

Resource Sharing in Academic Libraries

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Abstract—Libraries are the learning centres but in the present information age it is quite impossible to any library to be remaining self reliant. So the resource sharing is very much essential to overcome this situation. Sharing of resources means sharing one's assets or library materials with another libraries. Now some consortia have started functioning for resource sharing. These consortia have started sharing of e-journals. This will ensure maximum saving with regard to money spent on acquisition of information resources throughout the country and will help in research at all levels thereby contributing greatly in national development.

Index Terms—Resource, Libraries, Co-operation, Collection Development, Information.

1. Introduction

In early age, libraries are the centres of learning where knowledge and information is presented in the form of documents. But in an environment of information explosion, it has become practically impossible for any library to be remaining self-reliant. In a situation of growing demands of the readers and financial resources, no library is able to obtain all the material on demand. Resource Sharing is a method of overcoming these and other limitations of the individual libraries in respect of their resources by way of co-operation and co-ordination among the participating 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

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.

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.

A. Resource Sharing – What?

The concept of resource sharing involves two words – ‘resource’ and ‘sharing’. Resource we mean, wealth or available assets. Sharing means giving, to have or use with others. Thus, resource sharing means sharing one's assets with others. Resource sharing in libraries we mean sharing material in libraries.

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

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

The American Library association (ALA) defines it as follows:

“The co-operative structures, which cross jurisdictional, institutional, and often political boundaries to join in a common enterprise, several types of libraries – academic, special and public.”

B. Resource Sharing – Why?

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”.

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- Tremendous growth of literature;
- Increasing cost of document ;
- Reduce the operational cost of libraries;
- 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. The basic goals are,

- Maximize user satisfaction;
- Shared catalogue service;
- Shared circulation and interlibrary loan services;
- Minimizing cost and time in reaching destination;
- Shared database services such as abstracting, indexing and full text services.

2. Objectives of Resource Sharing

According to Allen Kent, Bhargava (1986) the objectives of resource sharing networks is: "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."

- To make available material which are not available in the library;
- Sharing of services & Human expertise;
- To extend the accessibility of resources;
- To economise the cost of organisation and management of libraries;
- To avoid duplication and save the finances ;
- Increase availability of resources & Promote full utilization of resources.

3. Needs for Resource Sharing

However rich a library may be, it is impossible to acquire and store all documents within its four walls. In order to satisfy the needs of its users, it may have to depend on other libraries. The needs of resource sharing are:

- Information Explosion;
- No library is self-sufficient;
- Increase in user population & Quality of library service;
- Growth of Knowledge in different subjects;
- Rapid growth of literature;
- Growth of publication and cost of publication;
- Increasing trend of new born subjects and specialization.

4. Areas of Resource Sharing

- Co-Operative acquisition;
- Co-Operation in technical processing of books;
- Co-operative storage centers & Union catalogs;
- Inter-library loan at various levels
 - Local, Regional, State, National, International levels
- Centralized acquisition of periodicals;

- Experience and expertise of library personnel.

5. 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.

6. Functions of Resource Sharing

- Assist in selection, acquisition and processing of materials;
- Inter library lending, supply of materials;
- Sharing of costs of documents as well as information;
- Saving the time of the users.

7. Advantages of Resource Sharing

- Resource sharing satisfies the fourth law of library science;
- Resource sharing is very economical;
- Resource sharing helps to save the library space ;
- Resource sharing avoids duplication of documentation;
- Acquire library materials & Share holdings
- Provide researchers with an increased number of research materials;
- Avoid duplicate purchases;
- Develop an information marketing mechanism through cooperation.

8. Criticism of Resource Sharing

- If all libraries depend on resource sharing, no library will have books to lend;
- If co-operation doesn't operate well, serious gaps is made in the collection of a library;
- Without the sophisticated technology, resource sharing would have very limited value;
- Heavy costs involved in resource sharing;
- Lack of adequate fund;

- Large libraries have to share a greater burden of lender rather than borrower which is not beneficial to them.

9. Conclusion

Nowadays 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 arrived by new technologies, and drastic cut in the library budgets made huge problem in the present day librarianship. In India, a few decades ago NISSAT started some library networks, such as CALIBNET, MALIBNET, DELNET, INFLIBNET, etc., for resource sharing. Now some consortia have started functioning for resource sharing. These consortia have started sharing of e-journals. This will ensure maximum saving with regard to money spent on acquisition of information

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