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# UNIT 8 RESOURCE SHARING

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## Structure

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Resource Sharing
  - 8.2.1 Need
  - 8.2.2 Concept
  - 8.2.3 Historical Background
  - 8.2.4 Objectives
- 8.3 Resource Sharing and Library Networks
- 8.4 Library Networks: Need
- 8.5 Resource Sharing: Issues Involved in Implementation
- 8.6 Library Consortia
- 8.7 Library Cooperation to Library Consortia
- 8.8 Summary
- 8.9 Answers to Self Check Exercises
- 8.10 Keywords
- 8.11 References and Further Reading

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## 8.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- elucidate the concept of resource sharing;
- explain the need for and objectives of resource sharing;
- discuss the issues involved in putting resource sharing into practice; and
- describe the developments in resource sharing.

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## 8.1 INTRODUCTION

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Libraries are in a state of paradigm shift. There are changes taking place in their users, documents, and services. The users are:

- demanding, engaged in specialised jobs;
- IT savvy; and
- need information in a time-frame.

The information and their carriers (documents) are also undergoing changes, they are:

- available in plenty;
- exploding, adding to the existing vast number; and
- available in different formats.

Libraries have changed from stand-alone entities to networked organisations, from collection-based to access-based, from physical existents to electronic and virtual libraries and their services moving from document-based to information-based. It is a demanding situation for libraries when information available is plenty and demand is high. It has to be fulfilled instantly from just-in-time collection. It is here that the concept of resource sharing has come into picture. Libraries share their resources to serve their users in an effective and efficient manner. Services under resource sharing include inter library loan ( ILL), cooperative cataloguing, cooperative collection development and joint storage of materials.

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## 8.2 RESOURCE SHARING

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Resource sharing is a concept quite often talked about in the literature of LIS. Literally, the term implies, using each other's resources. Edmonds defines it as 'the reciprocally beneficial sharing of resources, developed or pre-existing, by two or more bodies.' In the context of libraries, it refers to libraries sharing their resources, including the sources of information, staff expertise, infrastructure, and finance. The question arises, why should they do so? They are already so heavily burdened by requests from their own users, how will they cater to the needs of other libraries? The answer lies in knowing the situation in which they find themselves in, presented in the following paragraphs.

### 8.2.1 Need

The stock in trade in libraries, i.e. documents is available in plenty. Their rate of increase is such that it is termed explosion. It is estimated that there was a 6% increase in book production in 2012 compared to 2011. They are available in a variety of formats. The channels of availability of these documents are also varied adding to the complexity of their acquisition. Prices of documents are on the increase. Periodicals prices are on the increase, a 6% hike was reported in 2013. Earlier the increase in prices used to be mainly in science, technology and medicine journals only but now it has been experienced in other areas like humanities and education too. The prices of these publications are in dollars. The widening gap between dollars and rupees further affects negatively the buying power of libraries in India.

Increasing number of documents also demand physical space which is a limitation for libraries. Even if they are able to buy all that is needed where is the space to store the documents?

Libraries exist for users; any change in their demands and requirements requires libraries to adapt themselves. Users are now more demanding, expecting to be satisfied as early as possible. Libraries have to show their accountability; they have to satisfy the users in the best possible way. Customised services are the talk of the day. Staff has to be more interactive with the users knowing about their areas of interest and their requirements to serve them in the best possible way. This requires that the professional staff be relieved of the routine chores and technical procedures to be done jointly/ cooperatively by libraries. They should interact more with the users, design and develop innovative services satisfying their information needs.

Resource sharing enables libraries to function effectively and efficiently in view of the above situation. Sharing of resources may solve the problem as under:

- All libraries would not have to acquire all the documents that they require. They would share the documents thus overcoming the problem of increased prices and space for storing them.
- Libraries by sharing would have access to large number of documents thus satisfying the increasing demand for documents.
- It would also allow them to share the expertise of staff, thus saving costs as well as the time of the staff. They would now be comparatively freed from the routine technical procedures, as that would be done on a common basis between them.

### Self Check Exercises

**Note:** i) Write your answers in the space given below.

ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit

1) Define resource sharing. Describe its need.

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2) Discuss the advantages of resource sharing.

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### 8.2.2 Concept

Literally resource sharing means joint use of resources. Resource refers to the source which one uses to get some work done. Encyclopaedia of Library and Information Science defines resource as a person, thing or action to which one resorts to, when needed. To be more specific, we can say the resources in a library are staff, infrastructure, documents, and services. Sharing entails a relationship of reciprocity where the two parties offer their resources to each other for mutual benefit. Brewer defines it as ‘an umbrella term for a wide spectrum of cooperative processes and mechanisms.’ Philip Sewell opines that resource sharing is an evolution of the concept existing earlier as library cooperation. The difference being that library cooperation assumes two or more libraries existing and working jointly to achieve their goals whereas in resource sharing, it is presumed that there exist a group of users putting demand on libraries. Libraries on the other hand come together to pool their resources to satisfy these

demands. Resources may be physical or intellectual, the former refer to the documents and infrastructure, whereas the latter refer to the human resources (expertise), which libraries can utilise to plan, implement or evaluate their services and routines. Resource sharing could be done in two ways: by working separately and sharing or by working together and sharing. While working together, they collaborate to produce bibliographical tools, software; acquire materials; organise conferences and workshops for research and training of personnel.

Another difference between the two concepts is due to the developments in information technology. Library cooperation was more of a concept that could not be put in practice successfully due to: a) Geographical distance between the participating libraries and b) Transmission and duplication of documents not being possible, it made the cooperation among libraries difficult. Sharing of resources was also not too successful because of large libraries rich in resources, fearing that they may have to give more and receive less. More work would be involved in entertaining requests for books. If they do not accede to request, they would be branded as ineffective. An alternative thought was to develop regional libraries to facilitate sharing relieving the expected burden on large libraries. Subsequently, developments in technology for production, storage, duplication, processing, and transmission of information have enabled resource sharing. Desktop production, e-publishing, storage in magnetic and optical media and developments in telecommunications enabled easy duplication and transmission of documents for sharing among libraries. Data and telecommunication networks enabled library networks to materialise and this made possible sharing of all types of resources at any time, from anywhere across the globe.

**Self Check Exercise**

**Note:** i) Write your answers in the space given below.

ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

3) Differentiate between library cooperation and resource sharing.

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**8.2.3 Historical Background**

Library cooperation in modern times can be traced back to the efforts of Library of Congress when it started cooperative cataloguing, thereby enabling participating libraries to know about each other’s resources. It resulted in standardisation in practices and also helped them to save on their resources. It led to a chain reaction when libraries everywhere started preparing union catalogues. The system of sharing to satisfy personal needs existed in the society and it was no exception in libraries. Kaul quotes instances of library cooperation existing as early as 200 B.C. between Alexandria Library and Pergamum Library. He also cites Kraus mentioning cooperation between monastery libraries in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The cooperation was in sharing reading material.

Starting with mutually satisfying each other's needs as and when required, library cooperation became more systematic with time. Institutions took initiative in this regard. Mention may be made of FID, IFLA, and UNESCO. Another venture for cooperation began in 1895 when Paul Otlet and Henri La Fontaine attempted to compile a world index to published information from the forum of FID, and finally gave UDC as a tool for bibliographic control of published information. FID had one of its objectives as improvements in the availability of information. IFLA has two programmes to its credit in this direction viz., Universal Bibliographic Control (UBC) and Universal Availability of Publications (UAP). Information systems were designed at international, national and regional level to promote UAP. UNISIST, the World Science Information System exists with the aim of providing processed information in science and technology to all.

The cooperation extended in other areas e.g., indexing and abstracting. Abstracting services started providing abstracts of literature, international in scope. Chemical Abstracts, Biological Abstracts and Physics Abstracts are some examples, which are the result of cooperation among institutes. International coverage would not have been possible without cooperation. Further development in cooperation saw the establishment of information systems. INIS, AGRIS databases had inputs from national centers in different countries e.g., BARC and IARI in India. Another example of cooperation that took place was the formation of ADONIS. It was a Document Delivery System consisting of publishers- John Wiley, Elsevier, Pergamon, Blackwell Scientific, Academic Press and Springer Verlag. They provided index to articles appearing in 219 biomedical journals between 1987 and 1988 in CD- ROM. BLDSC was actively involved in this venture and developed the software for retrieving the information.

### Select Landmarks in Library Cooperation

Year	Country	Main features
1868	India	The <b>Catalogue of manuscripts in various parts of India</b> compiled by Whitney Stokes.
1873	India	Part I of <b>Sanskrit manuscripts in private libraries of the North West Provinces</b> covering Banaras was published.
1873	India	<b>A catalogue of Sanskrit manuscripts in private libraries of Central Provinces</b> edited by F. Kielhorn (Nagpur).
1885	USA	Smithsonian published the union list consisting of scientific and technical journals.
	Belgium	Establishment of the International Institute of Bibliography, Brussels.
1901	USA	Library of Congress begin card distribution service and work on the national union catalogue.
1909	USA	A union card catalogue of public library holdings developed in California.
1916	UK	Cooperative lending begins with the establishment of the Central Library of Students (CLS).

1917	USA	American Library Association (ala) Publishes the first inter-library loan code.
1920	USA	Development of union lists.
1924	India	A cooperative venture — Motibhai N Amin organises Pusthakalaya Sahayak Sahakari Mandal Limited with a share capital of Rs. 50,000 to supply books, periodicals, and other articles to libraries of Gujrat and also to accept trust funds and deposits from libraries.
1927	USA	Publication of the <b>Union list of serials in libraries of the United States and Canada.</b>
1930	UK	Promotion of inter lending of books as Central Library of Students (CLS) is converted into National Central Library.
1932	USA	Library of Congress Cooperative Cataloguing established.
1934	USA	Bibliographical Centre for Research established in Denver.
1940	USA	Pacific North West Bibliographic Centre established in Seattle.
1944	UK	British union catalogue of periodicals published.
1948	UK	Royal Society Scientific Information Conference recommended greater cooperation among libraries to reduce undesirable duplication and to extend access to a greater portion of world's literature.
1948-72	USA	Farmington Plan went into operation on January 1, 1948 and started receiving materials from Sweden, Switzerland and France. It resulted in cooperative acquisition of foreign materials by 6 American libraries with allocation of broad subjects to each library.
1948	UK	Opening of the British National Book Centre.
1948	USA	The United States Book Exchange programme begins.
1949	USA	Mid-West Library Centre began operation for cooperative central storage of less used materials held by the libraries of the Mid-West region. It became the national centre later and started acquisition programme.
1951	India	S.R.Ranganathan said that "Library service, bibliographic organisation and library classification recognise no national or political boundaries. They are international. The library profession is international, Bibliographers and documentalists are

		inter-national. “Thus, he stressed the need for international cooperation”.
1961	UK	National Lending Library for Science and Technology started to promote centralised document lending system.
1962	USA	Library of Congress begins acquisition of foreign books programme using funds from Public Law 480 accounts.
1963	USA	Ohio College Library Centre (now Online Computer Library Centre) (OCLC) begins as the first successful Library network.
1965	USA	Mid-West Inter Library Centre in Chicago changed its name to Centre for Research Libraries, and expanded its membership and acquisitions programme.
1966	International	In order to promoted the exchange of bibliographic data Unesco started UNISIST, It also developed ISBN, ISDS and Broad System of Ordering.
1969	US	Orin F. Notting of the University of Chicago introduced the concept of multitype library cooperation.
1970s	US	Adjustments between networks and participating libraries in regard to financial commitments regarding costs of online cataloguing and various tiers of cooperative programmes.
1971	US	Pre-natal classification and cataloguing to avoid repetition of the cataloguing process in each library introduced.
1979	Southeast	The Congress of Southeast Asian Libraries Asia (CONSAL) supported the establishment of Consortium of the National Documentation Centre of Indonesia and the National Libraries and Documentation Centres—South-east Asia (NLDC-SEA), the consortium of the national libraries of Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore.
1981	UK	ADONIS system was established by six publisher in cooperation with the British Library Document Supply Centre (BLDSC) and the Centre di Documentation Scientifique et Technologie. During 1987 and 1988 50,000 documents were printed and supplied to institutions and scientists in seven countries in Europe together with USA, Mexico, Australia and Japan.
1982-86	US	Simple type library cooperatives increased by 12%; multitype library cooperatives increased by 164% and 30 multi state networks were in operation.

1985	Europe	European Economic Commission presented a plan of action at community level aimed at library cooperation based on the application of new information technologies.
1987	Europe	European Commission launched a major new initiative in the form of a <b>Policy and plan of priority actions for the development of information services marked to cover the years 1989 and 1990.</b>
1989	UK	Library and information Cooperation Council established for furthering library and information cooperation.
	US	The Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) was created to encourage interaction among major universities of the Mid-West and to promote preservation of research collections.
1989-94	UK	In British Library's strategic plan for 1989-1994, <b>Gateway to knowledge</b> , the library plans to offer a range of cooperative relationship with other libraries in UK, Europe and abroad.
1991-92	India	DELNET saves about fifty lakhs through the rationalisation of foreign periodicals in Delhi libraries out of subscriptions for 1991 and 1992 under a scheme initiated by NISSAT. Some savings are also made in the other cities in India under this scheme.
May-1996	India	INFLIBNET launched to automate libraries and information centres in the academic and research sector.
Dec.2002	India	UGC INFONET launched to provide access to e-resources to the universities in the country.
2003	India	INDEST- AICTE consortium launched.
2011	India	National Knowledge Network (NKN) launched to provide a strong backbone of communication network to the academic community.

Source: Adaptated from Unit 12, MLIS-06. Application of Information Technology. MLIS Course Material. IGNOU.

### Self Check Exercise

**Note:** i) Write your answers in the space given below.

ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit

4) Discuss the form of resource sharing taking place in information systems.

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## 8.2.4 Objectives

The objectives of resource sharing are to:

- **Maximise the resource base of libraries**

The primary objective of resource sharing is to maximise the resource base, i.e., collection, staff, infrastructure, as well as services of the participating libraries. A library when functioning as part of a resource sharing programme would have at its disposal resources of other libraries besides its own to serve its users. In other words, the resources of any library would be the resources of every other library.

- **Provide democratic and wide access to information**

We are living in the information age where information is a commodity needed by one and all. We are highly dependent on information. It is required for learning, teaching, research, entertainment and decision making at different levels. In view of this scenario, one should not be deprived of information. Libraries have different document collections to satisfy the information needs of their users. They are strong in some areas and poor in others. Thus, they lack resources to excel in all areas. If libraries share with each other, they can overcome this limitation of poor document collection. And make available comprehensive information to their users.

- **Core collection**

Resource sharing results in a rational acquisition of documents. A library should only acquire those documents that are core to the area of its organisation. It can satisfy minor or auxiliary needs of its users from other libraries with which it shares its resources. Similarly it can satisfy the minor needs of other libraries.

- **Save resources**

Libraries share their resources to save and use them optimally. Cooperative acquisition enables them to save on money spent on documents. Cooperative cataloguing and classification enables them to save on staff salaries, efforts, and time spent on technical processing.

- **Enable uniform practices in routines**

A central agency can be entrusted the task of cataloguing and classification, which can be followed by others which results in standardisation. Uniform practices are helpful to users as well as staff. It is a result of sharing and a requirement too.

- **Rational acquisition**

Rationalisation of acquisition is one the major functions of library networks. Libraries can come together to identify duplication of resources thereby avoiding wastage. Funds could be diverted for resources which are found lacking in a particular geographical area. It would result in better allocation of funds and widespread availability of resources. Core collections could be built up for all libraries. Documents, which are rare or costly, could be acquired strategically in different locations to enable maximum use.

### Self Check Exercise

**Note:** i) Write your answers in the space given below.

ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

5) Enumerate the objectives of resource sharing.

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## 8.3 RESOURCE SHARING AND LIBRARY NETWORKS

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Let us refer back to what we said earlier that resource sharing evolved from library cooperation. And that library cooperation was not effective due to the geographical distances between libraries and limitations of duplicating and transmitting documents between the cooperating libraries. Also that resource sharing could be made possible due to the developments in IT. Libraries cannot stand in isolation today. This was a well-accepted fact and thus there were concerted efforts on their part to cooperate. Their efforts were made productive by developments in information communication technologies. Libraries could be connected locally as well as globally into library networks. Computers made possible electronic documents, and telecommunications made possible their transfer and transmittance electronically thus, overcoming the barriers of geographical distance and time. These developments made possible the establishment of library networks.

Library network has been defined as a “group of individuals or organisations that are interconnected to form a system to accomplish some specified goal. The linkage must include a communication mechanism, and many networks exist for the express purpose of facilitating certain types of communication among members.” Another definition of a network describes it in terms of its characteristics, viz.

- A network functions to marshal resources from its environment to accomplish results beyond the ability of any one of its members.
- A network develops an organisational design and structure that allows it to establish an identifiable domain and exercise appropriate influence over its members. It is based on communications technology.

There is a stress on ‘collaboration’ in the above definitions. Networks are IT driven, with a well defined administrative structure, and set goals.

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## 8.4 LIBRARY NETWORKS: NEED

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The term “Network” is increasingly used in place of “resource sharing” or “cooperative systems”. Networking and modernisation are becoming very

important in all types of libraries as they enable the users to have access to the resources of many other libraries in addition to their own.

The developments in information technology have made it possible for libraries to network. But today library networks are must because:

- **Increasing amount of information is in electronic form**

Information is stored in print, film, magnetic and optical storage media. The information produced in the year 2002 was distributed in these various media as under:

Media	Percentage of information stored
Hard disks	92%
Films	7%
Paper	0.01%
Optical Media	0.002%

- **Bibliographic access to information is also in electronic form**

Access to information is provided through databases produced online and offline which require libraries to be networked.

- **Internet**

The existence of Internet is a major factor that has changed the way information is produced, published, stored, transmitted and used. This requires libraries to be networked for accessing their information.

- **Timely access to information**

It is difficult for an individual to lay hands on his specific information in the large mass of information available. Computer helps to process and easily access the required information. Networking is essential to access when the information is available at a distance.

Networking of libraries has increased the feasibility of resource sharing by overcoming the barriers of distance and time involved in accessing information.

**Self Check Exercise**

**Note:** i) Write your answers in the space given below.

ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

6) Discuss the need for library networking.

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## 8.5 RESOURCE SHARING: ISSUES INVOLVED IN IMPLEMENTATION

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We have been discussing the conceptual details of resource sharing. Putting these into practice is a bit difficult, reasons being that there are so many libraries involved. We have to formulate policies, procedures and routines for a library. These have to be objective and unbiased for the library to function effectively. It is the same for a number of libraries. It is more difficult to do so in case of a number of libraries because of the:

- Number of libraries and users involved; and
- Variety of libraries and users involved.

The number and variety of libraries involved makes it difficult because policies have to be framed keeping in view the nature of documents for acquisition. The nature and variety of users make the framing and implementing the policy difficult.

The participating libraries should objectively frame policies in regard to:

- **Documents to be shared**

It is neither required nor feasible to share all types of documents. Decision has to be taken in this regard taking in consideration the use and cost of the same. Libraries would like to share only costly and less used documents. Those documents that are in heavy demands in their libraries cannot be spared for other libraries. The requirements of their own users are primary.

- **Terms and conditions for loan and return**

Documents are issued to users for a time period that enables them to use effectively. A period of loan is decided keeping this in view. It also depends on the type, cost, use and the number of copies of the document available. Similarly, these have to be formulated for sharing among a group of libraries. The period of loan in such a case cannot be the same for users of the library. The participating libraries can make duplicates of the same for use within copyright rules.

- **Deterrents and punitive measures to ensure safe and timely return of documents**

The biggest problem for a library in circulation service is to ensure safe and timely return of documents to keep them in circulation. It is difficult, as the user does not return the documents in time. It is all the more difficult when there are number of libraries and hence users. It is important that the participating libraries assume responsibility for their users and ensure safe and timely return of documents. They know their users better and can act accordingly to ensure the same.

- **Union catalogue production and maintenance**

The use of the combined collection of the participating libraries depends upon their knowing the collection. The resources of the libraries should be made known to all through union catalogues. The responsibility for designing and maintaining the same should be entrusted to one of the participating libraries. The data of each library should be according to uniform standards

and be in machine-readable form to enable users to search from their own libraries electronically.

- **Cooperative cataloguing**

Cooperative cataloguing is also expected in resource sharing. It needs to be decided as to who will be doing this work. It depends on the resources of the library. A library that has the staff expertise to do this work should be entrusted this responsibility.

- **OPAC**

The details of the documents along with their status should be made known to the users through OPAC. It is more important than for users of individual library because of the number of users involved as well as the distance between the participating libraries.

### Self Check Exercise

**Note:** i) Write your answers in the space given below.

ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

7) What are the factors to be considered for deciding the kind of documents to be shared?

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## 8.6 LIBRARY CONSORTIA

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Library consortia have evolved from the concept of resource sharing. The concept has come out of the increasing costs of publications, particularly periodicals and the reducing capacity of libraries to acquire. Another factor is the availability of electronic publications and databases. Increasing costs of journals led libraries to cut down on their acquisitions that affected the business of publishers. Thereafter, publishers have come into agreement with libraries to form consortia. Library consortia are mandated to play the role of a buying club for joint purchase of e-journals, interfacing as intermediary between publishers and consortium members, negotiating on their behalf on subscription to e journals and subscribing them on concessional rates. They are temporary in nature and exist as long as they bring economics of scale to libraries.

Library consortium is an association of two or more libraries formed to work together toward achieving a chosen goal such as resource sharing. Consortium libraries often pool resources for joint purchase of e-journals and share them for access and delivery online. Every member library in the consortium is only responsible to the association in respect of the obligations that are set out in the consortium agreement; otherwise they remain as independent entities, and manage their operations and services independently. Library consortium is an association

for non-profit, economics of information, and for improved and expanded economic collaboration to achieve mutually beneficial goals. Consortium deploys computer networks such as internet as a tool for sharing e-journals or other consortium resources among members for access and document delivery.

In India the phenomena of library consortia is relatively new beginning in the year 2000, it started emerging in academic libraries, S&T libraries, and management libraries. It was during this period that libraries focused more on access than ownership to materials. The drivers of change to library consortia are: (i) emergence of e-publishing, (ii) shift in the approach to building library collection from ownership of materials to access.

Library consortia in India developed on a centrally funded organisational model. It has a sponsoring agency and probably a separate source of funds. It makes available consortia resources that each campus/ member library could not afford alone. Libraries join the consortia programme through an agreement with the central office (often a central body overseeing academic institutions), and often take part in decisions through a structured system of governance. The objectives of all consortia in India are limited to joint purchase of journals and management of electronic licenses. Libraries subscribe to journals and e-books in consortia either directly through publishers, vendors or aggregators. Aggregators act as middleman between publishers and libraries providing journals as a bunch. Details about aggregators are available in Unit 9 of the course BLIE-228.

The advantages that accrue from library consortia are: wider access, higher quality content, economics of scale, lower costs, increased electronic access, and less individual deals in a time of human resources constraints. Increased access to electronic resources has increased institutional capacity for research output.

Libraries come together and identify a coordinating agency that coordinates the planning and implementation of the consortia including the negotiations with the publishers. The negotiations include the identification of the databases to be acquired, access facilities depending upon the number of libraries and users accessing the databases, including the back-up of the databases. The coordinating agency decides the infrastructural facilities required for access to the databases.

Indian National Digital Library of Engineering, Science, and Technology (INDEST), is a consortium set up and funded by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in India. It has its headquarters at IIT Delhi. It provides access to around 5,000 journals providing an advantage in price of to order of 80% to participating libraries while accessing e-resources. The consortium is also a member of International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC).

**Self Check Exercise**

**Note:** i) Write your answers in the space given below.

ii) Check your answers with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

8) Explain the concept of library consortia.

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## 8.7 LIBRARY COOPERATION TO LIBRARY CONSORTIA

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Library cooperation, library resource sharing, library networking and library consortia are related terms that need to be clarified. All the terms originate from the fact that libraries depend on each other to serve their users effectively and efficiently. They depend on each other for sharing physical resources viz. documents (books, periodicals, etc.), space, information technology; and intellectual resources viz. staff expertise.

The terms enumerated above originated with evolution of the concept of sharing between libraries. It started with cooperation when libraries shared books between each other and provided Inter-Library Loan (ILL) service wherein a user could issue a book, not available with her/his library, from some other library. There were problems for the libraries in providing this service due to limited copies of books available. Technology came to the fore in the form of xeroxing when copying of portions required from books facilitated the service.

Standardisation in library procedures and routines has been a consistent effort of library professionals. It is essential for providing services as well as for sharing between libraries. Library of Congress has played a very important role in standardisation by introducing the LC card service which absolves libraries from this routine, time consuming activity. This is how the concept of resource sharing in libraries took birth. At the same time some other factors like explosion of literature, increasing cost of publications, particularly periodicals and the competitive scholarly world putting pressure on libraries forced libraries towards resource sharing.

Further developments in information communication technology (ICT) led to the birth of library networks. They were preceded with developments in data networks that enabled libraries to be interconnected. The birth of library networks resulted in organised efforts towards resource sharing. Library joined hands formally, rules were framed, and responsibilities were fixed resulting in collaborative services provided to libraries. Users could have access to bibliographic information of collections limited to geographical areas due to metropolitan area and regional library networks. Internet and digitisation opened up the domains further enabling users to lay hands on information available globally. Library networks grew in scope geographically. The benefit of library networks included providing access to full – text collections to users irrespective of location. Libraries were benefited in economising on their resources. They could undertake rational collection development in view of the needs of particular regions. Union catalogues were built to provide access across boundaries. Bibliographic access was standardized also resulting into sharing of intellectual expertise.

The latest development in resource sharing is the formation of library consortia. Here libraries joined hands with publishers for rational and economic purchase of periodicals. The consortia could engage in other cooperative activities too but they have been mainly involved in acquiring periodicals and related activities of training related to ICT involved.

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## 8.8 SUMMARY

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This Unit provides an introduction to the concept of resource sharing. It presents an overview of the needs and objectives of resource sharing. The historical discussion of the topic would help to gain an understanding of the evolution of resource sharing from library cooperation to consortia. Library networks have been a boon for libraries in giving a practical shape to the concept of resource sharing. They have solved the biggest problem of transfer of documents across distances in minimum time. The learner is introduced to library networks, their need and purpose. Finally the latest development in the area i.e., library consortia have been introduced.

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## 8.9 ANSWERS TO SELF CHECK EXERCISES

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- 1) Resource sharing refers to mutual sharing of each other's resources by libraries to serve users' needs most effectively. Resource sharing is needed because: 1) Increasing number of documents available for libraries to acquire which is on the increase, 2) Their increasing cost, 3) Increasing demands of users, 4) Decreasing funds available to libraries, 5) More staff interaction needed with users to provide effective services. Resource sharing would enable libraries to overcome these problems enumerated above.
- 2) Advantages of resource sharing: 1) Libraries would be able to acquire documents in greater number that are used heavily by their users and share others with other libraries. 2) they would have access to greater number of documents. 3) sharing of expertise of staff would enable them to save on staff time and thus freeing them to interact more with the users to provide effective services.
- 3) Library cooperation involves two or more libraries coming together to share their resources to satisfy their mutual needs. Resource sharing is an evolution of the concept in view of the changing needs and increasing demands made on the library by the user. It also assumes application of technology.
- 4) Information systems also function by sharing resources. The resources shared are information. The information pertains to the literature published in different countries in case if international information systems. It is the bibliographic information relating to the literature published.
- 5)
  - a) Maximising the resource base of libraries
  - b) Provide democratic and wider access to information
  - c) Rational Acquisition
  - d) Save Resources
  - e) Enable uniform practices in routines
  - f) Acquisition
- 6)
  - a) Increasing amount of information in electronic form
  - b) Bibliographic access also in electronic form
  - c) Advent of Internet
  - d) Timely access to information



- 7) The factors to be considered by libraries while sharing documents are cost and use made of documents. Libraries would share only costly and less used documents. Frequently used documents should be available in the library for their own users and should not be loaned to other libraries. Libraries themselves can acquire less costly documents and they need not be dependent on other libraries for them.
- 8) Library consortia grew out of the problems due to increasing costs of publications, particularly periodicals. Publishers also felt falling business due to this. Another factor that made consortia to happen is the availability of e-documents. This enabled publishers to offer libraries the facility of collaborative purchasing. It is beneficial to libraries as it is on reduced costs and distributed access to information. Libraries that have similar needs come together to form consortia. They identify one of them as coordinator who decides on the issues of access and bargains with the publishers. The publishers provide libraries a number of e-resources in view of use made of them along with their hard copies.

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## 8.10 KEYWORDS

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- Library Cooperation** : Two or more libraries working together to achieve their goals of providing effective service to their users.
- Resource Sharing** : Two or more libraries/information systems sharing their resources to satisfy increased pressure of user demands. The resources may be physical or intellectual.
- Library Networks** : Two or more libraries connected together through telecommunication links for effective sharing of resources overcoming the barriers of geographical distances.
- Library Consortia** : Libraries and publishers coming together for mutual benefit and enabling collaborative acquisition of e-documents to a group of libraries.

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## 8.11 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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