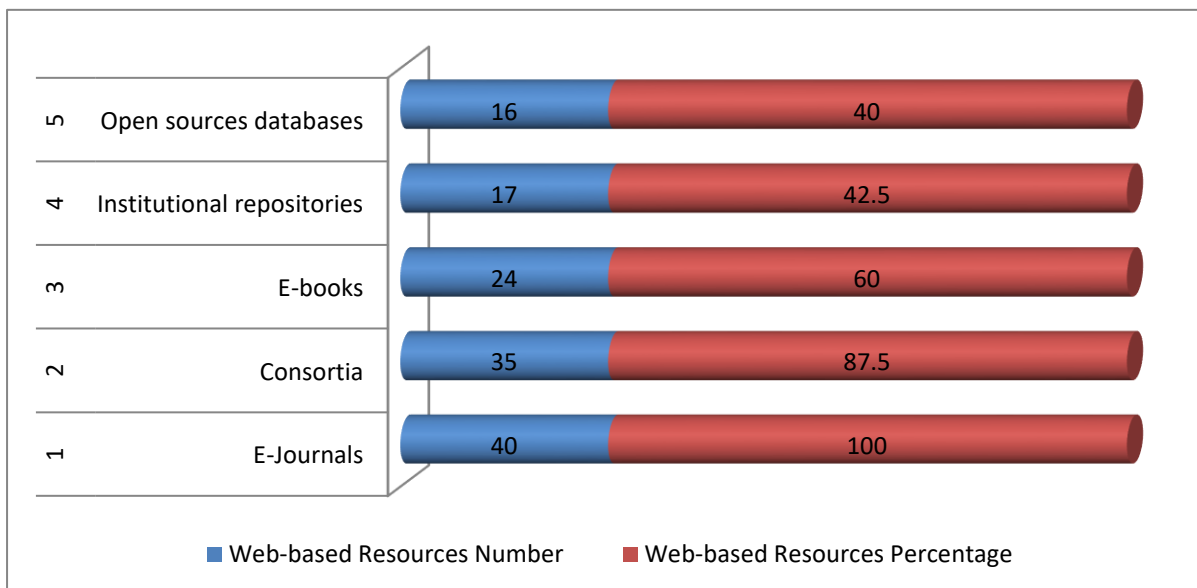
RQ-4: Web-based Resources

It is boon to the users' community that most of the scholarly information which is used by them is subscribed by libraries. The libraries need to initiate to identify, select, index subject-wise, and make accessible the web based resources available on the internet. Towards this direction, it attempts to analyze various web-based resources available on the websites of central university libraries. The result, as shown in Table 4, shows that out of various sources, E-journals are found in all the library websites, followed by 'Consortia' (87.5%), 'E-books' (60%), Institutional repositories (42.5%), Opens source databases (40%), Multimedia Information (30%), E-Theses and Dissertations (30%), Faculty Publications (27.5%), E-Newspaper (20%), Subject Gateways (17.5%), Archives (17.5%) and Subject guides (5%).It is quite encouraging that 40 percent of the library websites contain e-resources on the availability of open-access databases. Contrastingly, ETD and Faculty Publication are found in less than 30 percent of the websites. Globally, these two sources can enhance the image of the institution by making its scholarly contents visible, which can impact on the academic

community. As a result, the institution will be placed in a better position in terms of ranking of institutions. As far as the availability of e-books is concerned, finding results are similar to the study of Islam & Hossain (2014). The study of Haridasan & Uwesh (2014) depicted that only 92 percent of the library websites had e-journals, whereas the present study shows 100 percent. However, the libraries should take innovative steps to increase the percentage of the availability of ETD and Faculty Publications.

Table-4: Web-based Resources

Sl. No.	Resources	Number (N= 40)	Percentage
1	Archives	7	17.5
2	Consortia	35	87.5
3	E-books	24	60
4	E-encyclopedias	4	10
5	Faculty Publications	11	27.5
6	Institutional repositories	17	42.5
7	E-newspapers	8	20
8	Multimedia	12	30
9	E-Journals	40	100
10	Open sources databases	16	40
11	Subject gateways	7	17.5
12	Subject guides	2	05
13	E-theses & Dissertations	12	30
Total		**Mean= 15**	

Fig-2: Top five (5) Web-based resources

RQ-5: Contact information

Providing contact details in/on websites is an essential specific feature of the any websites. Table 5 shows that 30 libraries have a unique feature of providing a staff directory, which is 15 percent more than the findings of Islam & Hossain (2014). It's also observed that 28 libraries have the links to contact, contact us, helpdesk, etc. that's similar to Kaba (2011). Besides, 08 library websites have FAQ feature, which is an essential characteristic of a website or organization.

Table-5: Communication Feature

Communication Feature			
Sl. No.	Criteria	Number (N=40)	Percentage
1	Staff directory	30	75
2	links to contact	28	70
3	FAQ	8	20
		Mean= 22	

RQ-6: Library Services

The study tries to unveil the services that are provided by the Indian Central University libraries through their respective websites. Table 6 proves that 37 libraries provide either OPAC or WEB-OPAC service followed by reprographic services, plagiarism detective software services, and research support (citation style, citation management tools, reference style). Research support is supposed to be essential services for higher education, and these above-mentioned research support services stand against 22 (55%), 21 (52.5%) and 18 (45%) respectively in the library websites. 'Grammarly' is another useful service for researchers, but it has found in merely 04 library websites. Moreover, it has shown in table 6 that the digital library services are available in 09 library websites.

In a similar way of Islam & Hossain (2014), this study further unveils the Inter Library Loan (ILL) and Document Delivery Services (DDS), which are considered as one of the core services. The library facilitates this service for the sake of enhancing the research activity, and it has found in 12 and 14 library websites. Apart from this, astoundingly, the study manifests only 07 libraries which have a separate facility for differently-abled users. However, it's time to increase the facility for differently-abled students and scholars in the library. The overall results of this table, pertaining to the information services, contrast with the findings of Stojanovski (2012). In the case of OPAC and research service/support, Al-Qallaf & Ridha (2018) has justified us by showing that almost all the libraries provide OPAC.

Table-6: Library Services

Sl. No.	Services	Number (N=40)	Percentage
	Library Services		
1	Reprographic Services	22	55
2	Plagiarism	21	52.5
3	CAS	10	25
4	DDS	12	30
5	ILL	14	35
6	Downloads	13	32.5
7	OPAC/WEB-OPAC	37	92.5
8	Online Reserve	3	7.5
9	Online Renewal	1	2.5
10	Remote login	14	35
11	TOC Service	3	7.5
12	Grammarly	4	10
13	Digital Library	9	22.5
14	User Education/Awareness	10	25
15	Differently abled facility	7	17.5
16	Research support	18	45
Total		**Mean=12.375**	

RQ-7: Links to Other Organizations

During our research, the study has found that 05 university libraries have provided other local libraries' links in/on their websites. It is slightly different from Kaba (2011) in which it has found that nearly 17 percentage of sharing links. Out of 40 libraries, 11 libraries have facilitated the links to national organizations, and only 02 libraries have provided the links to international organizations. Providing such kind of links will help the users in terms of establishing research collaboration at national and international levels.

Table-7: Links of Other Organizations

Sl. No.	Links	Number (N=40)	Percentage
	Links of Other Organizations		
1	Other (local) Libraries	5	12.5
2	National Organizations	11	27.5
3	International Organizations	2	05
Total		**Mean=6**	

RQ-8: Dedicated Social Media Links

Out of 40 central university library websites, only 12 libraries were incorporated with social media in their library websites. With regard to the use of social media tools, the findings of

this paper were found to be contrary to the findings of Al-Qallaf & Ridha (2018) where it was merely 10 percent.

Table-8: Dedicated Social Media Links

Dedicated Social Media Links		
Social media	Numbers (N=40)	Percentage
Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Blog, WhatsApp, etc.	12	30

Discussion and Findings

This empirical study has revealed the present scenario of Central University Library websites that up to what extent the librarians utilize their website for marketing of library services and resources. In RQ-1, it has shown that Eight (08) libraries don't have their library's link in their parent university's homepage and seventeen (17) libraries have an indirect link. Indirect links may take a little time to navigate the library websites, and users may lose their interest to use it because of time-consuming. RQ-2 shows that only Nine (09) websites are bilingual, but India is a nation of multiple languages. Hence, it's necessary for every librarian to increase bilingual facility in their respective websites.

"New books are shelved on the "New Arrivals" shelves for a limited amount of time (usually 1 year) in order that library users may have a chance to browse new acquisitions" (Rseykora, 2016). In India, Only fourteen (14) libraries have "new-arrival" facility, but in most cases books are not updated timely. The "new arrival" facility attracts many patrons to access the library. The links of national and international library and organization (RQ-7) and social media (RQ-8) are rarely found in the websites. The libraries need more attention to make their websites useful and attractive in order to reach it out to a broader community.

Recommendations and conclusion

The study is an attempt in assessing the Indian Central University Libraries' websites. In this regard, it has found that library websites are not enough users-oriented in the perspective of library marketing. The basic necessity of libraries are users orientation program, services for differently-abled users, research support, ILL, Discovery services, etc. which need to pay more attention. On the other side, e-journals, OPAC/WEB-OPAC libraries have found in a better position in the library websites.

Nowadays, every organization is in a race to provide more and more information and services to do marketing through their websites. But, at the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century, the study has shown that the library users are not well designed to do marketing

of library. Hence, it is needed to cope up the situation. However, this study works as a path-finder to know the reality or exact position of Indian Central University Libraries. This study is only limited to the Indian Central Universities' library. It does not include the state universities or any other institutions in India.

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List of the Central Universities

Sl. No.	Names
	List of the Central Universities
	Names
1.	Rajiv Gandhi University
2.	Assam University
3.	Tezpur University
4.	University of Hyderabad
5.	Maulana Azad National Urdu University
6.	English and Foreign Languages University
7.	JamiaMilliaIslamia
8.	University of Delhi
9.	JawaharLal Nehru University
10.	South Asian University
11.	The Indira Gandhi National Tribal University
12.	Dr. HarisinghGourVishwavidyalaya
13.	Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya
14.	Mizoram University
15.	North Eastern Hill University
16.	Manipur University
17.	Central Agricultural University
18.	National Sports University
19.	Nagaland University
20.	Pondicherry University
21.	Sikkim University
22.	Tripura University
23.	Aligarh Muslim University
24.	BabasahebBhimraoAmbedkar University
25.	Banaras Hindu University
26.	University of Allahabad
27.	Rajiv Gandhi National Aviation University
28.	Rani Lakshmi Bai Central Agricultural University

29.	VisvaBharati
30.	HemwatiNandanBahugunaGarhwal University
31.	Central University of Tamil Nadu
32.	Indian Maritime University
33.	Central University of Rajasthan
34.	Central University of Punjab
35.	Central University of Orissa
36.	Central University of Kerala
37.	Central University of Karnataka
38.	Central University of Jharkhand
39.	Central University of Kashmir
40.	Central University of Jammu
41.	Central University of Himachal Pradesh
42.	Central University of Haryana
43.	Guru GhasidasVishwavidyalaya
44.	Central University of South Bihar
45.	Nalanda University
46.	Mahatma Gandhi Central University
47.	Dr. Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University
48.	Central University of Gujarat

Checklist

Criteria for analyzing the University Library Webpages		Yes	No
Sections	**Criteria**		
Link	Direct Link		
	Indirect Link		
Language	English		
	Regional		
	Both		
General Information	News/Events		
	New Arrivals		
	Virtual tour		
	Site map		
	Collection		
	Policy/Guidelines		
Web-based Resources	Archives		
	Consortia		
	E-books		
	E-encyclopedias		
	Multimedia		
	E-Journals		
	Subject guides		
	E-theses & Dissertations		
Contact Us	Staff directory		
	Links to contact		
Web-based Services	Plagiarism		
	DDS		
	Downloads		
	OPAC/WEB-OPAC		
	Online Reserve		
	Remote login		
	TOC Service		
	Grammarly		
	Digital Library		
	User Education/Awareness		
	Open Access		
Links to other institutions	National		
	International		
Links of Web 2.0	Social Media		