



DEVELOPMENT AND STATUS OF LIBRARY CONSORTIA IN INDIA

Prof. Gajanan B. Ghayal

Department of Library, Shrimati Shindhutai Jadhao Arts And Science College Mehkar

Abstract

Present article attempt to illustrate the overall development and status of library consortia in India. The article covers and briefly describes major steps of development of the co-operation among libraries to library consortia. Furthermore, the article also discusses different library consortia available in India briefly. The article concludes that the conception of the web and networks took many possibilities for assimilating consortia accomplishments in developed as well as developing countries. The library consortia are flowing from a fringe and restricted position of resource sharing to a cohesive system-wide resource sharing in recent years in India.

Key Words: Consortia, Library, India, Development

Introduction:

The co-operation among libraries established through sharing of union catalogue information, storage facilities, collection development, and human resources at local, national, and regional levels. Another form of co-operation has been based mainly on inter-library lending services where co-operating libraries agree to enter into reciprocal borrowing and use of materials from other libraries. This form of co-operation enabled libraries to borrow books and periodical articles, which were not available locally. Though there was need for library cooperation in the past, it was meted out locally with locally available resources and local network. Library co-operation has long been practiced in the West. In the early 1960s and 1970s proper resource sharing was much advertised as the way of the future, and practiced in many countries with considerable success. Then for a

short time, the decade from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s coordinated collection development was felt to be the best solution, but this was gradually overtaken by interest in coordinated collection management, which is where the profession is positioning itself at present.

Hurdles in Co-Operation among Libraries:

According to Evans (2002), there are six type of hurdles in co-operation among libraries viz., institutional; legal, political and administrative; technological; physical; human and knowledge based issues. In addition to these hurdles, factors such as desire for autonomy, competitive environment, changing institutional focus and financial constraints are four major barriers in co-operation among libraries. These barriers to co-operation facilitate the development of effective co-operative arrangements. The unending inflationary spiral in the cost of library materials is probably the principal factor in favour of co-operation. This is accompanied by increased output by publishers, and the escalating introduction of new or improved multimedia formats. Costs and volume will continue to be the principal motivators that push libraries into co-operative arrangements. These factors favoring co-operation are evident, as the co-operative enterprise over the years has evolved from resource sharing to co-ordinated collection development to co-ordinated collection management.

Resource Sharing:

Resource sharing is supposed to be one of the support of modern librarianship. The main objective of resource sharing is to maximize the availability of materials and services and to minimize expenses. Availability of a variety of electronic tools for document

identification such as access to online OPACs, publishers' catalogues, contents pages, and bibliographic databases has enhanced the awareness of library users about literature produced in their areas of interest. Rapid growth in world literature along with problems such as shrinking library budgets, steady increase in document prices, and depreciating currencies have made it increasingly difficult for individual libraries in developing countries to acquire and retain everything their users might like to read. (Majid *et al.*, 1999)

The principle behind resource sharing has been the availability of maximum service at the minimum cost or the maximum service at the same cost.

The main objectives, therefore, are:

- (i) increase availability of resources
- (ii) extend the accessibility of resources
- (iii) diminish cost, and
- (iv) promote full utilization of resources (Kaul, 1986)

The major factors that affect the resource sharing of libraries are:

- (i) existence of computerized databases,
- (ii) existence of communication facilities (computer, telephone, satellite communication, reprography, fax, e-mail, etc.);
- (iii) standardization of library organizational practice;
- (iv) existence of financial resources;
- (v) efficiency in the governance of network and
- (vi) basic agreement (Chavare, 2002).

Networking System:

The term network is synonymously used for Resource Sharing or Cooperative system, it is because of two important reasons, potential improvement of Library and Information operations by interconnecting individual library systems with the more recently developed facilities for data and information transfer; and the significant role played by the computer telecommunications and new reprographic technique. Network implies "Computer and

Communication links with each other and to share. programmes, facilities, data and knowledge-bases". A network can be local, national or even international. It consists of two or more computers connected through a phone line or network cable. It may be in the next room or halfway around the world. With rapid advancement in communication technologies such as Telecommunications, Satellite communications, etc. several networks in India can be grouped into local networks, regional networks, national network, and international network. (Srivastava, 2007)

Establishing the connectivity with the help of Technology and linking together with resources of all types Indian information professionals, education specialists and scientists have realized that the time has come to share the information resources and to coordinate mechanisms. This has resulted in discernible change in the information scenario in India. A large number of library resource sharing networks like the Metropolitan Area Networks such as CALIBNET in Calcutta, DELNET in Delhi, BONET in Bombay, PUNENET in Pune, MALIBNET in Madras, HYLIBNET in Hyderabad, ADNET in Ahmedabad, and countrywide ones like ERNET, INFLIBNET for Universities and Research Institutions and DESINET for Defence Laboratories, and sectorial ones like BTISNET for Biotechnology Networks etc. are under various stages of conceptualization, design, development and implementation. (Rao, 2006)

Emergence of Consortia Concept

The object of sharing has changed over a period of years, so also the techniques. Recently resource sharing has come to mean sharing computing resources, unlike sharing of bibliographic materials like books, journals or journals articles on Inter-library loan basis or preparing union lists of serials, etc. Many Indian university and college libraries are not in a position to subscribe to all the required journals and databases mainly due to lack of management support and financial constraints. The libraries are forming consortia in order to facilitate knowledge sharing at a much cheaper rate. The development of consortia is the outcome of the desire for resource sharing.

The impact of information and communication technologies has made rapid transformation of libraries and information centres. The advent of Internet and its subsequent proliferation has made dynamic changes in the communication and use pattern in libraries. The electronic publishing has made it possible to process and distribute the documents digitally. The transition to electronic publishing has provided the commercial publishers an excellent opportunity to produce the journals electronically where libraries are able to purchase large number of journals bundled in single package. In order to combat the escalating cost of the journals the Governments have developed consortiums with the objective of collective responsibility to access those journals. The reputed publishers started publish e- books. Publishers have also developed databases both full text and bibliographic, indexes, abstracts, directories, encyclopedias, dictionaries and other reference works, etc., in electronic form.

It is not clear that when the word "library consortium" was came to be introduced. The exact date for the introduction of the term "library consortium" is not clear but the concept of a consortium as being an association or partnership has long been a tenet of librarianship. The published literature indicates that the concept is not new, and it refers to co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration between, and amongst, libraries for sharing information resources. However, a library did not use it widely until about the 1980s. The main drive for co-operation arose when there was increase in the output of publications or the information explosion, the rise in the cost of publications coupled with stringent budget allocations, and growth in student enrolment. Increasing demand for service from users together with the need to improve inter-lending services and the library collection are additional factors.

Some special libraries and organizations like the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) Library, Inter-university Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) Library, National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA) Library, Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) Library, Raman Research Institute (RRI) Library, Tata

Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) Library, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Department of Atomic Energy, etc., have established consortia to share electronic access to journal literature. NISCAIR is developing a consortium for CSIR labs for accessing e-journals. Consortia in India are still a new concept that requires proper guidelines and methodologies. (Mannan and Bose, 1998)

Development of various consortia in India: UGC – INFLIBNET - INFONET Digital Library Consortium

The Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) Centre is an autonomous centre within the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India and is involved in creating the infrastructure for sharing library and information resources and services among academic and research institutions as stated on its web site (www.inflibnet.ac.in).

The possibilities of alliances with publishers for adapting a consortia-based approach to e-subscriptions for journals are also growing fast. These journals will be available over UGC-INFONET to all the universities. Much of the new research publications are also available on the net as freeware, thereby, making quality information accessible to a wider academic scholar base spread across the country, at an affordable price. It provides details of the use made of e-journals between 2004-2007 by members of the INFLIBNET consortium. (Chand and Arora, 2008).

CSIR Consortium:

The only name recognized for research platform consisting of a network of laboratories that spans the geographical dimensions of India in India is none other than Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). Its acts as bridge between various disciplines, address specific needs, which arose in the process of social transformation in the post-colonial context, and demands, which our society faces in this period of globalization. The CSIR was established in 1942 as an autonomous, non-profit organization with a wide-ranging charter of functions. CSIR laboratories have teamed up with academia, steel industry and government to develop mathematical models to stimulate steel production in a blast furnace. There are many more other similar alliances. (CSIR)

INDEST Consortium

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has set up the Indian National Digital Library in Science and Technology (INDEST) Consortium. Under this, the ministry provides funds required for the subscription to electronic resources for 38 core institutions including the Indian Institutes of Science (IISc), the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), the National Institutes of Technology (NITs), Regional Engineering Colleges (RECs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and a few other centrally funded government institutions through the consortium. INDEST is an open-ended proposition, and welcomes other institutions with the similar area of interest and who can join for sharing benefits. The INDEST consortium is the most ambitious initiative taken up so far in India in the area of engineering and technology disciplines. (INDEST)

FORSA Consortium:

The Forum for Resource Sharing in Astronomy & Astrophysics (FORSA) came into existence in the year 1982, for sharing the resources available in astronomy libraries in the country. In 2004, this group has extended its membership to Physics and Maths libraries in the country who have common interests to carry forward the aim of FORSA and its activities. Currently FORSA has twelve members and it works towards the goals and services, which the founder members have started. This is a model where professionals willingly come forward and actively support consortia formation; thereby everyone benefits. As such, FORSA has realized four consortia, viz. Nature Online Consortium; Indian Astrophysics Consortium for physics/astronomy journals of Springer/Kluwer; Consortium for Scientific American Online Archive (EBSCO); and Open Consortium for Lecture Notes in Physics (Springer), which are discussed briefly. Several other organisations such as the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), State Agricultural Universities, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), AICTE and some other individual groups of institutions have started working to form different consortia. (FORSA)

Advantages of Consortia

- (1) A comprehensive collection is possible
- (2) Building communication among different libraries
- (3) Avoid duplication of core collection especially for core journals
- (4) Scope of electronic archives
- (5) Easy access to resource sharing on Internet by developing common resources database
- (6) Reduce cost of information and time saving
- (7) Improved resource sharing
- (8) More professional services to users and help to develop a competitive professionalism among LIS professionals.
- (9) It becomes a vehicle for distance learning.
- (10) It is a tool for distribution of education material and journals to remotest of areas.
- (11) It is a resource for researchers and scholars for tapping most up-to-date information.
- (12) It forms a medium for collaboration among teachers and students, not only within the country but also all over the world.
- (13) It is on Intranet for university automation.
- (14) It establishes a channel for globalization of education. (Evans, 2002)

Disadvantages of consortia

- (1) Duplication of efforts
- (2) Wastage of resources
- (3) Confusion for libraries /publishers
- (4) Reduction in purchase power (Moghaddam and Talwar, 2009)

Conclusion:

It is clear that the conception of the web and networks took many possibilities for assimilating consortia accomplishments in

developed as well as developing countries. The library consortia are flowing from a fringe and restricted position of resource sharing to a cohesive system-wide resource sharing in recent years in India.

Library consortia are reflected as an alliance between libraries, publishers and vendors. They often provide a practical price in a situation of benefit for all participants. Thus, libraries have progressively turned to consortia as a way of brokering better prices and rendering rapid and efficient services to information seekers. However, library consortia are facing new challenges, such as increasing expectations and a static budget, fair use, archiving of information, pricing strategies, measures of effectiveness and licensing e-resources.

References

- (1) Chand, P. and Arora, J. (2008). Access to scholarly communication in higher education in India: trends in usage statistics via INFLIBNET, *Program: Electronic Library and Information Systems*, 42(4):382-390.
- (2) Chavare, S. R. (2002). Co-Operation For Resource Sharing: Initiatives, Models and Techniques, Workshop on Information Resource Management 13th-15th March, DRTC, Bangalore, Paper: BB
- (3) Evans G. E. (2002). Management issues of co-operative ventures and consortia in the USA. Part one, *Library Management*, 23(4/5):213 – 226.
- (4) Evans G. E. (2002). Management issues of co-operative ventures and consortia in the USA. Part one, *Library Management*, 23(4/5):213 – 226.
- (5) <http://paniit.iitd.ac.in/indest/>
- (6) Kaula, P.N. (1986). Towards resource sharing in libraries. Planning in library resource sharing. Edited by A.S. Chandel & Veena Saraf. Lucknow: Print House: 1-15.
- (7) Majid S., Eisenschitz T. S. and Anwar, M.A. (1999). Resource sharing among agricultural libraries in Malaysia, *Library Review*, 48(8):384 – 394.
- (8) Mannan, S.M. and Bose, M.L. (1998). Resource Sharing and Information Networking of Libraries in Bangladesh: A Study on User Satisfaction *Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science*, 3(2):67-86.
- (9) Moghaddam, G.G. and Talawar V.G. (2009). Library consortia in developing Countries: an overview, *Program Electronic Library and Information Systems*, 43(1):94-104.
- (10) Rao, N. L. (2006). Knowledge-Sharing Activities in India, *LIBRARY TRENDS*, 54(3):463–484.
- (11) Srivastava, P (2007). Network Information System, *Library Herald*, 45(1):41 – 50.
- (12) www.csir.ac.in
- (13) www.forsa.com.hk