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LIBRARY CONSORTIA INITIATIAVES IN INDIA – A PROPOSED MODEL

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ABSTRACT

The success and survival of libraries will much depend on how much and to what extent the libraries cooperate with each other in future

Allen Kent

The most important objective and goal of a library is to fulfil the information required by the users and now-a-day's libraries are finding it difficult to achieve it. Educational globalization and research output in multi directions resulted in the disappearance of the border between different disciplines. The supervision of the information produced is a challenge for the libraries and monitoring the knowledge explosion for a single library and to accumulate the resources for the users is impossible. Consortia are the mostly accepted way to maintain cooperation, coordination between the member libraries. This paper reviews the literature on library consortia in India and provides brief account of various consortia initiatives in India and suggests a model for the same.

KEYWORDS :Library Consortia , Educational globalization , collection developments.

1. INTRODUCTION

Libraries differ from each other in terms of its collection developments, users need, method of working, finance, information processing etc. The important responsibility of the libraries are

development of the collection, preservation of information and making it available for the users which has become complex because of ICT application in the libraries. Now the information resources are available in digital or electronic format which has enhanced the exchange of resources between the libraries. In the developing countries collection development and services provided are affected by insufficient fund and budgets cuts. Libraries are facing problems in the fast changing environment among which major challenge are insufficient budget and pressure to perform well providing information effectively and efficiently to the users. As a result only few libraries can meet the expense to procure wide range of information resources available within their budgets. Cooperative procurement of information resources through the consortia purchase avoids the duplication of resources among the libraries. Consortia came into existence primarily to obtain favorable pricing on licensed e-resources and are considered as one of the up-and-coming tool for libraries to survive. The main aim of library consortia is to achieve which cannot be achieved individually and has been formed to increase the availability of resources and to offer automated services.

2. LIBRARY CONSORTIA

The plural form of consortium is "consortia". Consortium is derived from the Latin word "consors" (con-together and sors fate) for "fellowship" which means emphasizes coming mutually or forming separate groups for a purpose. Terms such as alliance, coalition, collaboration, cooperation, partnership etc are used as synonyms term for consortium. Library consortia are organisations of libraries which are formed for benefits and opportunities of mutual activity. Dong and Zou defined the library consortium as "an association of library established by formal agreement usually for the purpose of improving the services through resource sharing among its members". The history of the consortium was traced by Nfila and Darko- from 1960 through 2000 and reported in 1997 International Coalition of Library Consortia was formed. Historically, academic libraries formed the consortium for sharing of printed materials but now consortia are formed for providing access to the electronic resources of common interest to the users across the internet. Prior to library consortia many libraries came together willingly for the mutual benefit of their respective users and this was the starting stage of cooperation among the libraries. Now the resources are also available in electronic or digital medium which has facilitated the exchange of information resources among libraries. For resource sharing the development of library consortia is a significant development (Chaterjee, 2002).

3. LIBRARY CONSORTIA INITIATIVES: INDIAN SCENARIO

3.1 INDEST-AICTE Consortium

A proposal for the subscription of electronic resources through consortia was discussed on 1st and 2nd December 2000 in the National Seminar on Knowledge Networking in Engineering and Technology Education and Research held at IIT Delhi. Under the chairmanship of Prof. N. Balakrishnan, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) appointed an Expert Group, who submitted the report in September, 2002 and based on their recommendations the "Indian National Digital Library in Engineering Sciences and Technology (INDEST)" Consortium was set up in 2003. IIT Delhi is the headquarter.

3.2 National Knowledge Resource Consortium (NKRC)

To facilitate the accessibility, use and increase the resource base of world science and technology literature, the 5th meeting of the Heads of CSIR Laboratories and Information Centres held at National Institute For Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (NIIST), formley Regional Research

Laboratory, Trivendrum in February 2001, had recommended that a consortium for access to E-Journals be set up. Consequently, a study group was set up for collecting and compiling the informaltions about the journals subscribed by various CSIR Laboratories and studying the feasibility, economic viability of laboratories by the Director General, CSIR. Based on the recommendations made by the study group, the CSIR accepted the recommendations and decided to set up a consortium, "CSIR E-Journal Consortium" for access to electronic journals. In 2009, the consortium was named as the National Knowledge Resource Consortium (NKRC) consisting of 39 CSIR and 24 DST institutes. The consortium has increased not only its resources but also the number of users. NISCARI is the nodal organisation.

3.3 UGC Infonet Digital Library Consortium

The Honourable Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee announced the effort and it was activated by Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, the Minister for Human Resource Development at the inauguration of the Golden Jubilee celebration of UGC in December 28, 2002 at New Delhi. It has been successful due to close understanding and cooperation among UGC, ERNET, Inter University Centres IUCCA, INFLIBNET, CEC and national and international publishers. The Honourable President of India, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam formally launched UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium in December 2003, after the universities were provided the Internet Connection in the year 2003 under the UGC INFONET programme. From January 1, 2004 e-journal access as enabled. UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium is an innovative project to facilitate e-resources to the Indian academic. The consortium is the largest academic library consortium in India.

3.4 Indian Institute of Management Consortium (IIM Consortium)

The need of resource sharing was realized by the Indian Institute of Management libraries. In 1999 libraries of IIMs Ahmadabad, Bangalore, Calcutta, Indore, Kozhikode and Lucknow formed a consortium. First meeting was held in Calicut in which IIM Kozhikode took the leadership in the formation of consortium. Host of database was purchased jointly in the first meeting itself at competitive price. IIM get online access to over 740 e-journals at nominal price from major publishers like Elsevier, Kluwer, Wiley, Blackwell and MCB University Press etc. The IIM Library Consortium is decentralised acquisition and processing and centralised utilization. IIM library consortium is now a part of INDEST-AICTE consortium and gets resource from INDEST-AICTE consortium.

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

A meeting was held at Raman Research Institute, Bangalore on July 29, 1981 and Forum for Resource Sharing in Astronomy and Astrophysics (FORSA) was informally launched to share the resources held in each library. In initial phase five members joined the consortium and is example of homogenous group of members joined together to bargain consortia licensing for astronomy journals. FORSA is a member of International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC) from August 2003. In 2004 Physics and Maths libraries also became its member. Currently FORSA has twelve members.

3.6 Health Science Library and Information Network (HELINET) Consortium

The consortium was conceived by the University and its implementation has been success. In 2001 the consortium concept was adopted by RGUHS for networking all the libraries associated with health sciences under its affiliation. HELINET was promoted in 2002 as a resource sharing consortium by the Digital Library at RGUHS to network libraries, promote collaboration and sharing resources

among them. The major benefit of HELINET was the expanded access to core international e-journals which was not possible for each library to get the access before. HELINET is partly funded by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

3.7 Consortium for e-Resources in Agriculture (CeRA)

To maximise the e-journals resources the authorities of ICAR formed a e-consortium under the project of National Agricultural Innovation Project (NAIP) and named it as CeRA (Consortium for e-Resources in Agriculture). Since November 2007 the National Agriculture Innovation programme (NAIP) has funded for establishing the CeRA at Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI). CeRA provides access to 126 libraries of National Agriculture Research System.

3.8 UGC- Department of Atomic Energy consortium

UGC-Department of Atomic Energy consortium was formed for enhancing interaction between the research scientists working in the Department of Atomic Energy and the faculty from various institutions of higher education. A memorandum of understanding was signed on December 10, 2003 by Dr. Arun Nigavekar, Chariman UGC and Dr. Anil Kakidkar, Chairman Atomic Energy Commission. Academic libraries faced major problems in subscribing online resources because of financial crunch, increasing user's demand, diverse need of users, lack of self sufficiency etc. As a result formation of consortium was an essential model for libraries.

3.9 DBT E-Library Consortium (DELCON)

DBT E-Library Consortium is a project of the Department of Biotechnology to bring change in the research organisations qualitatively. National initiative was taken to provide access to the e-resources in all the life science subject to DBT institutions. DELCON was setup up in January 2009 including 10 DBT members. 1n 2010 17 more DBT institutions joined the consortium. In the third phase 2011, 7 members were added. Currently the consortium consists of 16 Department of Biotechnology Institutions and 18 North Eastern Region Institutions. The consortium covers about 926 journals and SCOPUS database which are made available through DELCON portal (http://delcon.gov.in) to the members.

3.10 National Medical Library – Electronic Resources in Medicine (NML- ERMED Consortium)

The Director General of Health Services and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare take an initiative to develop national level electronic resources in medicine named as National Medical Library – Electronic Resources in Medicine consortium. The consortium is operated by National Medical Library, New Delhi. It consists for 39 institutions which include 10 DGHS libraries, 28 ICMR libraries and AIIMS.   For the medical college and institutions there are no membership fees but for private colleges and institutions price is charged as payment per site.

3.11 e-Shodh Sindhu

Based on the recommendation of an Expert Committee, the MHRD has formed e-Shodh Sindhu merging three consortia initiatives, namely UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium, NLIST and INDEST-AICTE Consortium. The e-Shodh Sindhu will continue to provide current as well as archival access to more than 15,000 core and peer-reviewed journals and a number of bibliographic, citation and factual databases in different disciplines from a large number of publishers and aggregators to its member institutions including centrally-funded technical institutions, universities and colleges that are

covered under 12(B) and 2(f) Sections of the UGC Act. The main objective of the e-Shodh Sindu: Consortia for Higher Education E-Resources is to provide access to qualitative electronic resources including full-text, bibliographic and factual databases to academic institutions at a lower rates of subscription.

4. Proposed Model for National Consortium of Indian Libraries (NCIL)

Potter (1997) argues that "the fact that a group of libraries share common funding sources be it directly through elected officials or through board of regents or oversight agency, is an important reason to build state wide cooperative systems. There are great appeals in efforts to pool resources and in cooperating to control users". The present consortia system has a lot of merits. The benefits can be maximized by forming consortia for nationwide access. Instead of spending funds on various consortia it is useful to spend upon one consortium which will fulfil the requirements of academic as well as research institutions. Such a consortium can be named as **National Consortium of Indian Libraries (NCIL).**
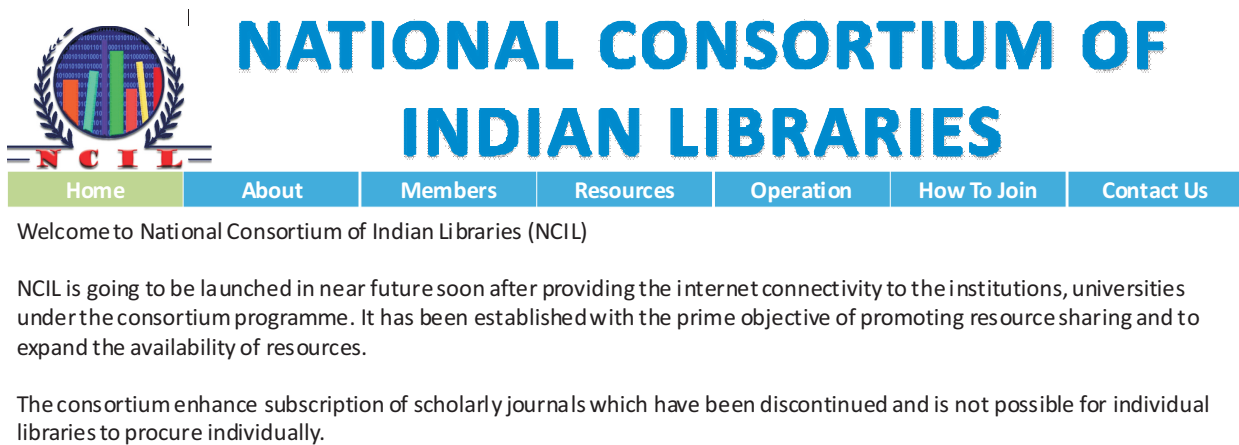

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Welcome to National Consortium of Indian Libraries (NCIL)

NCIL is going to be launched in near future soon after providing the internet connectivity to the institutions, universities under the consortium programme. It has been established with the prime objective of promoting resource sharing and to expand the availability of resources.

The consortium enhance subscription of scholarly journals which have been discontinued and is not possible for individual libraries to procure individually.

Fig : Home page of NCIL

5. CONCLUSION

Formation of a consortium has proved to be a significant solution in the situations of scarcity of library budget, rising cost of e-resources. Indian libraries are now moving towards consortia approach for access to online resources. Indian initiatives in the consortia formation has made remarkable development to ensure the growth of library in the country. Consortia based acquired publications has brought great benefits. The models of library consortia are different but then also they share many common interests. The responsibility of libraries has become more complex with the developments of computer and communication technologies. The e-Shodh Sindu Consortia for Higher Education E-

Resources is going to be a successful Library consortia in India and provide access to qualitative electronic resources to all academic institutions of India at a lower rates of subscription.

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