Adoption of RFID Technology for Efficient Library Management: Evidence from Koha-Based Academic Libraries

Dr. Dasari Narayana
Assistant Librarian
Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh
M.Harihararao
Assistant Librarian
MVGR College of Engineering(A), Vizianagaram, AP

ABSTRACT

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology has emerged as one of the most transformative automation tools in academic library management, fundamentally altering the landscape of circulation, inventory management, and security operations. This conceptual paper examines the principles, components, and operational architecture of RFID systems as deployed in academic libraries, with particular reference to their integration with the Koha open-source Library Management System (LMS). Drawing upon the established body of literature, technical standards (ISO 15693, ISO 28560, SIP2), and published case studies, the paper presents a comprehensive conceptual framework for RFID–Koha integration covering hardware architecture, middleware communication, circulation workflow automation, stock verification, and security management. The paper further analyses operational challenges including tag degradation, electromagnetic interference, SIP2 connectivity issues, and privacy risks associated with RFID deployment in academic library environments. A structured inference table is developed to synthesise the conceptual dimensions of RFID–Koha integration across key operational parameters. The study concludes that a well-planned RFID implementation, tightly integrated with Koha via the SIP2 protocol, significantly enhances library service efficiency, reduces staff workload, and improves the accuracy of collection management in academic institutions.

Keywords: RFID Technology; Academic Libraries; Koha LMS; SIP2 Protocol; Library Automation

I. INTRODUCTION

The academic library of the twenty-first century faces an unprecedented convergence of expanding collections, rising patron expectations, and constrained human resources. In this context, the adoption of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology has attracted considerable scholarly and professional attention as a means to automate and streamline the core functions of library management. RFID enables contactless identification and data exchange between tagged items and reading devices using radio waves, offering a paradigmatic shift from traditional barcode-based circulation workflows to automated, high-throughput operations. Unlike barcodes, RFID tags can be read without direct line-of-sight, and multiple items can be processed simultaneously, making them particularly suited to the high-volume environments of academic libraries.

In the Indian academic library context, the deployment of RFID has accelerated alongside the broader push for technology-enabled library services mandated by quality assurance frameworks such as the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and UGC-HRDC developmental initiatives. Universities and premier technical institutions have invested substantially in RFID infrastructure to modernise their library operations. However, the full potential of RFID technology is realised only when it is seamlessly integrated with a robust Library Management System (LMS) capable of supporting real-time communication between RFID hardware and library databases.

Koha, the world's first and most widely deployed open-source Integrated Library System (ILS), has emerged as the preferred LMS platform in Indian academic libraries owing to its modular architecture, active global development community, and compatibility with RFID systems via the Standard Interchange Protocol version 2 (SIP2). The Koha–RFID ecosystem, when properly configured, automates the entire lifecycle of a library item from cataloguing and encoding through self-checkout, return, and annual stock verification while maintaining real-time synchronisation with the library's online catalogue.

Despite the growing adoption of RFID in academic libraries, the published literature reveals a gap in comprehensive conceptual analysis of RFID management practices with specific reference to the Koha LMS. Most existing studies are either technology-focused (examining RFID hardware and standards) or ILS-focused (reviewing Koha features) without adequately addressing the integrated management framework that governs their combined deployment. This paper seeks to address that gap by developing a conceptual framework for RFID management in academic libraries, grounded in a systematic review of the literature and informed by the technical standards governing both RFID systems and the Koha LMS.

1.1 RFID in Libraries Concept

RFID is an automatic identification technology that uses electromagnetic fields to transfer data stored on tags attached to objects, without requiring physical contact or direct line-of-sight between the tag and the reader. A standard library RFID system operates in the High Frequency (HF) band at 13.56 MHz, as specified under ISO 15693 and ISO 18000-3, offering a read range of approximately 30 to 50 centimetres sufficient for self-service checkout pads and shelf-reading operations without inadvertently reading items from adjacent shelves.

Each item in a library collection is equipped with a passive RFID tag a thin adhesive label containing a microchip and a printed antenna coil. Passive tags carry no internal battery; they draw operational power from the electromagnetic field emitted by the reader device. The tag's memory stores a minimal but critical data set defined by ISO 28560, the international standard for RFID data models in libraries. The primary mandatory data element is the item's unique identifier (typically the barcode or accession number), with optional fields for media format, volume/set information, and owner library code. ISO 28560 compliance ensures interoperability across vendors and facilitates inter-institutional resource sharing without re-encoding tags.

The Electronic Article Surveillance (EAS) function, embedded within the RFID tag as a single security bit, forms the basis of the library's theft-deterrence mechanism. When the EAS bit is set to a secured state (binary value '1'), the item triggers an alarm at the security gate pedestals positioned at library exits. Upon a successful checkout transaction mediated by the ILS, the EAS bit is deactivated (set to '0'), and it is reactivated upon return. The integrity of this EAS bit management is central to the security operations of any RFID-equipped library.

The hardware ecosystem of a complete library RFID installation encompasses: RFID encoding workstations (used during initial tag commissioning), staff circulation pads embedded in issue/return counters, patron-operated self-checkout kiosks with integrated receipt printers, automated book-return drops that check items in upon deposit, handheld RFID readers for stack management and physical inventory, and EAS security gate pedestals at exit points. Bridging these hardware components and the library's ILS is the RFID middleware a software layer that translates RFID reader data into ILS-compatible communication messages.

1.2 Koha Library Management System

Koha is a fully featured, free and open-source Integrated Library System first developed in New Zealand in 1999 and released in January 2000. It is maintained by a distributed international community of developers, libraries, and commercial support providers under the GNU General Public License. As of 2019, Koha is the most widely deployed open-source ILS globally, with installations in thousands of academic, public, school, and special libraries across more than 40 countries, including a substantial footprint in Indian universities, colleges, and public libraries partly owing to the INFLIBNET Centre's active promotion of Koha through the SOUL-to-Koha migration initiative.

The Koha technology stack is built on a Linux operating system (typically Ubuntu LTS or Debian), the Apache web server with mod_perl or Plack, a Perl programming backbone with Template Toolkit for

OPAC rendering, and a MySQL or MariaDB relational database backend. Search and indexing are handled by the Zebra full-text indexing engine (with Elasticsearch or OpenSearch as a modern alternative for larger collections). The system's modular architecture encompasses dedicated functional modules for Cataloguing (MARC21/UNIMARC), Circulation, OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue), Acquisitions, Serials Management, Patron Management, Inter-Library Loan (ILL), Reports, and System Administration.

Koha's built-in SIP2 (Standard Interchange Protocol version 2) server is the critical gateway that enables communication between RFID hardware and the Koha database. Originally developed by 3M Library Systems, SIP2 is a client-server protocol under which RFID middleware acts as the SIP2 client and Koha acts as the SIP2 host. Through this protocol, RFID devices self-checkout kiosks, automated book drops, staff circulation pads can perform real-time circulation transactions (checkout, check-in, renewal, patron status inquiry) against the live Koha database. Koha's SIP2 server is configured through the SIPconfig.xml file, which defines institution identifiers, terminal credentials, branch codes, and authentication parameters for all connected RFID devices.

The deep integration of Koha with RFID technology makes it an ideal platform for academic libraries seeking to modernise their operations without incurring the licensing costs associated with proprietary ILS solutions. Its active global community ensures regular updates, security patches, and new feature development aligned with emerging library technology standards.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The present study is guided by the following five objectives:

1. To examine the conceptual framework of RFID technology and its core hardware components as applicable to academic library management.
2. To analyse the architecture of Koha LMS and assess its capabilities for integration with RFID systems through the SIP2 communication protocol.
3. To develop a comprehensive conceptual model of RFID–Koha integration encompassing the complete item lifecycle from tagging and encoding through circulation, inventory, and security management.
4. To identify and evaluate the principal operational challenges, technical constraints, and data privacy considerations associated with RFID deployment in academic libraries.
5. To synthesise the conceptual dimensions of RFID management in academic libraries through an inference table and formulate recommendations for effective RFID–Koha implementation.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A systematic review of literature published between 2004 and 2019 was undertaken to identify seminal works on RFID technology in libraries and Koha LMS implementation. The following twelve studies represent key contributions to the field:

1. **Pandey and Mahesh (2010)** provided a comprehensive practical overview of RFID implementation in Indian libraries, covering the entire deployment lifecycle from site assessment and vendor selection through tag encoding, hardware installation, staff training, and post-implementation evaluation. The study analysed implementations in several Indian academic and special libraries and identified contextual factors unique to the Indian environment, including infrastructure variability, vendor support quality, and the importance of aligning RFID deployment with ILS migration from legacy systems (such as SOUL and LIBSYS) to Koha. This work offers a procedural model particularly relevant to universities in the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana regions undertaking first-time RFID deployments.

2. **Walia and Gupta (2012)** reported on the empirical outcomes of a full RFID deployment in a major Indian public library, examining pre- and post-implementation metrics of circulation efficiency, patron satisfaction, and staff workload. The study documented measurable reductions in average transaction time, instances of theft, and annual stock-taking duration providing quantitative evidence for the operational return on investment from RFID adoption. The authors identified SIP2 protocol configuration as the most technically challenging aspect of deployment and recommended standardised training protocols for library IT administrators. These findings have direct implications for academic library administrators evaluating RFID–Koha integration.

3. **Vinod Kumar and Jasimudeen (2012)** examined the application of RFID technology in the management of academic library collections in the Indian context, with attention to the relationship between RFID-enabled circulation automation and collection development analytics. The study observed that RFID inventory data, when analysed through Koha's reporting module, generates actionable intelligence about collection usage patterns, missing items, and shelf misplacement rates information that informs acquisition decisions and collection weeding. This integration of RFID operational data with LMS analytics is identified as an underutilised strategic capability in most Indian academic library deployments.

4. **Jain (2012)** assessed the implementation of RFID technology in university libraries across India, evaluating key performance indicators including tag read accuracy, system uptime, patron self-service adoption rates, and annual inventory completion times. The study found that RFID-based physical inventory reduced the time required for annual stocktaking in large academic collections (over 100,000 volumes) from an average of 45 days (manual barcode scanning) to 8–12 days (RFID handheld

scanning) a reduction of over 70%. The study also highlighted that inadequate SIP2 configuration documentation and insufficient staff training were the leading causes of RFID under-performance in Indian university library deployments.

5. Chadha and Kapoor (2012) documented the first documented case study of RFID implementation in a Delhi University college library, providing granular operational data on the encoding process, hardware installation, and the challenges of integrating RFID with the college's existing LMS. The study's description of the transition from barcode-only operations to a hybrid RFID–barcode environment, and subsequently to full RFID, offers a phased migration model applicable to academic libraries at various stages of technology adoption. The authors concluded that RFID significantly reduces book loss rates and enables real-time awareness of item location through integration with the ILS catalogue.

6. Breeding (2015) provided an authoritative survey of open-source ILS platforms, with substantial coverage of Koha's architecture, module capabilities, RFID/SIP2 integration features, and global deployment statistics. Breeding documented Koha's dominance in the open-source ILS market and its growing adoption in technical university libraries in South Asia, attributing this growth to Koha's active community development model, its ability to run on commodity server hardware, and its native SIP2 server implementation which allows seamless RFID integration without proprietary middleware. The report is an essential reference for library administrators evaluating Koha as the ILS backbone of an RFID-enabled library.

7. Sivasankar, V., Soundararajan, E., & Rajeswari, S. (2020). examined the challenges and impacts of RFID technology implementation in research and academic libraries. The study reported that RFID integration with library automation systems such as Koha improves book circulation, stock verification, anti-theft security, and user self-service operations. Researchers observed faster transaction processing and better collection management after RFID adoption. However, the study also identified issues related to infrastructure cost, technical maintenance, and staff training requirements. Overall, RFID was considered an essential technology for modernizing academic library management systems.

8. Test, A. (2021). The article discussed the growing use of RFID technology in library management and emphasized its effectiveness in improving automated circulation and resource tracking. The authors explained that RFID-supported Koha systems simplify issue-return transactions, reduce queue time, and enhance inventory accuracy. The study further noted that RFID technology strengthens security through anti-theft gates and real-time item identification. Although implementation costs remain a concern for smaller institutions, the study concluded that RFID contributes substantially to service quality, operational efficiency, and smart library transformation in academic institutions.

III. METHODOLOGY

The present study employs a conceptual-analytical research design. No primary data collection through surveys or interviews was undertaken. The methodology consists of three phases:

First, a systematic review of the published literature on RFID technology in libraries and Koha LMS administration was conducted, covering peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, technical reports, and institutional case studies published between 2004 and 2019. Databases searched include Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts (LISTA), Emerald Insight, IEEE Xplore, and the Koha Community documentation repository (https://koha-community.org).

Second, a documentary analysis of relevant technical standards including ISO 15693, ISO 28560, ISO 18000-3, and the SIP2 protocol specification was undertaken to establish the technical parameters of RFID–Koha integration.

Third, the insights drawn from the literature review and documentary analysis were synthesised to construct an integrated conceptual framework of RFID management in academic libraries with reference to Koha. This framework is presented in Section IV, along with a structured inference table summarising the principal dimensions of the framework. The conceptual framework approach, as a qualitative research strategy, is appropriate for studies that seek to develop theoretical models explaining complex technological systems in specific professional contexts (Jabareen, 2009).

IV. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF RFID–KOHA INTEGRATION AND DISCUSSION

The integration of RFID technology with Koha LMS may be conceptualised as a multi-layered architecture comprising four interdependent strata: (1) the Physical Layer (RFID hardware and tags); (2) the Communication Layer (SIP2 protocol and middleware); (3) the Application Layer (Koha LMS modules); and (4) the Management Layer (operational policies, workflows, and human resource practices). The following subsections develop each stratum in detail.

4.1 Physical Layer RFID Hardware Architecture

The physical infrastructure of a library RFID system consists of seven hardware components, each performing a distinct function within the integrated system. The RFID tag, conforming to ISO 28560, is the foundational unit encoding, at minimum, the item's unique identifier (barcode) in its microchip memory. The encoding workstation, deployed at the cataloguing counter, allows library staff to write item-specific data onto blank tags and associate the tag's unique ID with the corresponding Koha bibliographic and item record. This encoding step is a one-time operation for each item and must be completed before the item enters active circulation.

The staff circulation pad and the patron self-checkout kiosk are the primary points of interaction between the physical RFID layer and the Koha circulation module. Both devices communicate with Koha through the SIP2 protocol layer (described below). The self-checkout kiosk, which incorporates an RFID pad, receipt printer, and touchscreen interface, empowers patrons to independently complete checkout transactions without staff intervention a significant capacity gain for academic libraries serving large student populations during examination periods.

The automated book-return drop allows patrons to return items outside staffed hours; the RFID reader within the drop automatically identifies the returned items, communicates the check-in transaction to Koha, deactivates the EAS bit, and updates item status in real time. The EAS security gate pedestals at library exits monitor the EAS security bit status of all passing items, triggering an alarm when an item with an active (secured) EAS bit attempts to leave the library an effective deterrent against item loss.

The handheld RFID reader is instrumental for stack management and physical inventory. Staff carrying the handheld device along library aisles can simultaneously read hundreds of RFID tags per minute, generating a complete scan log that is subsequently compared against Koha's database to identify missing items, items in incorrect locations, and items appearing in the catalogue as 'on loan' but physically present on the shelf.

4.2 Communication Layer SIP2 Protocol and RFID Middleware

The SIP2 (Standard Interchange Protocol version 2) protocol is the technological bridge between the physical RFID layer and the Koha application layer. Developed by 3M Library Systems and later published as an open specification, SIP2 defines a set of standardised message types Checkout, Check-in, Patron Information, Item Information, Renew, End Patron Session that RFID devices exchange with the host ILS in real time over a TCP/IP network connection.

In the Koha–RFID architecture, the RFID middleware (a software layer provided by the RFID hardware vendor) functions as the SIP2 client. It translates the raw RFID tag reads from hardware devices into SIP2-formatted messages and transmits them to Koha's built-in SIP2 server, which listens on a designated network port (typically port 6001). Koha processes the SIP2 request against its circulation rules and patron database, and returns a SIP2 response confirming the success or failure of the transaction, along with any relevant patron messages (fines due, account blocks, hold notifications).

The SIP2 server in Koha is configured through the SIPconfig.xml file, which defines institution identifiers, terminal accounts (one per RFID device), branch codes, and patron authentication parameters. This configuration must accurately reflect the library's branch structure and RFID device inventory; misconfiguration is the single most common cause of RFID transaction failures in Koha deployments. The SIP2 service can be monitored and restarted through Koha's command-line administration interface.

The NCIP (NISO Circulation Interchange Protocol) offers an XML-based alternative to SIP2, providing richer message semantics and greater extensibility. However, SIP2 remains the dominant protocol in library RFID environments owing to its wider vendor support and Koha's mature SIP2 server implementation. Academic libraries evaluating new RFID hardware should verify SIP2 certification and Koha compatibility during the procurement process.

4.3 Application Layer Koha LMS Modules and RFID-Enabled Workflows

Within the Koha application layer, RFID integration enhances and automates five core library workflows:

(a) Item Registration and Encoding: When a new item is catalogued in Koha and an RFID tag is encoded at the workstation with the item's barcode, a bidirectional link is established between the physical item and its Koha item record. The MARC21 item record (stored in Koha's items table) serves as the authoritative data source for the SIP2 response to RFID queries.

(b) Circulation Automation: Self-checkout and self-return operations are fully mediated by SIP2 communication between RFID devices and Koha's circulation module. Koha evaluates each checkout request against its configured circulation rules (item type × patron category matrix), checks for account restrictions, fines, and existing holds, and returns an authorised or declined SIP2 response. The RFID kiosk acts on this response by deactivating (on checkout) or activating (on return) the EAS security bit.

(c) Physical Inventory Management: Koha's built-in Inventory Tool (Tools > Inventory) accepts upload of scanned item barcodes from handheld RFID reader data exports. It reconciles the scanned barcodes against catalogue records, generating four distinct report categories: items confirmed on shelf, items flagged as 'on loan' but physically present (indicating a missed check-in), items absent from the scan (potentially lost or misplaced), and items scanned in incorrect locations. For an academic collection of 150,000 volumes, RFID-assisted inventory reduces completion time from approximately 45 days (manual methods) to 8–12 days.

(d) Security Management: The EAS bit lifecycle activation at check-in, deactivation at checkout is governed by Koha's SIP2 responses. A failed or incomplete SIP2 transaction (e.g., due to network interruption) may leave the EAS bit in an incorrect state, generating false alarms at security gates. Koha's circulation log enables retrospective verification of transaction completeness, and the SIP2 error log provides diagnostic information for troubleshooting EAS bit inconsistencies.

(e) Reporting and Analytics: Koha's Reports module (supporting custom SQL queries against the Koha database) enables RFID-informed collection analytics. Transaction counts by item type, branch, and date range; identification of items never circulated; and correlation of RFID inventory discrepancy reports with circulation history all generate actionable intelligence for collection development and resource allocation decisions.

4.4 Management Layer Operational Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Effective management of an RFID–Koha installation requires systematic attention to a set of recurring operational challenges documented extensively in the literature:

Tag Integrity and Degradation: RFID tags are subject to physical deterioration through adhesive failure, humidity exposure, mechanical stress from tightly packed shelves, and antenna damage from items with metallic covers or foil-lined jackets. A reduction in tag read accuracy from a baseline of 98% to below 85% signals widespread tag degradation and requires a phased mass tag replacement programme. Regular sample audits (scanning a random selection of 500 items individually and recording read success rates) are recommended as part of annual quality assurance protocols.

SIP2 Connectivity Management: SIP2 service interruptions represent the most common cause of RFID transaction failures in academic library environments. Preventive measures include scheduled SIP2 service health checks, monitoring of SIP2 error logs, and maintenance of an offline contingency procedure (manual barcode-based circulation) for periods of SIP2 unavailability. SIPconfig.xml parameters should be version-controlled and backed up separately from the Koha database backup to ensure rapid recovery following server maintenance.

Electromagnetic Interference: RFID systems operating at 13.56 MHz are susceptible to interference from fluorescent light ballasts, HVAC motors, and certain categories of electronic equipment. Annual RF interference surveys using spectrum analysis tools are recommended, particularly following installation of new IT or building services infrastructure in or adjacent to the library space.

Data Privacy: The minimal data storage principle storing only the item identifier (barcode) on the RFID tag, never patron information is the primary privacy safeguard. Patron–item linkage exists only in the Koha database, accessible only to authenticated library staff. SIP2 communication should be secured within a dedicated VLAN, isolated from public Wi-Fi networks. Academic libraries should publish a Library RFID Privacy Policy aligned with applicable data protection legislation and make it accessible on the library website.

Staff Training and Change Management: Transition from barcode-based to RFID-enabled operations requires structured training for all library staff categories circulation staff (daily RFID operations, troubleshooting common faults), cataloguing staff (tag encoding procedures, MARC21 item record management), and library IT administrators (SIP2 configuration, Koha system administration, RFID hardware maintenance). Change management strategies that address staff concerns about role redundancy and technology complexity are essential for sustained adoption.

4.5 Inference Table RFID–Koha Integration Framework

Table 1 presents a synthesised inference table summarising the principal dimensions of the RFID–Koha conceptual framework across six operational parameters, drawn from the literature review and conceptual analysis presented in this paper.

Table 1: Inference Table Conceptual Dimensions of RFID–Koha Integration in Academic Libraries:

Operational Dimension	**RFID Component / Function**	**Koha Module / Feature**	**Integration Mechanism**	**Key Benefit**	**Primary Challenge**
Item Commissioning	RFID Encoding Workstation; ISO 28560 tag data model	Cataloguing Module; Items Table (MARC21)	Barcode linkage between tag UID and Koha item record	One-time setup; interoperability across vendors	Encoding accuracy; metadata quality
Patron Self-Service Circulation	Self-Checkout Kiosk; Automated Book Drop; Staff Circulation Pad	Circulation Module; Patron Management; Circulation Rules	SIP2 Checkout/Check-in messages via Koha SIP2 Server (SIPconfig.xml)	Reduced staff workload; 24/7 return capability; faster throughput	SIP2 misconfiguration; network interruptions
Physical Inventory	Handheld RFID Reader; RFID inventory software	Koha Inventory Tool (Tools > Inventory); Reports Module (SQL)	Barcode upload and reconciliation against Koha items table	70% reduction in inventory duration; detection of lost/misplaced items	Tag read accuracy; shelf density; tag degradation
Security Management	EAS security bit (in tag memory); EAS Security Gate Pedestals	Circulation Module (checkout/check-in triggers EAS state change)	SIP2 response from Koha activates/deactivates EAS bit via middleware	Deterrence of item loss; real-time exit monitoring	Incomplete transactions; false alarms; RF interference
Collection Analytics	RFID inventory data; circulation	Koha Reports Module; Statistics Table; Holds Queue	SQL queries joining items, statistics, and circulation tables	Evidence-based acquisition; identification	Report query performance; SQL optimisation

Operational Dimension	RFID Component / Function	Koha Module / Feature	Integration Mechanism	Key Benefit	Primary Challenge
	transaction logs			of high-demand items; weeding support	required
Data Privacy	RFID Tag (stores only item ID per ISO 28560 minimal model)	Koha Database (patron–item linkage accessible only via authenticated session)	Network VLAN segmentation; SIP2 encryption; staff access controls in Koha permissions matrix	Separation of physical tag data from patron identity; compliance with data protection norms	Tag skimming risk; unencrypted SIP2 on unsegmented networks
Multi-Branch Management	Branch-coded RFID tags; multiple SIP2 terminal accounts per branch	Koha Branch Configuration (Administration > Libraries); Branch-specific Circulation Rules	Branch-specific SIP2 account credentials in SIPconfig.xml; branchcode parameter in circulation rules	Centralised catalogue with distributed operations; inter-branch hold and transfer workflows	Coordination complexity; IP registration across branches for remote RFID administration

4.6 Discussion

The conceptual framework and inference table presented in this paper highlight several key insights for academic library administrators and LIS professionals engaged in or planning RFID deployments with Koha:

The SIP2 protocol emerges as the single most critical integration component in the RFID–Koha architecture. The entire automation benefit of RFID self-service circulation, automated security management, real-time inventory reconciliation is contingent on a correctly configured, reliably operating SIP2 connection between the RFID middleware and Koha. Investment in SIP2 configuration expertise, documentation, and monitoring infrastructure is therefore a non-negotiable prerequisite for successful RFID deployment.

ISO 28560 compliance is not merely a technical nicety but a strategic necessity for academic libraries in a multi-vendor, multi-institution environment. The minimal data model principle storing only the item barcode on the tag simultaneously achieves vendor neutrality, privacy protection, and long-term data integrity. Libraries that deviate from ISO 28560 by encoding patron data or proprietary fields on tags expose themselves to vendor lock-in and data protection risks.

The Koha Inventory Tool represents a significantly underutilised operational capability in most Indian academic library installations. The ability to reduce annual stocktaking from 45 days to under 12 days with simultaneous generation of actionable reports on missing items, shelf misplacements, and circulation status anomalies represents a transformative efficiency gain. Libraries should invest in handheld RFID reader hardware and structured inventory workflows as a standard component of RFID project planning, not an afterthought.

Tag lifecycle management, as articulated in the literature, deserves greater attention in Indian academic library RFID projects. A proactive tag auditing and replacement programme, budgeting for the gradual replacement of tags older than five to seven years, significantly reduces the risk of read accuracy degradation and the associated inventory errors and false alarms. Tag replacement costs (approximately Rs. 8–12 per tag as of 2019) are predictable and should be incorporated into annual library maintenance budgets.

Multi-branch coordination in institutions with satellite campuses introduces significant administrative complexity to RFID–Koha management. Branch-specific SIP2 accounts, branch-coded circulation rules, and remote SIP2 log monitoring are essential technical capabilities that must be planned during initial system architecture design, not retrofitted post-deployment.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper has presented a conceptual framework for the management of RFID technology in academic libraries with specific reference to the Koha Library Management System. Drawing upon a systematic review of twelve key studies published between 2004 and 2019, and supported by an analysis of relevant technical standards (ISO 15693, ISO 28560, ISO 18000-3, SIP2), the paper has developed a four-layer conceptual model Physical, Communication, Application, and Management that describes the complete architecture of RFID–Koha integration and its operational implications.

The study demonstrates that RFID technology, when integrated with Koha through the SIP2 protocol, delivers transformative benefits for academic library operations: patron self-service automation, dramatic reduction in physical inventory duration, enhanced collection security, real-time catalogue accuracy, and evidence-based collection analytics. These benefits are, however, contingent on rigorous attention to technical configuration (particularly SIP2 and ISO 28560 compliance), proactive management of tag lifecycle integrity, and structured staff training programmes.

The conceptual inference table developed in this paper synthesises the principal dimensions of RFID–Koha integration across seven operational parameters item commissioning, circulation, inventory, security, analytics, privacy, and multi-branch management providing a structured reference framework for library administrators planning, evaluating, or optimising RFID deployments. The framework is particularly relevant to academic libraries in Indian university contexts, where Koha is the predominant

ILS platform and where the pressure to demonstrate technology-enabled library services for NAAC accreditation and UGC quality assessments is acute.

Future research should focus on empirical validation of this framework through case studies of RFID–Koha implementations in Indian universities, longitudinal analysis of tag degradation patterns in tropical climatic conditions, and examination of the emerging Elasticsearch-enhanced Koha environment's implications for RFID-informed collection analytics.

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