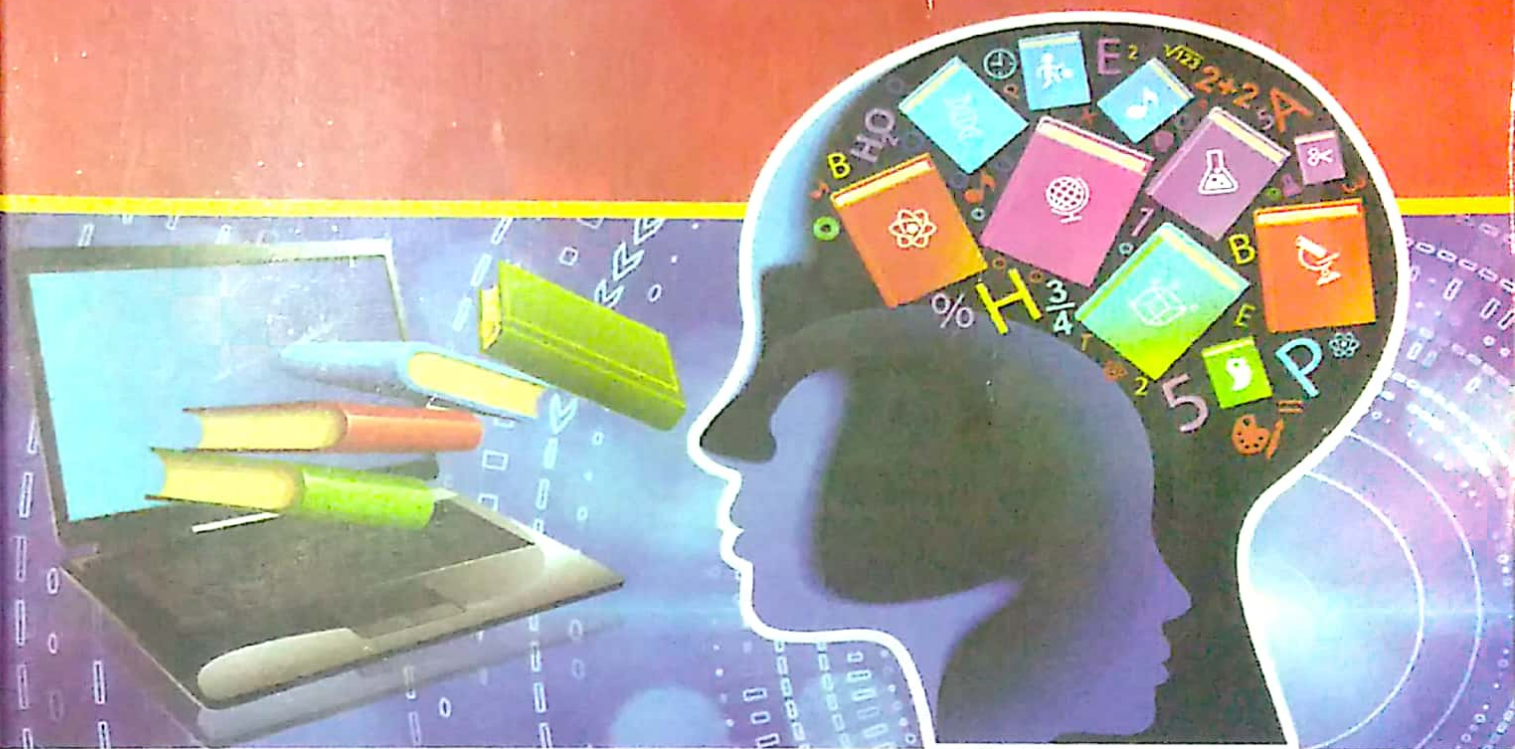


Multi - Disciplinary Scenario of

LIBRARIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA



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MULTI-DISCIPLINARY SCENARIO OF
**Libraries in Higher Education
in India**

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CONSORTIA APPROACH: VALUABLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MULTI-DISCIPLINARY SCENARIO OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

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Abstract

This paper titled 'Consortia approach- valuable for the development of Multi-Disciplinary scenario of Higher Education in India' deals with meaning of consortia, reasons for the formation of consortia. Major Journals Consortium includes UGC-INFONET E-Journal Consortium, INFONET-CNR E-Journals Consortium, IIRCA Consortium, IAI Library Consortium and IAIPI Consortium. Advantages and limitations of consortia.

Keywords: Consortia, Higher Education, UGC-INFONET, IAIPI, IIRCA

Introduction

Due to increasing cost of the documents and non-availability of enough funds, libraries are unable to provide each and every material to its users. To cope with the demand of information documents more and more emphasis is being given on resource sharing. Library Consortium is a group of two or more libraries established with a view to share information among them. Now a days the major emphasis of librarian is to share online resources. These resources are very expensive if subscribed by the library individually. When on line journals are subscribed through library consortium the publishers provide discount on them, and the member libraries share their subscription cost. The present world of information explosion and proliferation of published literature throughout the world have dramatically changed in higher education. The challenges posed by information explosion get multiplied due to resource crunch on one hand and increasing cost of publications on the other. But the Consortia have helped out to face these challenges. The advent of information technology and networking technologies have changed the concept and have opened new vista of library consortia not only faster and cheaper but also opened a flood gate of resources available in different parts of the world.

Library consortia in today's digital age are quite different from that of library networks in yester years. The main reason is that the resources that are shared in today's consortia environment are predominantly in electronic form such as electronic journals, electronic books and databases. Hence, the technology and associated tools to support sharing the electronic resources are also important components for the success of any library consortia. Library Consortium facilitates the libraries to get benefit of wider access to electronic resources which are a group of libraries those are

working together towards a common goal, whether to expand cooperation on traditional library services such as collection development or electronic information services. The consortia may be formed on a local, regional, national or international basis, on a functional or topical basis, or on a subject basis.

Reasons for the formation of Consortia

The following are some of the reasons for the formation of consortia

- Better sharing of existing resources,
- Controlling building cost by providing regional storage facilities,
- Expediting inter library borrowing at the lowest cost to the consortia members,
- Providing library services with access to new electronic resources including databases and services offered by the World Wide Web,
- To collect all the documents published at the national and international level, and
- To ensure equal access to electronic resources,
- To meet the needs of the people;
- To overcome the language barrier.
- To reduce the cost of member library operations by joining group purchase of information products.

Major E-Journals Consortium

1. Gate is the first e-journal portal from India. Launched in 2001 by Informatics India Pvt. Ltd., Bangalore. Gate provides seamless access to millions of journal articles available online offered by 5526 publishers. It presently has a massive database of journal literature, indexed from 16,400 e-journals with links to full text at publisher's sites. It also plans to support online subscription to journals, electronic document delivery, archiving and other related services. The concept of consortia in India is still in the initial stage, slowly and steadily it picking up in many institutions. Several initiatives that were taking place in the west in recent times have influenced them to think seriously about consortia. Indian academic, research and technical libraries have started to provide shared web-based resources since several years. Some important E-resources consortium has given below;

• **UGC-INFONET E-Journal Consortium:** UGC Infonet is an ambitious programme of UGC to interlink all the Universities in country with state-of-art technology.

The Network is being switched to BSNL backbone i.e. 1st April 2010 and renamed UGC INFONET 2.0. On the new scheme 10 Mbps (1:1) Leased line is being established in 200+ Universities preferably by using Fibre to provide Internet Services. The UGC-INFONET mainly provides Internet bandwidth, a prerequisite for delivery of scholarly content subscribed through the UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium. The scheme has now been extended to 200 Universities and 6 Inter-University Centres of the UGC.

• **INDEST (Indian National Digital Library in Engineering Science and Technology (Indest Consortium)):-** The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) set up the 'INDEST Consortium'. The Ministry provides funds required for providing differential access to electronic resources subscribed for 48 institutions including IISc, IITs, NITs, IIMs, 100+ governments and government aided engineering colleges, and 1000+ engineering colleges joined under self-support scheme. A few others provide the consortium to the core members through the consortia headquarters at the IIT, Delhi. The total members in the consortia have now grown to 1072. The INDEST consortia subscribes to over 6000+ e-journals from publishers.

• **CSIR E-journals Consortia:-** The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), is India's largest research and development organization. It has 40 laboratories spread over the length and breadth of the country. CSIR E-Journals consortium is a network project under 10th five year plan to bridge-up and strengthen the constant decline of journals information base in CSIR labs/institutes. NISCAIR is one of the constituent units of CSIR in the area of information science has been providing access to 4500 e-journals to all science and technological personnel of CSIR through pooling and sharing resources. Now the project has been approved in 11th five year plan for continuing access to the large pool of information resources and also to expand the resources base comparable to world's leading institutions. In the year 2009, autonomous institutions and professional bodies under Department of Science and Technology (DST) also joined the consortium for accessing information resources. Now consortium has agreements of 29 information products including journals, bibliographic databases, patents, standards and protocols.

• **FORSA Consortia:-** Forum for Resource Sharing in Astronomy and Astrophysics (FORSA) was established in 1981. It is a typical example of homogeneous group of members of subject group Astronomy and Astrophysics. Indian Institute of Astrophysics library is member of National Knowledge Resource Consortium which was launched recently. Through this consortium, all the libraries of DST are provided online access to additional journals of various publishers.

• **IIM Library Consortia:-** The Indian Institutes

of Management (IIMs) has launched the IIM Library consortia in the year 2000 to facilitate better resource sharing among the IIM libraries and to minimize the expenditure on subscription to various resources. IIMs have started collaborative subscriptions to databases and e-journals from Kluwer, Blackwell and Elsevier publishers. IIMs are now part of the INDEST, a consortia initiative launched by the Ministry of HRD in 2002. As a result of both these initiatives, each of IIMs is getting on-line as well as off-line access to over a 1000+ e-journals from publishers in addition to more than 10 selected databases.

• **N-LIST E-consortium:-** The Project National Library and Information Services Infrastructure for Scholarly Content (N-LIST), being jointly executed by the UGC INFONET Digital Consortium, INFLIBNET Centre and INDEST-AICTE Consortium, IIT, Delhi provides for cross-subscription to e-resources subscribed by two consortia and access to selected e-resources to colleges. The N-LIST provides access of e-resources to students, researchers and faculty from colleges and other beneficiary institutions through server installed at the INFLIBNET centre.

Advantages of Consortia

Some of the important advantages of the proposed library consortium are as follows:

- Consortia-based subscription to electronic resources provides 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 shelling 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; and
- Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Economy in maintain
- Consortia-based subscription to electronic resources provides access to wider number of electronic resources at substantially lower cost.
- Availability and monitoring of usage statistics, which helps libraries in accomplishment of future strategy.
- Library consortia act as means to achieve electronic resources access to more users for a lesser price. For the library it is more-for-less bargain strategy.

Disadvantages of Consortia

- Absence of a printed copy of Journals
- Require training of staffs in handling electronic documents etc.
- Consortia require high initial investments in licenses and information and communication technology
- Copyright problems
- Unreliable telecommunication links and insufficient bandwidth
- Some e-resources not provide facility of archiving and back files availability
- Internet Access id necessary
- Users are not accepting e-journals as per with the printed Journals

Conclusion

Access to e-journals has definitely proved to be a great boon to the academic research community to strengthen their research endeavor. In this era of budget constraints, the libraries are able to provide access to more e-journals through various consortia to support teaching and research. However e-journals can be more beneficial to the research community if their proper utilization is ensured by developing proper infrastructure for their access.

The exponential growth of digital information resources has necessitated consortia-based services for the economic and effective delivery of information to the end users. Consortia approach has become a heavily-used service by the students. Strengthening of consortia services by adding more resources and facilities will provide strong information support for the education, research, and extension programmes.

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