Library Co-operation through Resource Sharing, and Networking among Special Libraries in India

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ABSTRACT: In this article, we tried to show that through library cooperation with resource sharing, special libraries can create an environment where they can give all kinds of information to their researchers and users by providing better services and more material at low-cost. The explosion of information has led to the rapid development of literature in each subject, making it practically impossible for any library to fully meet the needs of users by becoming self-sufficient. Due to rising reader demands and declining level of financial resources, no library is able to get all the material on readers' demand. Resource sharing is a method of crossing these and other boundaries of individual libraries with respect to their resources through collaboration and coordination between other libraries.

1. Introduction

Today we are living in the era of information technology. Knowledge and information are growing at a rapid pace, especially in the fields of information communication and technology. Emerging information technologies have brought many changes in the library work area and information needs of users. Technology played an important role in resource sharing. Specialized libraries depend on various types of automation systems to manage their collections. Through these technologies it facilitates library and informatics professionals to work together to acquire and share library collections and provide digital library services as well as traditional library services to the user community. Due to information explosion in literature of all subjects and budget of libraries falling day by day, dependence of libraries on each other increased. The cost of books and sources or other documents published in India and abroad is increasing very fast. The main functions of a particular library are to obtain information from various sources and disseminate that information to meet the needs of researchers at the right time. No particular library of any kind is capable of meeting all the requirements of its user. Such dependence gave rise to the concept of library collaboration. This concept is now known as resource sharing and networking. Resource sharing through networking is a two-way communication system with two or more libraries with common goals and the free flow of information from one source to another. This should centralize the information processing system and reduce the communication

gaps between libraries. The advantages of resource sharing through networks are to control the bibliographic literature explosion, avoid duplication, and improve data mobility and flow of information between specialized information centers. Resource sharing serves as a bridge to meet the information demand of users of a particular library, which we can do through networking, cooperative agreements between two or more libraries to efficiently resource sharing. The mutual lending arrangement in cooperative agreements establishes the general principle in which one agrees to allow borrowing of material from each other's collections. Sharing of resources among specialized libraries is needed, as no library in its entirety can meet the needs of users. This saves a lot of human effort, financial comments, along with the application of physical and logistic resources, especially among libraries and particularly in under-utilized materials. Otherwise the same process has to be repeated again and again, it provides important technical support to sustain all scientific efforts. Resource sharing is very economical and time-saving for information professionals and document lists.

2. Resource Sharing

Resource sharing means maximizing access to a large array of resources by funding the collection or pooling of collaborative libraries for the purchase of shared digital resources by collaborating with one or more libraries. Through its use, libraries get the opportunity to use material from other libraries. Resource sharing is also known as library co-operation. It is a means by which users of libraries can provide access to information when there is a shortage of resources. Library collaboration is intended to share resources, knowledge, bibliographic data, services, computer facilities, and even library professionals. Resource sharing should be mutually beneficial for all participants it is not always an equal exchange. As per the famous information scientist Allen Kent said 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".

3. Special Libraries

A special library which provides information resources on a particular subject and its users are more specific and limited who come to the library only to get information about that particular subject. In this period, the growing demand for esoteric information related to a particular subject for research, policy planning, educational purposes, etc., as well as published and unpublished documents related to it, has prompted the use of specialized libraries. Special libraries are in the government or non-government sector, in the corporate sector and in the particular subject department of any educational institution. These libraries only distribute information related to their subject. These libraries play an important role in developing academic discipline and advancing knowledge in research. They provide information not only to the research community, but also to policy planning and action. Broadly speaking, the special libraries and information centers have a different importance in the development of knowledge. Special libraries do not open for general public use, although access to specialized research can be obtained by request. Special libraries are also known as information centers. The main purpose of a special library is to meet the information needs of its parent body, it disseminates and updates important information in the relevant field, and it provides the desired information on demand to its users and initiates mostly new projects. The special library also plays an important role in giving new ideas and inspiration to its users.

4. Need of Resource Sharing

The tradition of sharing of resources among libraries is an age old practice. Due to increase of demands and high expectation of library users all the libraries, especially special libraries needs to improve their services to satisfy their users in the best possible ways. It is not necessary that the libraries could have all the resources. They should share the documents to reduce the problem of storing the resources and obviously the high price of the documents. In the age of information technology, the libraries can share the e-databases and e-resources also to save the time of staff and users as well.

The needs for resource sharing are mentioned as below:

• Better use of literature in every field of knowledge, at least in prices.

• Establish cooperation and communication between member libraries.

• Ensuring availability of important documents of special subject to partner libraries.

• To optimize the best use of available library resources.

• Sharing to library resources for pooling and access electronically.

• Reaching information and services to more and more users.

• Through resource sharing to meet the shortage of space in the library.

5. Objectives of Resource Sharing

The purpose of resource sharing is to create an environment in which libraries can provide better services and have more content at minimum cost and maximum benefits available to maximum users. Its purpose is to make the resources of one library available to users of another library and vice versa. Emphasis is placed on the provision of access to information sources rather than on such possession and ownership, as no library can keep all the reading material of the world and rely on other partner libraries to meet all the needs of its customers have to do.

A systematic concept provides many objectives like:

• Optimization of information resources through Union Catalogue, ILL services, collection development and avoiding duplication.

• Pooled resources can help to arrange greater resource centers.

• Help of Document selection.

• Provide, through cooperative acquisition by voluntary organization, materials beyond the reach of individual libraries.

• Fulfilling institutional or state mandated assessment programs.

• Promote full utilization of resources.

• Avoid duplication of documents.

• Promote interaction and networking with pattern libraries.

• For users provide high range and quality of Library and Information support services.

• To reduce financial crunches.

• Increased Availability and Accessibility of library resources.

6. Areas of Resource Sharing

The area of resource sharing is very wide, consisting mainly of people, processes, materials, or any other right of the library. All these are subject to partnership for mutual benefit. These include materials such as acquisition, cataloging, storage and preservation. The services include all the techniques employed in libraries to establish the link between reader and reading material so that users can get the benefit of sharing resources equally.

These are:
• Inter-Library Loan

• Cooperative acquisition

• Specialized purchasing programs

• Centralized processing

• Shared Cataloguing

• Sharing of Bibliographic data

• Centralized periodicals collection for loan purposes

• Cooperative microfilming

• Preparation and maintenance of Union Catalogue and Union List of Serials

• Exchange of publications

• Exchange of expertise

• Data base creation

• Staff Training

• Softwares

• E-Resources

7. Resource Sharing Tools

Effective resources can be shared using certain tools through the network.

These are:

• Databases

• Union Lists

• Union Catalogues

• Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)

• E-Resources and Multimedia

• Shared digital Repositories

8. Benefits of Resource Sharing

Through collaboration and networking between specialized libraries, participating institutions can reap many benefits from resource sharing. The duplication of resources and efforts resulting from networking can be avoided at many levels. To keep among new collections added to each library and present awareness service like sharing by exchange etc.

The benefits of resource sharing are mentioned as below:

• For utilizing the resources, document delivery system may be evolved among these libraries.

• Sharing expertise and experiences relating to manage information resources and providing new information services.

• Increase professional cooperation among the women's libraries.

• Develop skills among library professionals through cooperative arrangements.

• Improves working relationship between cooperating libraries.

• Assists staff to keep up to date.

• Enables co-operating institutions to stretch limited resources.

9. Planning of Resource Sharing

When resource sharing is agreed by participating institutions through networking, the following aspects should be planned. Keeping those aspects in mind, it could be planned effectively.

• Identify and locate major collections, sources and materials.

• All the participating bodies collectively come together for mutual benefit through networking.

• Libraries are linked with their materials and services together with the help of ICT.

• Workout the basis for sharing, reference services, lending services, copying services, access to materials, delivery services, and lists of holdings.

• Establishment of sharing ideas, development and problems in the networking.

• Plan for new developments in the knowledge of what others are doing.

10. Conclusion

To analyze the importance, objectives, tools, areas, benefits and planning of resource sharing and networking, it concludes that strongly implementation of collection development, providing physical and electronic demands and become a member of various libraries is the important steps of resource sharing among special libraries. These Libraries should maintain a union catalogue, union list of journals, periodicals, bibliographies etc. to access the information needed by their users. Resource sharing is a very idealistic approach for all over the growth of any type of library. Father of Indian library science Dr. S. R. Ranganathan initiated five laws of library science in 1931 for operating a library system, which is absolutely fit for resource sharing. With the help of ICT, it has been possible to remove and prevent the limitation of geographical barriers around the world and for immediate access to resources and services. It has also reduced space crunches, skilled staff and new technical challenges that exist in the system. In view of the present global scenario, we can say that resource sharing should be encouraged among all types of libraries in the library world.

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