Resource Sharing In Libraries: A Vital Role of Consortia

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Abstract

Resource sharing is nothing but sharing of library resources by certain participating libraries among themselves on the basis of the principle of co-operation. This is applicable in sharing of documents, manpower, services, space and equipments. This paper mainly highlights for What is Resource Sharing?, Why Resource Sharing?, Ways, Means & Methods: Definition, Objectives, Needs, Areas for Co-Operation & Resource Sharing, Components, Requirements, Concept, Advantages, Criticism, Barrier, Steps to Promote Resource Sharing through Network, Library Consortium and their types & functions, Advantages and disadvantages.

Keywords / Descriptors:

1. Introduction:

Today, the object of resource sharing has changed the old concept of resource sharing due to multi-dimensional growth of published documents in recent past, increasing cost of books and subscribing periodicals, advancement of new technology for information processing and dissemination are some of the fundamentals factors which require information resource sharing among the libraries. From a long time, libraries were practicing information resource sharing among libraries. Besides entering into inter-library loan practice, libraries thought seriously of resource sharing for the proliferation of information which is the outcome of the rapid growth of publications and staying in the limited budget they are trying to integrate libraries cautiously for resource sharing in their principle of collection development. For collection development, participating libraries should come together and cooperate in two broad areas,

- Developing the collection on shared basis
- Developing services for exploiting such collection
Traditional library is seriously affected by barriers of information communication, like indifference of the lending library, conservative attitude, distance, language, cost, time etc. for inter-library loan. These barriers may be eliminated by computerized inter-library loan system. There are several constraints to the resource sharing in the print environment as it existed till recently;

- Open access to shared resource not possible & Service depends upon library performance
- Access to shared resource at a cost & Authenticity of collected information resources on internet

Reader services are also critical to the resource sharing Programme for its performance in providing access to shared resources effectively and efficiently. Most of the libraries are not organized and fully equipped to render services to the users satisfactorily should be taken care of. Modern information technology has made the activity of resource sharing very simple and convenient manner. This new technology comes forward for products and services of the library that have changed the traditional library objectives and operation which may be called the revolutionary changes to the information field. These technologies are called computer technology and telecommunication technology. By these, library can easily perform resource sharing Programme and services to the users very quickly and timely with least cost. Emergence of library consortia is a very promising development in this direction.

2. What is Resource Sharing?

Resource sharing denotes “a mode of operation whereby the functions are shared in common by a number of libraries”.

The term “Resource” is used to designate any or all of the materials, functions, services and the expertise of the professional and non-professional staff.

Kent & Galwin (1977) defines a resource as a thing/ person/ action to which one turns for and in time of need.

“Sharing” on the other hand implies apportioning, allotting or contributing something that is owned to benefit others.

In short, resource sharing in the context of library is sharing of;

- Information
- All kinds of information
Available in any format

- Personnel & Equipment
- Expertise & Services

2.1. Why Resource Sharing?

Allen Kent has suggested that "the success and survival of big libraries will depend on how much and to what extent libraries co-operative with each other in future"

- Increasing cost of document & Tremendous growth of literature
- Declining library budget & Reduce the operational cost of libraries
- Technological solutions & Users need satisfaction
- Optimum utilization of existing records

The goal of resource sharing is to provide convenient access to information, in whatever form and manner and wherever they located, at possible minimum cost. Resource sharing via network is planned to achieve these basic goals; they are,

- Computerized union service & Maximize user satisfaction
- Shared catalogue service & Shared circulation and interlibrary loan services
- Minimizing cost and time in reaching destination
- Links with other automated library systems and services
- Shared database services such as abstracting, indexing and full text services

2.2. Ways, Means & Methods:

- Inter library loan & Co-operative cataloguing
- Co-Operative storage & Reference, Reprographic service
- Documentation centre
- Union list of serials & Bibliographies

2.3. Definition of Resource Sharing:

The activities that result from an agreement, formal or informal, among a group of libraries (usually a consortium or network) to share collections, data, facilities, personnel, etc., for the benefit of their users and to reduce the expense of collection development
“A mode of operation whereby the functions are shared in common by a number of libraries”.

3. Objectives of the Resource Sharing:

Allen Kent, Bhargava (1986) stated the objectives of resource sharing networks as: “Library user should have access to more materials or services providing level service at less cost, increased service at level cost, or much more service at less cost.”

- Sharing of the burden of purchasing materials & processing the materials
- Sharing of services & Human expertise.
- To extend the accessibility of resources
- To diminish costs & To promote exploitation of resources
- To avoid duplication and save the finances
- Increase availability of resources & Promote full utilization of resources

3.1. Needs for Resource Sharing:

- Information Explosion & No library is self-sufficient
- Language barrier & Limitation in fund
- Diversity in users need
- Increase in user population & Quality of library service
- Inflation & Acquisition, Universal bibliographic control
- Growth of Knowledge in different subjects
- Rapid increase of literature and growth of publication, cost of publications
- Increasing trend of new born subjects and specialization
- Increase in the number of members of user community teachers, scholars and students in universities.
- Lack of environment to make use of available computer and communication technology for efficient and production use in libraries.

3.2. Areas for Co-Operation & Resource Sharing:
Co-Operative acquisition
Co-Operation in technical processing of books
Inter-library loan at various levels
   ❖ Local, Regional, State, National, International levels
Co-operative storage centers & Union catalogs
Documentation centers & Document procurement
Centralized acquisition of periodicals
Sharing of staff & Regional centers

3.3. Components of Resource Sharing:

Parket points out the five components of resource sharing resources, directories, communications, users and management, Network.

➢ Depending on the native or resource sharing activity, the resources component may be existing collection of books, journals, special collections and non book materials.
➢ The directories component consists of the index or detailed listing of the resource component for library network users.
➢ The communication component consists of the link among the participating libraries as modes in the network
➢ The user component of a library network vary according to the nature of the resource sharing activity
➢ The fifth component “network” will be provided by an administrative which carry out four basic function

At least five network components may be identified in the process of resource sharing. They are resources documentary, manpower and technology, management and users. It requires special skill to run successfully the processes involved in networking.

3.4. Requirements for Resource Sharing:

Every library is required to have computers, electronic database and connectivity of data communication network to enact resource sharing. A computerized database of bibliographical
records of library materials is to be developed to provide a broad perspective about in various libraries in the network. Other than hardware and software following facts should be taken into consideration to make resource sharing effective and successful. They are,

- Willingness to share & Commitment to share
- Planning & Preparation
- Policy guidelines and firm acceptance & Technical compatibility
- Trained manpower & Proper monitoring and feedback
- Ensure proper mechanism
  - Transport, Courier, Network, Other communication facilities
- Do not look for immediate benefits & Involve all those concerned
- Frequent meetings reliability & Review

3.5. Concept of Resource Sharing:

The voluminous growth of published documents in the recent past, increasing cost of information sources, techniques, advancements that offer newer methods of information processing, retrieval and dissemination are some of the factors which have made resource sharing a necessity. The library co-operation is a very old concept and a form of resource Sharing. Need for resource sharing was realized by libraries a long time ago. Besides entering into inter-library practice, libraries also thought seriously of resource sharing in many other areas, such as co-operative acquisition, co-operative cataloguing, co-operative classification, etc. Inter-library loan has been practiced as one of the most popular resource sharing activity amongst libraries. Inter-library loan in a traditional library is severely affected by barriers of information communication, such as apathy of the lending libraries, distance, language, time, etc. A computerized inter-library loan system overcomes these limitations. For resource sharing the participating libraries need to come together and co-operate in two areas:

- Developing the collection on shared basis.
- Developing services for exploiting such a collection.

While developing shared resources, the focus is first on eliminating duplication in the acquisition of various participating libraries to the extent possible. The efforts of participating libraries in developing shared resources are therefore directed in two distinct
Areas:
- Rationalization & Acquisition

4. Advantages of Resource Sharing:

- Resource sharing satisfies the fourth law of library science
- Resource sharing is very economical & Resource helps to save the library space
- Standardization in classification and cataloguing is possible
- Resource sharing avoids duplication of documents and work
- Acquire library materials & Share holdings
- Provide researchers with an increased number of research materials;
- Avoid duplicate purchases & Ensure collection of special material and services
- Establish efficient communication systems
- Develop an information marketing mechanism through cooperation and control of the quality of collections

4.1. Criticism of Resource Sharing:

- If all libraries depend on resource sharing, no library will have books to lend;
- If co-operative acquisition doesn’t operate well, serious gaps in the collection of a library will result;
- Without the sophisticated technology, resource sharing would have very limited value;
- Cost consideration may not permit resource sharing;
- The reaction of the publishing trade, if their sale gets reduced;
- Large libraries have to share a greater burden of lender rather than borrower which is not beneficial to them.

4.2. Barrier to Resource Sharing:

- Cost involved in computer network & Skilled manpower
- Psychological & cost of publications, Loss of autonomy
- Owning is still preferred & Traditional / Institutional barrier
Lack of institutional and external support & Legal and administrative
Urgent requirement are hardly met & Lack of determination and dedication
Difficulty in mutual agreements

5. Essential Factors Affecting Networking/Resource Sharing:

The major factors that affect the networking of libraries are,

- Availability of computerized data- bases & Availability of communication facilities (computer, telephone, satellite communication, reprography, fax, e-mail, etc)
- Standardization of library organizational practice & Availability of financial resources
- Efficiency in the governance of net-work & Basic agreement

5.1. Steps to Promote Resource Sharing through Network:

As we have seen networking of libraries is essential for sharing of library resources, the same should be promoted at local, regional, national and international level. Following steps are to be taken to promote resource sharing through Networks:

- Important libraries, information centers and institutions get their catalogues and bibliographies prepared in machine readable form to provide computer aided information services to users and promoting automation of the functions in their libraries such as cataloguing, circulation, preparation of bibliographies, union catalogue, etc.
- To promote sharing of resources among the libraries in India by developing and disseminating information and by offering computerized services to the users.
- To optimize information resources utilization through shared cataloguing, interlibrary loan services, catalogue production, collection development and avoiding duplication in acquisition to the extent possible.
- Encourage cooperation among libraries, documentation centers and information centers so that pooled resources can augment weaker resources centers.
➢ The promotion of non-bibliographic databases in India, especially by National Informatics Center has enabled institutions to perfect computer and networking technology.

➢ In house functions like acquisition, cataloguing, classification, serial control, circulation, SDI, current awareness services, etc; the network should support these library operations and the libraries should use the data in the central port for this purpose.

➢ The participating libraries should follow the rules and regulations of the network and be willing to create bibliographic records according to standards laid down.

➢ Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR-2) should be used as the code for cataloguing. It will help in creation of standard records.

➢ Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) should be used as a guide for creating subject descriptors. Other thesauri available on specialized subjects could also be used whenever needed in specialized libraries.

➢ The network should provide technical assistance to participating libraries in the creation of bibliographic databases.

➢ A panel of experts should be maintained for providing assistance to libraries & A central host machine should be installed for creating a union catalogue, combining catalogues of all participating libraries.

➢ As libraries in India use mainly Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC), Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) and Classified Catalogue Code (CCC) for classification of books, it would not be within the means and worth the effort to have one classification scheme in all participating libraries.

➢ The network should promote inter-library service and sharing of foreign periodicals should be attempted. As far as possible, foreign exchange should be saved on avoidable duplication titles. A courier service should be established to support the sharing of resources.

➢ All serials should also be published in electronic format and the availability of serials in electronic format, either outline or CD-ROM.

➢ Most of the abstracting and indexing services have cumulated the entries forming into databases, which can be searched online.
Networking activities should increase in India. Government should take an interest in this field. Some of the important networks established are NICNET, I-NET, ERNET, SIRNET, INFLIBNET.


In the context of Library, Consortium is a community (a co-operative) of two or more information agencies which have formally agreed to coordinate in or consolidate certain functions to achieve mutual objectives. It is a joint venture of any group of libraries to fulfill the common goal. Consortia may be formed on a local, regional or international basis; on a functional or format basis; or on a subject basis. Majority of the libraries particularly in developing countries are thinking today about the cooperative purchasing for any group of libraries, consortia should be formed and are often useful for establishing a formal structure regarding resource sharing with formal agreement for each participant library. In this method of cooperative collection development of each and every participant library can easily access to specific collections.

6.1. Growth of Consortium:

Library consortium is a joint activity of any group of libraries towards an information resource sharing and the development of consortia is getting much better place at local, national and international level. OCLC is the leading global library cooperative, helping libraries to serve people by providing economical access to knowledge through innovation and collaboration. Other major consortia like Virginia’s VIVA, Ohio’s OHIOLINK, Georgia’s Galileo, Swedish consortium model etc. are newer consortia which have been successfully implemented in these libraries but in India, consortium idea is still the preliminary stage.

6.2. Salient features for Library Consortium:
To eliminate the different problems faced by the libraries to provide specific service to the users & To meet the needs of the vast people due to tremendous growth of population all over the world.

To cope up with the newly generated knowledge published in different forms such as printed documents and electronic media on various disciplines, multidisciplinary and new innovated subject areas.

To collect all the documents published at the national and international level because of the library budgetary limit.

To overcome the language barrier i.e. primary documents are being published by the developed countries like USA, UK, France, Japan, China etc. and among them the non-English speaking countries produce majority of scientific literature in their national languages.

**6.3. Some Important Consortia play vital role for in Libraries:**

These are many consortia running successfully in different fields, but some important consortia play vital role in Library. These some important consortia for example given below in details;

**6.4. Types of Consortia:**

- **By type of Libraries covered**
- **By Geographical area of coverage**
- **By Subject/Discipline covered**
- **By type of Organizational structure**
- **By basis of Formation**

- **By type of Libraries covered**
  - Consortia of multi-type libraries
  - Consortia of same type libraries

- **By Geographical area of coverage**
  - Local level consortia
State level consortia
National level consortia
International level consortia

- By Subject/Discipline covered
  - Single discipline oriented consortia
  - Multi-discipline oriented consortia

- By type of Organizational structure
  - Loosely knit federation
  - Tightly knit organization

- By Basis of Formation
  - Non-sponsored consortia
  - Sponsored consortia

6.5. Indian Library Consortia:

Library Consortia have come up in many countries; several consortia have come up in India too:

- Forum for Resource Sharing in Astronomy and Astrophysics (FORSA)
- Indian National Digital Library in Science & Technology (INDEST)
- INFONET Project of UGC – Health Sciences
- Health Sciences Library & Information Network (HELINET)
- CSIR E-Journal Consortium
- DAE Library Consortium
- IIM Library Consortium

6.6. Functions of Consortia:

It is obvious that the existing consortia are basically serving as buying clubs than consortia in the real sense. But with little initiatives these can be developed into platforms for sharing valuable resources available in different libraries of the country, both in print and non-print media. Not only so, these consortia can also take up several other activities for the mutual benefit of the participating libraries.
6.7. Responsibilities for Information Resource Sharing:

- Cooperative collection development among the member libraries & Cooperative processing of information resources acquired through the consortium
- Creation of virtual digital library covering all the e-information resources available in member libraries by networking of those libraries
- Compilation of bibliographical and/or full-text database of the holdings of the member libraries, both print and non-print
- Sharing of information resources, both traditional and digital, of member libraries through network or document delivery service as the case may be
- Allowing reciprocal borrowing by the members of all libraries of the consortium
- Digitization of valuable and rare collections of member libraries available in printed format and providing access to such materials to the members of all the libraries of the consortium
- Supporting member libraries for setting up institutional repositories, e-print archives, electronic theses collection, etc.
- Developing common interface to catalogues, databases and e-collection by creating portals
- Creating interoperability among the member systems, databases and services
- Balanced collection development & Negotiation of group pricing
- Establish a standardized resource sharing systems & Prepare the union catalogue among participating libraries & Create databases of resources among participating libraries
- Use of web resource for each other & Document / Electronic media delivery service
- Strengthen communication system
- Sharing professional expertise and conduct training Programme
- Library co-operation and co-ordination with contractual obligations for each participant

6.8. Other Resource Sharing:

- Sharing the storage facilities, thereby minimizing expenditure on space
- Sharing of human resources at local, regional and national levels & Pooling of expert manpower and promoting professional development
- Assist member libraries in creating information technology infrastructure & Facilitating joint preservation and archiving activities for print and digital materials
- Initiating and supporting research projects of common interest & Collectively promoting, marketing and publicizing the library services

6.9. Advantages of Library Consortia:

- Consortia –based subscription to electronic resources providers access to wider number of electronic resources at substantially lower cost & Optimum utilization of funds
- Facilities to build up digital libraries & Helpful to provide better library services like CAS and SDI
- Cost sharing for technical and training support & Electronic journals demand neither library space nor shelving costs nor can they be stolen from the library
- The consortium have been offered better terms of licenses for use, archival access and preservation of subscribed electronic resources, which would not have been possible for any single institution
- Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week & Economy in maintain

6.10. Disadvantages of Library Consortia:

- Absence of a printed copy of journals & Require training of staff in handling electronic documents etc.
- Consortia require high initial investments in licensees and information and communication technology & Copyright problems
- Unreliable telecommunication links and insufficient bandwidth & Lack of archiving and back files availability
- Internet access id necessary & Users are not accepting e-journals as per with the printed journals
7. Conclusion:

With the explosion of knowledge and constraints on the financial resources, resource sharing has emerged as an important thing or necessity. Moreover, the problems of space, standardization, professional development of the staff, challenges posed by new technologies, and drastic cut in the library budgets have aggravated the problem of the present day librarianship. In India, Resource Sharing, in true sense of the term, has not yet developed in a big way. A few decades ago NISSAT came into being and some library networks started with much fanfare, such as CALIBNET, MALIBNET, DELNET, INFLIBNET, etc. Today NISSAT has been dismantled, while none of the networks have been able to become an efficient vehicle of resource sharing for which basically these networks had been established. Only DELNET and INFLIBNET have a better record, but still they will have to go a long way to be worthy of the tasks assigned to them. Happily now some consortia have started functioning. These consortia have started sharing of e-journals. To boost resource sharing activities in the country it is necessary to take up three pronged approach:

- Strengthening and reengineering of existing consortia to make them true vehicles of resource sharing and not merely sharing of e-journals
- Starting of new consortia and networks for resource sharing on suitable basis
- Linking of the consortia based networks to achieve nationwide network of libraries

Implementation of these steps will require some time and many hurdles are to be crossed. But once done, it will be possible to have effective nation wide resource sharing. This will ensure maximum saving with regard to money spent on acquisition of information resources throughout the country and will help expedite research at all levels thereby contributing greatly in national development.

At present scenario academic society is information hunger society, and he wants information on any form, cost, and place so library consortia are best solution for everyone. Library consortia helps to library to achieve library objective, every library have common objective “right information to right user, at right time” for satisfy our users.
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Information is considered as a vital resource for communication or dissemination of knowledge of one individual to another from the very early stage of human civilization. It is the basis of education and is an essential ingredient for new ideas. For effective use of information, it is necessary that it should be shared. Resource sharing in libraries is not a new concept. It has long been used to improve access and service through borrowing and lending from other libraries. Cooperation and sharing have been transformed by information technology and the move from a print to a digital environment. There are many libraries in India, have setup consortia among themselves for resource sharing.