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LIBRARY CONSORTIUM: PRESENT SCENARIO IN INDIA

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Abstract—This is the day of information explosion so huge volume of information is being developed day by day. In this situation, it is clear that no library could not satisfy its users. To solve this problems, library consortium is evolved. In this study library consortia and its present situation in India have been discussed.

Keywords: Library Consortia, e-Journal, Information explosion , Library Cooperation, Inter-library loan

1. Introduction

Each and every library is suffering from different problems like huge information or documents, lack of library staff to manage the resources, space problem, problem of fund etc. On the other hand we have information technology (IT), this can be utilized aptly to manage those hurdles to some extent. As a result of this library consortia is evolved and Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) supported the present activities related to library consortia.

2. What is library consortia

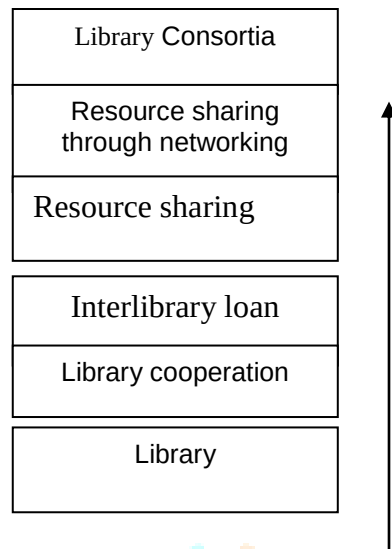
The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English gives the definition of Consortia as “a temporary association of several countries, companies, banks etc for a common purpose” The term is derived from the Latin word ‘consors’ which is a combination of two words – ‘con’ meaning together and ‘sors’ meaning fate. A Consortium is an association of two or more individuals, companies, organisations or governments (or any combination of these entities) with the objective of participating in a common activity or pooling their resources for achieving a common goal. A consortium could be described as a group of organisations who come together to fulfil a combined objective that usefully requires co-operation and the sharing of resources. And need to have a clear mutual goal in order to ensure their success. The aim should be to deliver “ more than the sum of the individual parts”.

Library consortia mean the cooperation, coordination and collaboration among the libraries for the purpose of sharing resources. According to Hirshon (1999), “library consortium is the term to indicate any group of libraries that are working together towards a common goal, whether to expand cooperation on traditional library services or electronic information services” . The main purpose of library consortia is the sharing of all types of resources – information or human, so that the collective strength of the institutions foster the research and learning of the constituent members.

A library Consortium formation can be local, regional, state ,national and inter institutional level.

3. Development of library consortia

The development of library consortia followed different stages from the inception – these stages are:



4. Factors responsible for library consortia

- Information Explosion
- Retrieval of library document effectively
- Lack of library personnel to maintain large no of data
- Different types of complex demands
- Problems of space and finance
- Research work is increased day by day
- Development of new discipline or new subject
- Advancement of computer technology including networking
- Possibility of joint funding from like minded institutions for sharing resources

5. Characteristics of library consortia

Some important characteristics of library consortia :

- Consortia is always formed by institutions, and not individuals. The main theme of consortia is cooperation.
- Consortia can be formal or informal, big or small, centralized or decentralized.
- Consortia is always a growing activity.
- The initiatives for selecting a consortia depend on size, mission, vision, organisational structure, goal, funding agency etc.
- Many consortia have broad programmes, while others are based on licensing of electronic resources.
- Consortia initiatives are not restricted to a specific area -it may be local, regional, national, international, statewide or countrywide.
- Consortia activities can change over times - various forms of consortia activities , e. g. Document delivery, collection development, networking, interlibrary loans,, cataloguing can be adopted by libraries, depending on time, situation and need.

6. Advantages of library consortia

The glance at the published literature on the topic and study of success stories of library consortia reveals that

- It provides each institution with the ability to share resources without sacrificing the individuality to each member library
- Consortia based subscription to electronic resources provides access to wider number of electronic resources at substantially lower cost. Consortia reduces the cost of purchasing resources, infrastructure, and processing and maintenance of resources.
- Avoidance of unnecessary duplication of information resources, and their processing and maintenance cost.
- Helps the libraries to enhance their services by providing greater access to information resources to a wide category of users, improving interlibrary loan and document delivery services, and facilitating, searching, browsing and downloading information.
- It help decision making and collective thinking
- Cost effectiveness and cost sharing forms another important advantage
Cost sharing can be achieved through shared cataloguing, processing, and maintenance of information resources, shared collection development, and shared professional expertise.
- Consortia help in evolving standards, technologies, licensing and pricing policies to provide better facilities to the users
- Enhanced library services are provided with an emphasis on access to new electronic resources including databases and services offered through the internet and World Wide Web.
- Better delivery of services.
- Better understanding of copyright laws.
- Electronic journals demand neither library space nor shelving costs nor can they be stolen from the library

7. Consortia models

The types of consortia identified are generally based on various models evolved in India in variety of forms depending upon participants' affiliation and funding sources

7.1 Open Consortia

This type of library consortia allows the participating libraries to join or leave the consortium at any time. So these can be considered as the most flexible model of library consortia.. INDEST Consortium is an example to this.

7.2 Closed Group Consortia

This type of consortia is restricted to a definite group, where libraries join either by affiliation or collaboration .E.g. CSIR consortium

7.3 Centrally Funded Consortia

In this type of consortia, the central funding agency provides services to the members organisation E.g. UGC-INFONET consortia. In this model, consortium will solely depend on the parent body.

7.4 Shared-Budget Consortia

A MOU is made with the participating libraries in this model. the participating libraries take the lead and form the consortium. FORSA is examples of this model.

7.5 Publisher Initiative Consortia

The Emerald Full-Text Library published by the Emerald Publishing Group (formerly MCB University Press) is recent example. Here, the consortium members will get deep discount price to the participating libraries.

7.6 National Consortia

These consortia work at the National level, providing products of National importance e.g. INDEST

8. Consortia in india

Several library consortia have been set up in India over the last few years, to obtain site licenses and desktop Internet access to scholarly e-resources like e-journals and databases, Prime examples include the INDEST consortium under MHRD (Ministry of Human Resources), IITs (Indian Institutes of Technology), IIMs (Indian Institutes of Management) and NITs (National Institutes of Technology) and CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research) consortia covering about 40 national laboratories. INFLIBNET, with UGC (University Grants Commission) support, is another major initiative covering universities. The Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) through the their consortia make science Direct (Elsevier) available to all its constituent libraries . The description of these consortia is given below

8.1 INDEST-AICTE Digital Library Consortium

The Indian National Digital Library in Engineering Science and Technology (INDEST) Consortia was set up by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in 2003. The Ministry provides funds required for subscription to electronic resources for 48 institutions including IISc, IITs, NITs, IIMs and a few other centrally funded Government institutions through the consortium headquarters at the IIT Delhi. The consortia was renamed as INDEST-AICTE Consortium in December 2005. The consortium headquarter functions under a National Steering Committee (NSC) for inter- institutional coordination, and for taking decisions on policy issues under the overall policy direction of the Government of India. This consortium is an open-ended proposition, inviting all AICTE-accredited/ UGC-affiliated institutions to join the consortium. Membership is open to any private or government- funded Engineering/Technological/Educational institutions/ Universities for one or more electronic resources. The members would be required to sign an agreement with this consortium as well as with the publishers of electronic resources that they wish to subscribe. These are 48 core members institutions in this group – IITs and Iisc(8), NITs, ISM, SLIET and NERIST(21),IISERS(5), IIMs, IIT, IITM and NITIE (14). The Consortium also provides services to another 453 self supported members under the new scheme. This consortium helps to become an information rich educational institute, promotes advances in teaching and learning , and facilitates improved productivity and quality research.

8.2 CSIR-DST e-journal Consortium

It was established in 2001, and provides access to 4500 world class e-journals to the CSIR people through sharing of resources. Not only e-journals, but patent databases, standards, bibliographic databases and printed 20-200journals are all shared through this scheme. In 2009, autonomous institutions and professional bodies under Department of science and Technology also joined this Consortium. In 2010, the consortium's name was changed to National Knowledge Resource Consortium (NKRC). Through it, an awareness and training programme for increasing the usage of e-resources among CSIR scientists have been enhanced. It serves 44 CSIR labs and 24 DST institutions in India. The consortia has agreements of 29 information products including journals, bibliographic databases, patents, standards and protocols.

8.3 UGC-Infonet Digital Library Consortium

is a major initiative of UGC, launched in 2003 by Honble Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, the then President of India, to provide greater access to high quality information resources for academics in India to improve teaching, learning and research. All UGC-affiliated universities can join the consortium. The Consortium charges an annual membership fee of Rs. 5000/-. The members of core group of Institutions are as follows :

Universities covered under Phase-I (50), Universities covered under Phase-II(50), Universities covered under Phase-III (59); Associate Members(54); and IUCs and other Institutions (4). The consortium provides current as well archival access to more than 5000 core and peer-reviewed journals covering over 97 subjects areas and ten databases from 24 publishers and aggregators.

The major objectives of this consortium are –

- To provide access to a high quality and scholarly electronic resources to a large number of academic institutions including universities and colleges at substantially lower rates of subscription and at most favourable terms and conditions;
- To promote rapid and efficient access to scholarly content to the users and to create and promote use of ICT in teaching and learning in universities in India.
- To extent the benefit of consortium to its associate members including private universities and colleges
- To impart training to the users, librarians, research scholars etc;
- To promote use of e-resources with gradual decrease in print subscription
- To evaluate the usage of the subscribed resources and to identify new resources that are required to be subscribed under the programme
- To bring qualitative change in teaching and research with an aim to meet the ever growing challenges of globalization of higher education
- Increase the research productivity of the institutions both in terms of quality and quantity of publication.

8.4 FORSA (Forum for Resource Sharing in Astronomy and Astrophysics)

In the early 1980s, library professionals felt the need to come together and form a forum which could act as a catalyst for sharing and exchange of information. This led to the formation of FORSA, as was decided in the first meeting held on July 29, 1981, at Bangalore, where all like minded astronomy librarians met together. The objectives of FORSA are collection development in IT environment, facilitate e-access to journals and books, actively participate in resource sharing, document delivery by Fax, e-mail, Speed post etc., database merging of library holdings, and facilitate access to merged database, digitization of archival materials and making it available on website for access to all, to facilitate access to website of each institute's library, to come forward for open access and to develop institutional repositories and to welcome new members of the institutes where astronomy is one of the main subjects of study, and library has collection pertaining to the subject. At present, there are 11 institute members. The special characteristics of FORSA consortium are:

- The agreement is meant only for astronomy journals published by a particular publisher
- Members are likely to continue same level of subscription during the period of consortium deal
- The negotiation is based on the total number of users
- There will be fixed rate of increase in subscription as per negotiation etc.

From its inception, FORSA has done a lot of things in resource sharing in the field of astronomy. It has become a participant in ICOLC. It is one of the leading groups in the country as a model for active cooperation, coordination and collaboration in realizing the need of astronomy libraries.

8.5 IIM Consortium

In the year 2000 was a land mark in the history of IIMs, with the formation of the IIM consortia IIMK took leadership in the formation of the IIM Consortia, and had the first meeting in Calicut. The objective was to ensure among the IIMs optimum utilisation and enhancement of the resources, and to minimise the expenditure by consortia based subscriptions to the commonly subscribed databases and journals. The idea was to approach publishers of CD-ROM Databases to begin with, as consortia, for better pricing and services. Eventually, other digital databases and journals were also planned to be covered by the programme. The meetings were proved to be very productive and successful. During the first meeting

itself, a host of a databases were jointly purchased at very competitive prices, and a number of others promised supply of their products at a nominal cost.

In the case of journals, all the six IIMs put together subscribes to over 2550 scholarly titles of which around 1200 are duplications. Among these, 33 titles are being subscribed to by all the IIMs. Having convinced on the dire need for a journals consortia, major publishers such as Elsevier, Kluwer, Wiley, Blackwell and MCB University Press were approached and they all represented in the second meet, which was held at IIM Bangalore in 2001. The end result has been highly praiseworthy, that over 740 E-journals IIMs are able to get online access, across all the IIMs, by paying a nominal additional amount.

9. Disadvantages of library consortia

- Consortia require high initial investment s in licensees and information and communication technology
- Unreliable telecommunication links and insufficient bandwidth
- Absence of a printed copy of Journals
- Outdated technology
- Lack of standards
- Insufficient knowledge
- Fear of loss
- Copyright issues
- Negative attitudes Lack of archiving and back files availability
- No tradition of cooperation or Reluctance to participate
- Reduce buying power

10. Conclusion

In India, there are many barriers to form a library consortium, and therefore, library consortia have not developed in India to that extent. Any problem in budgeting and fund allocation hampers the growth and functioning of the consortia. Lack of code of understanding forms a major obstacle in proper running of a consortium. Not only this, but lack of technical background and proper organizational structure hampers the consortium too. There is a lack of standard for resource sharing, and also a lack of trained staff to manage consortia activities to a great extent. Copyright infringement issues forms a serious problem in the formation of consortium. Consortia initiatives need to have a legal entity for its participating institutions. These are also often not followed properly.

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