
UNIT 13 RESOURCE SHARING - CONCEPT, NEED FORM AND SELECTED CASE STUDIES

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13.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- understand the concept of resource sharing; its purpose and objectives;
- identify different aspects of resource sharing;
- know the developments taking place due to the impact of modern information technologies; and
- have exposure to some of selected case studies.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

In the present day context, no single library could think of organizing library services entirely based on its own collection. It has, to certain extent, depend on resources external to its collections: The reason for this dependency is ascribed to the rising cost of journals, the growing pressures on library space and the cost of processing and maintaining large collections. In essence, these factors call for effective cooperation among different libraries.

It may also be mentioned here that library cooperation in resource sharing has become essential because of a shift on the part of the libraries from permanent acquisition' to temporary ownership. It may be pointed out that the advocates of "ownership paradigm" emphasise the acquisition of materials, believing that the academic library is fulfilling its role in planning and managing for anticipated information needs for scholars and students. The 'temporary ownership' model is criticised because of the short term application, since its objective is to satisfy the immediate information needs only.

The concept on 'access' to information resources is a part of wider philosophy concerned with resource sharing in libraries. It may be stated that access is facilitated by means of cooperative collection development and inter-library loan activities.

One of the significant aspects that need to be emphasised is that resource sharing activity is based on the concept of equivalency: **that is libraries should not only receive but should**



also give however small it should be. In order to facilitate such arrangements all the participants must know what each of the member libraries has and what resources it will be acquiring in future.

An attempt is made in this Unit, to furnish information relating to resource sharing, its objectives, organization and development. The sharing of information resources is enhanced by the concept of networking. Libraries have been familiar with the concept of networking for decades. They have predicated a portion of their service goals on networking - the ability to obtain needed materials from other libraries: What has changed in 1980's and 1990's is the ability to carry out such resource sharing more efficiently with the use of telecommunications networks. The unit also discusses the implications of modern information technologies to Library Resource Sharing Service, and presents a few case studies, especially some of the developments taking place in India in the academic sector in resource sharing activity.

It is hoped that the material presented in this Unit will be found helpful by the students of BLISc Programme in understanding the concept of Resource Sharing in libraries.

13.2 CONCEPT OF RESOURCE SHARING

Librarians are very much familiar with library cooperation. The basic purpose of library cooperation was to pool the resources of a group of libraries and use them to their optimum level for the mutual benefit of all the participating (members) institutions. In fact, library cooperation did manifest itself in different forms such as cooperative acquisition, centralised , cataloguing and inter-library loan. All these were aimed at avoiding duplication of efforts on the part of libraries and using the available resources optimally. Especially, interlibrary loan did enhance the ability to, obtain needed materials from other libraries. Thus, library cooperation facilitated access to knowledge within, between and among the libraries.

Resource sharing, in fact, extends the scope of 'library cooperation to include certain reciprocity and partnership in which each participant has something useful to contribute as well as to receive from others. There is a willingness and also the capability to make it available when required. Efforts were made during the 1950's and 1960's to formalise the concept of resource sharing largely because of inadequate library budgets and the sudden spurt in the cost of books and subscription of periodicals.

13.2.1 Definition

Allen Kent provides descriptions to some of the concepts associated with resource sharing in the following terms:

Resource sharing in libraries is defined as a mode of operation whereby functions are, shared in common by a number of libraries in its most positive effects: Resource sharing entails reciprocity, employing partnership in which each member has something useful to contribute to others and in which every member is willing and able to make available when needed. 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. Resource implies a thing, a person or an action to which one turns for aid and help in time of need.

Secondly; the term '**Sharing**' implies apportioning, allotting or contributing something that is owned to benefit others: It implies partnership for mutual benefit.

Library Resources encompass print and non-print materials as well as human resources that are eligible to be shared in ways that enhance the quality of service.

With the elaborate explanation as provided by Allen Kent, it must be easy for any one to understand the meaning as well as the significance of the concept of "Resource Sharing": Obviously, it does not mean that individual identity of participating libraries would be affected in any way. In fact, the gains of resource sharing are to be achieved without in any way adversely affecting the objectives or interests of the participating libraries.

However, there might be situations that may call for minor adjustments with regard to methods of operation.



13.2.2 Objectives of Resource Sharing

The objectives of resource sharing are very idealistic. They are aimed at providing convenient access to information to library users irrespective of the location of the resources. In other words, libraries go beyond their own resources to satisfy the user requirements. This is achieved by sharing the resources of other libraries. The main reasons for this activity are

- reduction in all round cost;
- avoidance of unnecessary duplication of information resources and their processing and maintenance costs;
- provision of greater access to information resources to a wider category of users; and
- development of specialised areas of collection building, each library concentrating on areas of its own concern.

The basic activity of resource sharing is aimed at maximising the availability of library materials and services at the minimal expense. The emphasis is on provision of access to information sources rather than possession and ownership of such resources, although ownership is, not completely excluded. The basic assumption is that no library can possess all the world's literature and, hence, has to depend on other libraries for serving all the needs ' of its clientele.

13.3 REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ORGANISATION OF RESOURCE SHARING

One of the significant aspects that needs attention is that each participating library should have a clear cut policy as regards the type of resources it would be in a position to share' with other member libraries. In other words, the library will necessarily have some books and journals which are very much used by its own clientele and cannot be lent out of the premises: Such documents do not fall under the purview of resources sharing. Therefore, for effective resource sharing among libraries, it is important to reach an agreement on some of the under mentioned issues:

13.3.1 Agreements On.

- type of material to be shared;
- acquisition policies both to ensure consistent development of holdings and also to avoid duplication when this is considered to be non-productive by the member libraries;
- loan periods, renewal procedures, payment for materials lost during transactions, etc.;
- production of tools such as union catalogues with uniformity and standardisation for bibliographic control;
- cooperative cataloguing or shared cataloguing;
- maintenance of up-to-date catalogues, etc.

In addition to the aspects mentioned above; it is necessary that there should be :

- positive procedures for delivering materials and their timely return;
- bibliographic access to local holdings and on order and in-process records of the participant libraries;
- establishment of facilities for storing little used or discarded materials, their maintenance and use as and when required.

Once material of interest has been' located elsewhere, it becomes necessary to determine whether it is indeed available, or is in use by others. Resource sharing requires access to circulation information to avoid disappointment and to accelerate the process of locating the required material in another library. Once this is done, the next step entails transfer of the physical material to the point of need. Resource sharing, therefore, involves establishing positive procedures for delivering materials, and for ensuring their return in a timely manner.



If resource sharing is to be successful and effective, all procedures must occur with sufficient speed so that the client has the desired material in hand before the need for it is evaporated. Technology may become useful tool in this regard:

13.3.2 Basic Records

Record keeping is important in resource sharing systems as it is in individual libraries.. Sharing of materials entails sharing in a formal and consistent manner, the records with out which the system cannot operate.

First is the acquisitions policy, which must be reduced to writing in as much detail as possible. This is necessary in order that other members in the system can make effective predictions of whether other libraries will or will not acquire a given item. The experience in the preparation of parameters for approval programmes may serve as a workable model in this regard.

Convenient access in real time, to on-order/in-process records of resource sharing partners and to union catalogues of their holdings can help in the application of policy to individual selection decisions.

Once a positive acquisition decision has been made, the local on-order and in-process files must be accessible to others who may be making an: acquisition decision to purchase the same materials. The same goes for access to holdings as represented by the catalogues of the member libraries.It is useful to consider the feasibility of establishing a union catalogue for the member libraries and of keeping it up to date.The union catalogues whether individual or union must contain indications of library location of items and also information on any restrictions on use.

The client who has located material of interest to him must know whether it is available or it is circulating., In the latter case, the expected time of availability must be known so that a decision can be reached as to whether the delay is acceptable or whether the holdings of the other library should be availed: In other words, the basic circulation files, therefore, need to be made accessible.

Once the loan transaction has been completed, it is necessary to establish files, and also procedures for recall of materials. If protocols are established for fines or other punitive methods for late return, or non-return, then appropriate files and procedures must be established. The files and procedures discussed above' provide the opportunity for analysis of usage and for making decisions on retirement of materials to a common storage facility. If such a facility is developed, appropriate files and procedures must also be developed.

13.3.3 Technology

Since there is need to share data about acquisitions, holdings, inter library loan requests, and completed transactions - and to share this data over distances - the technology of computers and telecommunications becomes dominant in the design and operation of -' resource sharing systems. The primary records containing such data can be recorded in machine-readable form to permit cost-effective transactions to be concluded; to permit ready analysis; and to support, with consistent and up-to-date data, decision processes that must -, be made in different geographic locations.

There is a whole spectrum of computers, which can be considered for resource sharing systems. Small and inexpensive computers (microcomputers) to more expensive large scale "computer facilities are available for this purpose, Libraries participating in resource sharing systems may wish to utilise any of these to support local automation requirements. Careful analysis is needed to ensure that equipment choices for local requirements and/or to support consortium, are compatible.

If a network of participating libraries is envisaged, the process would be enhanced by telecommunications networks. In such situations, libraries must recognise both the potential and problems that result due to adoption of technology. Successful cooperation is closely related to adherence of standards. Standardisation is a must in an electronic environment:



locally, but the money saved from that non-acquisition could well represent an investment in 'access to a larger universe of material than the particular local library can afford. Availability through resource sharing, also implies new ways of evaluating libraries and using the resources of recorded knowledge. The collections of a particular library are not an important criteria to judge the value of a library as much as the access facilities that the library is able to provide for larger quantum of recorded knowledge by virtue of its membership in a resource sharing network: The effectiveness of resource sharing depends on the availability of appropriate communications, technology and delivery systems. The computer has been an extremely effective device for processing and locating materials quickly and conveniently regardless of distance. The delivery services, till now, have mostly relied on mail service or private delivery systems:

If resource sharing systems are to be operated in parallel with 'systems' aiming toward self sufficiency, the cost effectiveness may not be possible. On the other hand, if more integrated systems of resource sharing are developed, more benefits; will be realised from such efforts.

13.5 DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA (SOME CASE STUDIES)

The need for networking of libraries with the objective of resource sharing was felt in the - 1980s after witnessing a great deal of progress made by the developed countries in this direction. The 'Working Group.' of the Planning Commission on libraries and informatics headed by Dr. N. Seshagiri recommended the need for modernisation of library services and inter-linking of library systems during the 7th plan period (1985-1990).

In 1985 NISSAT convened a meeting under the-chairmanship of Director-General, CSIR. One of the recommendations of this- meeting was establishment of a Science and Technology library in Calcutta and the promption of automation and networking in the city. CMC Ltd. - was commissioned by NISSAT to prepare the feasibility report on the Calcutta Library ' Network (CALIBNET). The report was completed and published in 1989. In the meanwhile, in January 1988, India International Centre, New Delhi with the support of NISSAT began the work on Delhi Library Network (DELNET) as a project of the Centre. In July 1992; it was registered as a society under the Societies Registration Act of 1860.

The recommendations of the Working Group on Modernisation of Library Service and Informatics headed by Dr. Seshagiri, paved the way for the establishment of an Information ' and Library Network (INFLIBNET). The report of INFLIBNET was published in 1989. In 1991, INFLIBNET opened its office at Ahmedabad as soon as funds became available under the Eighth Plan, INFLIBNET began its work. In the meantime proposals were made regarding the establishment of more networks. in cities like Chennai, Pune, Bombay and Bangalore. Therefore, besides CALIBNET, DELNET and INFLIBNET the library networks started in one form or the other in Bombay, Bangalore, Chennai, Pune and Ahmedabad. '

In the following sections a brief account of CALIBNET; DELNET and INFLIBNET is presented. These form some selected examples of case studies.

13.5.1 CALIBNET

CALIBNET was sponsored by NISSAT which initiated the action for the preparation of a : feasibility report by CMC. According to the feasibility report, CALIBNET 'was to be network of 40 libraries. If was to be developed in two phases: NISSAT provided funds for the development of software package (MAITRAYEE) based on INGRESS 502 for CALIBNET. The package was developed by CMC Ltd:

Details regarding the total quantity of machine-readable data produced by different participating libraries using MAITRAYEE package of software are not readily available. It is understood that CALIBNET is providing access to INTERNET and is offering CD-ROM database searching facility. Whether CALIBNET has started the creation of a union catalogue for the books available in the participating libraries is not known.

It appears that CALIBNET has not yet developed itself into a resource sharing network of



libraries in Calcutta as was envisaged. A full picture of CALIBNET and the value-added products it has developed so far to aid the resource sharing activity by libraries in Calcutta has yet to emerge. Only then; its achievements can be evaluated critically in the real sense.

13.5.2 DELNET

DELNET was originally started as a project of India International Centre (IIC) New Delhi, with the financial support from NISSAT. The financial support continued for the period 1988 to 1992. It became a registered society in March 1992. Some of the salient features of the network are:

- 1) It has 67 institutional libraries as its members (the membership is on the increase from year to year).
- 2) In order to promote resource sharing among member libraries DELNET has, so far, created the following:
 - a) Union catalogue of books available in the member libraries in computer-readable form (1068 lakh records).
 - b) Union list of periodicals (116 libraries)
 - i) Union list of scientific and technical periodicals.(?, 811 records);
 - ii) Union list of social science periodicals (696 records);
 - iii) Union list of periodicals inhumanities (1178 records).
 - c) Specialists database (1,200 specialists I
 - d) Database of articles (50,000 records)
 - e) Union catalogue of periodicals (2391 records)
 - f) Database of language publications (sample database).
- 3) DELSIS, the networking software based on BASIS plus which can accommodate and retrieve millions of bibliographic and full text records was developed by DELNET itself.
- 4) INTERNET access and E-mail facilities are provided for its members and access to INTERNET is available at DELNET headquarters: Also, DELNET has created a Home Page on WWW. It can be accessed on INTERNET at the following address: HYPERLINK [http://WWW.nic in/delnet](http://WWW.nic.in/delnet);
- 5) It is claimed by DELNET that it has saved nearly Rs.1 crore on the part of participating libraries through rationalisation of foreign periodicals in the field of physical sciences, medical sciences and agricultural sciences.
- 6) DELNET has been arranging training programmes for the staff members of the participating libraries and providing them an exposure to the application of modern technology.

It may stated that DELNET has made a break through in resource sharing activities and has thus become the first operational library network in India. It is on the path of enlarging its activities and is contemplating to develop an on-line database of 'Books in Print: New Titles', with the cooperation of some renowned publishers.

13.5.3 INFLIBNET

The INFLIBNET programme was conceptualised by the then Chairman of UGC Prof. Yash Pal. It was his belief that a library and information network of the magnitude of INFLIBNET is very essential for the country in the present context of computer and communications technologies making a great impact on the provision of library and information services in the developed world: The entire programme envisaged for INFLIBNET has been described and discussed along with operational details in the document "Development of an Information and Network - Report of the Inter-Agency Working Group UGC, 1988".

Objectives

The objectives of the creation of INFLIBNET as recommended were :

- to evolve a national network, interconnecting various libraries and information centres in the country and to improve the capability in information handling and service;



- to provide access to document collection of libraries by creating on-line union catalogue of monographs, serials, and non-book materials;
- to provide improved access to bibliographic numerical and factual databases with particular emphasis on those databases created indigenously by the Sectoral Information Centres of NISSAT and UGC Information centres;
- to establish gateways for on-line accessing of information;
- to provide document delivery service by enriching information sources of libraries having rich collection in specific areas;
- to optimise information resource utilisation through resource sharing;
- to implement computerisation of operations and services in libraries and information centres following uniform standards;
- to facilitate scientific communication among scientists, technologists, researchers, social scientists; academics, faculties and students through electronic mail, bulletin board; file transfer, computer/audio/video conferencing, etc.;
- to enable users dispersed all over the country to have access to information regarding books, monographs, serials, and non-book materials by locating the sources where available, and to obtain them through the facilities of new technologies and union catalogue of documents;
- to encourage cooperation among libraries; documentation centres, information-centres in the country; so that the resources can be pooled for the benefit of weaker resource centres by the stronger ones;
- to develop suitable professional manpower of appropriate quality to establish and manage and sustain the INFLIBNET and;
- to evolve standards and uniform guidelines in techniques, methods, procedures, hardware and software, and services and so on, and promote adoption in actual practice by all libraries in order to facilitate exchange of resources towards optimisation.

INFLIBNET Services

INFLIBNET is planned and designed as a multiple function/service network. It is expected to provide the following services:

- Catalogue based service
- Database services
- Document supply service
- Collection development (helping different participants in acquisition, and procurement)
- Communication based services

Catalogue Based Services

Catalogue services comprise of shared cataloguing of monographs, serials and non-book materials, compilation of union catalogue of books, serials and non-book materials provision of on-line access for shared cataloguing and location identification, assisting in catalogue production in card, book, magnetic tape/floppy, etc.

Data Base Services

These include searching of databases for current as well as retrospective services, provision, of computer-based SDI and provision of non-bibliographic information such as on-going and completed projects, institutions and specialist by compiling; maintaining and searching such non-bibliographic databases.

Document supply services include inter-library loan service and document delivery service through fax/non-fax etc.

Collection development service is basically intended to help the member libraries in selection, acquisition and procurement aspects.

Communication Based Services

These are of different types such as:



- Referral services
- Electronic-mail service
- Bulletin Board - view/update bulletin board
- Academic communication through electronic mail, file transfer, computer/audio/video

INFLIBNET is conceived as a cooperative venture and its resources strength is expected to depend on its participating members and their resources. It is expected that 200 university libraries, 400 special libraries of the R&D organisations and 500 college libraries would form the membership of this network.

INFLIBNET intends to provide access to the vast information resources available in the country. The access to information is intended to be provided to all those who might need it. This could become possible only when modern technologies are utilised for the purpose. Hence, the working group report emphasised the use of computers, communications and document delivery technology for data capture, data preparation, information processing and its transfer and delivery:

Due to non-availability of funds, the INFLIBNET is not fully operational but it has been registered as a project under IUCCA and its head office is located at Ahmedabad. The present services are limited to training of manpower, preparation of guidelines for data capturing, encouraging library automation activities, developments of suitable software and implementing at some libraries. It is involved in the organization of seminars and conferences relating to application of information technology. It must be mentioned here that the progress is rather slow. Although automation process was started by funding 54 university libraries, only 17 libraries could only acquire hardware till now! No achievements could be made in the resource sharing among university libraries during the period 1991-1996, while the Working Group report envisaged it to be completed by 1994, and end users were supposed to be served by collecting documents from 400 nodes in the country and were likely to get offered modern services: Even the other targets set by the Working Group could not be achieved. The Review Committee report of 1996 mentions the following as achievements of INFLIBNET: :

- a) Compilation of a union catalogue (machine-readable) with 5000 records,
- b) Databases of theses/dissertations (65,000 records).
- c) Serials database which contains about 30,000 records.

It has been stated that the quality of databases prepared falls short of the general standards and needs improvement. The work on the development of standard software is still going on and it appears that the existing human resources are too inadequate to handle the -gigantic task of INFLIBNET programme.

INFLIBNET Review Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. S.Venkateswaran submitted its report in September, 1996 and inter-alia recommended a revised set of objectives for INFLIBNET: It also emphasised adequate representation of library experts in the Management Board and Council. It remains to be seen how soon UGC accepts INFLIBNET Review Committee recommendations and what follow up action it would take to translate these recommendations into an action plan.

It must be mentioned here that the other library networks such as MALIBNET, BONET etc have not made much progress. It might take a long time for all these networks to become functional and service oriented in the real sense.

Self Check Exercise

- 4) Mention some of the existing national and local library networks programmes in India.

Note: i) Write your answers in the space given below.
ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

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13.6 SUMMARY

In this Unit, an attempt has been made to explain to you the concept of 'Resource Sharing', its need and how it 'should be organised. It has been emphasised that resource sharing opens up a wide range of resources for use by large number of scholars/users.

The organisation of resource sharing involves a lot of effort on the part of participating institutions before it is implemented. For instance, several basic agreements need to be ' developed before a proper and functional resource sharing system is evolved. Some of these agreements have been discussed and described in the text of this Unit.

Resource sharing activity calls for maintenance of basic records for its successful operation. Use of computers, it has been emphasised would facilitate this work. The concept of networking and the use of telecommunications networks for enhancing resource sharing activities have been considered. The developments taking place in India in resource sharing activity and the creation of different computer-based resource sharing networks in the country have been briefly described. CALIBNET, DELNET AND INFLIBNET have been discussed as some examples of resource 'sharing networks developed in India. -

It is hoped that information furnished in this Unit would be helpful to the participants of BLIS programme, to understand the concept of resource sharing and its organisation.

13.7 ANSWERS TO SELF CHECK EXERCISES

- 1) The philosophy behind the concept of resource sharing in libraries is "access" to information resources available in the libraries. It is also based on the concept of "equivalence" which means libraries should not only receive but should also give.
- 2) The objectives of resource sharing are to:
 - provide access to information resources irrespective of geographical location;
 - reduce all round cost;
 - avoid duplication of many, manpower and material; satisfy wider variety of users;
 - develop specialised area of collection building.
- 3) Resource sharing requires to reach an agreement on: a) type of material to share, b) acquisition policy, e) circulation policy, d) production of union catalogue with uniformity and standardisation for bibliographic control, and e) co-operative cataloguing and maintenance of up-to-date catalogues etc.
- 4) The existing national Library Network Programme is named as INFLIBNET (Information and Library Network) at Ahmedabad, besides there are some local library networks such as Delhi Library Network (DELNET), Calcutta Library Network (CALIBNET) etc.

13.8 KEY WORDS

Automation:

The organisation of machine handling of routines or operations, requiring minimal human intervention.



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| Document Delivery Service: | The process of supplying the relevant documents on a specific topic to the user. |
| Electronic Mail: | The transfer of messages, memoranda, letters, reports, etc. between individuals or organisations by the use of Videotex, online, online networks. |
| Gateway: | A system which permits users of one computer system to access another computer. |
| Inter- Library Loan (ILL): | A library activity which lends on loan documents required by other library users. |
| Network: | A system of physically separate computers with telecommunication links allowing the resources of each participating machine to be showed by each of the other members. If such a network is used for sharing library esources it is known as Library Resource Sharing Network. |
| OPAC: | On line Public Access Catalogue (an automated catalogue system stored in machine-readable form and accessed online by the library clientele via a VDU employing a User-friendly software. |
| Resource Sharing: | A sort of agreement amongst participating libraries wherein each participant is willing to spare its resources with other members and in turn it is privileged to share the resources of other participant members as and when the need arises. |

13.9 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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