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5.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the role of resource sharing in the field of library and information science;
- define the areas of resource sharing;
- know the prerequisites for resource sharing; and
- understand the present trends in sharing of resources.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of resource sharing in libraries is as old as the librarianship itself. This has been used in different forms in different contexts. Library Cooperation, Inter-Library Loan, Consortia, Library Networks, etc, are the terms used in resource sharing. During the olden days it was called library cooperation and it mainly existed in the form of Inter-Library-Loan. After the 1960's, the term resource sharing has been widely used and practised. Resource sharing in the context of library and information centres includes all types and forms of resources and services, personnel, equipment, facilities, etc.

Libraries have shared their resources for many decades through formal and informal agreements using traditional means. During the past two decades, things have drastically changed due to more and more libraries automating their catalogues, acquiring resources in electronic form, and getting connected to one or the other network. This has resulted in easy accessing of the resources from the remote nodes adding a new dimension to the nature of library services. In a resources constrained environment, sharing of resources among libraries and providing services through resource sharing practices is gaining considerable importance. With the developments application of information technology tools, the sharing has become much easier. Due to resource crunch in the libraries, library managements have no other way out but to seek the cooperation of other libraries to meet the requirements of the clientele. In a nutshell, resource sharing is a method of overcoming the limitations of the individual libraries in respect of their resources by way of cooperation and coordination among participant libraries.

5.2 DEFINITIONS AND OBJECTIVES

5.2.1 Definitions

“Resource Sharing is a sort of implied agreement amongst participating libraries wherein each participant is willing to share its resources with other members and in turn is privileged to share the resources of its partners.”

Another definition reads as

“Resource sharing comprises transactions by which a library makes its materials or copies of its materials available to the clientele of another library upon request.”

According to Allen Kent

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

5.2.2 Objectives

The main objectives of resource sharing can be listed as:

- 1) Facilitating the sharing of resources in an efficient, timely and cost effective manner
- 2) Facilitating the utilization of resources to enhance the reader's ability to meet their information requirements

- 3) Facilitating to users the which range of services available from many libraries
- 4) Promoting cooperative programmes and services of libraries with adequate resources
- 5) Providing communication among libraries
- 6) Increasing the access base for users
- 7) Avoiding the duplication of resources
- 8) Making overall improvements in library services.

These objectives can be achieved through networking of libraries and information centres using interactive computer systems and telecommunication facilities for the explicit purpose of resource sharing.

Self Check Exercise

- 1) What do you understand by resource sharing?. Discuss the objectives of resource sharing.

Note: 1) Write your answer in the space given below.

- 2) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of this unit.

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5.3 RESOURCE SHARING - THE CONCEPT

In this era of information explosion and of the ever increasing demands of the clientele, no library in the world is self sufficient to meet the requirements of its users. The situation calls for optimum utilization through the sharing of resources among libraries. This dependence has given rise to the concept of resource sharing which was originally called library cooperation.

The term “library cooperation” allows one to achieve the objectives better by working together, whereas the resource sharing assumes a range of physical, intellectual, and conceptual resources on the one hand and a body of people with library and information needs on the other hand covering the activities involved in organizing the one into a set of optimum relationships to meet the needs of the other.

Resource sharing is basically sharing of resources of participating libraries on the basis of the agreement of cooperation for the purpose of sharing the resources of each other’s materials. This entails not only to share the document resources but also facilitates, services, equipment and even the manpower among the participating libraries.

The success of resource sharing essentially depends on :

- Agreement among participating library administrators
- Availability of union catalogues
- Formation of consortia among the libraries
- Formation of computer communication networks among the libraries.

5.4 NEED FOR RESOURCE SHARING

The rapid growth in world literature along with problems such as shrinking library budgets, steady increase in document prices, and depreciating currencies have made it increasingly difficult for individual libraries in developing countries to acquire and retain everything their users might like to read. These are a few of the challenges facing library and information professionals. Due to these challenges, no single library can meet all the requirements of its users. This calls for sharing of resources through cooperation.

The aim of any cooperative endeavour is to achieve what the members of the group cannot achieve individually. Resource sharing is considered to be, one of the pillars of modern librarianship. The availability of a variety of electronic tools for document identification such as access to online OPACs, publishers' catalogues, contents pages, and bibliographic databases has enhanced the awareness of library users about literature produced in their areas of interest.

The following are a few factors that force libraries to come together and share the resources :

- Continuous rise (nearly 15-20% every year) in the cost of reading materials of all types and in particular of scholarly journals
- Fluctuation in the conversion rate of the Indian rupee against major foreign currencies
- Growth of scholarly publications in every discipline
- Decline of library budgets every year
- Increasing demand from users
- Availability of technological solutions with the availability of computer and communication facilities
- Availability of various information sources in electronic form, particularly networked versions
- Formation of library networks, consortia etc.

5.4.1 Access Versus Ownership

Most libraries have traditionally tried to own, resources as much as possible, because owning an item provides faster access to patrons compared to waiting to borrow or purchase on demand. However, the increased cost of maintaining a collection of primary sources and the increased demand for information has resulted in a shift of emphasis from ownership to access. The result has been an increased emphasis on

cooperation and resource sharing aiming to replace acquisition by access. So local, regional, national and international networks have been established.

Libraries in India have so far been developed on traditional lines and more emphasis till now was given to ownership rather than to access. Now librarians have little or no choice but to initiate the transition from an ownership-based model to an access-based library model. Access versus ownership is “just in time” versus “just in case”. We are witnessing the use of the Internet as a means of access to networked information resources, such as remote library catalogues, bibliographic databases, bulletin boards, newsgroups, electronic conferences and discussion groups. A library acts as a link or node within the total information network. The user accesses the immense information resources of the network(s) through this link, which it also has some additional or unique features that may be available to an individual otherwise.

Virtually all librarians are trying to balance these alternatives as they grapple with shrinking budgets and struggle to modify library policies that will meet their users’ information needs.

5.4.2 Cost Effectiveness

The resource sharing approach leads to cost effectiveness and better utilization of library resources. The tremendous advancement in information technology now offers many alternatives for networking and resource sharing among geographically dispersed and remotely located library and information centres. The resources available in many libraries show that there is a lot of duplication in the procurement of library materials as the interest of users in libraries is more or less the same everywhere. One should not be surprised at the extent of duplication and overlap, as the sources are purchased to meet the requirements of a library’s own clientele. Through sharing of resources, a lot of common subscriptions can be avoided which can be used to provide access to more unique resources within the budget. In view of these problems, it is essential that the libraries develop some rational and mutually beneficial guidelines for the procurement of various kinds and types of learning resources. Such an approach will minimise duplication on the one hand and ensure comprehensive coverage on the other, saving valuable financial resources.

The new concept of library consortia helps libraries to have cost effectiveness in subscribing to international periodicals. The whole world is moving towards electronic publishing and the cost of the electronic publishing is much lower than that of the print version. Due to technological developments, electronic publishing of scholarly journals has given rise to various models of consortia purchase by publishers. Many publishers offer to consortia, if their purchasing power is big enough, access to their whole range of journals collection not only to the currently subscribed but also to all the journals published by them in some cases. Subscription in consortia mode gives the library 75-90% discount as against the individual subscription.

5.5 AREAS OF RESOURCE SHARING

There are a number of areas that could be considered for sharing of resources. Some of the prominent areas which are widely practised and are of much relevance in this context are:

5.5.1 Union Catalogue

The term Union Catalogue is different from Library Catalogue and is associated with the national catalogue. The importance of a union catalogue lies in promoting inter-library cooperation on local, regional, and international levels. The preparation of a union catalogue is the first step in resource sharing when two or more libraries agree to cooperate. They generally begin with the preparation of union catalogue of their holdings.

A union catalogue has been defined as “a catalogue listing in one sequence, the holding or part of the holdings of two or more libraries” (Knud, Larsen). However, another definition given by William Katz as, ‘an inventory common to several libraries and listing some or all of their publications maintained in one or more orders of arrangement. The prime objective of union catalogue is to inform the users of a library who has what which library has material. Compilation of union catalogues of periodicals, case collections, reference materials, microforms, audio-visual materials, dissertations, theses and other such materials held by the participating libraries. This makes resource sharing easy.

Union catalogues are the backbone of an effective resource sharing programme. There are certain priorities regarding the type of materials based on which the union catalogues are to be prepared. These union catalogues help the participating libraries to have access to the collection available from other libraries and to have resource sharing depending on the requirement. The development of the union catalogue is a tedious job, requiring lot of support from the participating libraries.

A few examples of union catalogues:

The US-Library of Congress - the national union catalogue; The British union catalogue of periodicals; the National Union Catalogue of Scientific Serials in India (NUCSSI-INSDOC), the Union Catalogue of Social Science Serials in India (NASSDOC), the Union Catalogue of Books, Serials, Theses, Experts, Projects by INFLIBNET.

5.5.2 Collection Development

The political and economical circumstances in which the libraries operate have drastically changed in the last two decades. The explosion in the number and variety of publications, and the increase in the cost of books and serials in particular, compel the libraries to share their resources to improve coverage of the universe of titles. The variety and range of resources demanded by the scholars is growing at a rate beyond capacity and are adding to the library’s economic problems.

The libraries’ prime task is to guarantee the availability of relevant and representative collections in various fields. The collection development at the higher level is essential for developing core collection that serves the immediate needs of their users. In this situation it is necessary that libraries co-operate in developing their collections.

The starting point for coordinated collection development is collection intensification. It aims at improving the quality of library service by broadening and deepening the range of research materials collectively made available to users.

Librarians are skeptical about the realisation of the general aim of coordinated collection development: broadening and deepening the range of titles by reducing overlap, because in the last ten years librarians have tried their best to reduce the

overlap as far as possible. Many serials even unique and core titles have been cancelled and at many libraries the general policy is to cancel a few titles every year. In this situation, cooperative collection development can better be described as shared poverty. In spite of this scepticism, librarians are positive about the benefits of making library profiles. The collection of profiles will be very useful for negotiations with faculty, publishers, in contacts with partners of a consortium, to inform others, etc. These collection profiles can be used as a collection management instrument to develop collections more efficiently and effectively.

The objective of collection development is to help the libraries to identify and select the publications which are worthwhile for acquisition. This can be based on the data available at various levels such as circulation, inter-library loan statistics, SDI user profiles etc. After examining the strength and weaknesses in document collections in libraries as well as duplication, a cooperative acquisition system will gradually evolve.

5.5.3 Consortia

The aim of Consortia is to achieve what the members of the group cannot achieve individually. The average number of subscriptions to international journals by Indian libraries is even less than 500 titles, whereas the average number for American libraries is more than 10 times. Improving the quality and standard of research at the national level and bringing it to the level of global recognition by improving the access-base of literature is essential.

Consortium means a “group of libraries come together with common interest to form a consortium”. One of the libraries or agencies will work as the coordinator on behalf of all libraries to negotiate with publishers, take care of legal issues, etc.

The main objectives of consortia are:

- Increase the cost benefit per subscription.
- Promote the rational use of funds.
- Ensure continuous subscription to the periodicals subscribed.
- Guarantee local storage of the information acquired for continuous use by present and future users.
- Develop technical capabilities of the staff in operating and using electronic publication databases
- Strategic alliance with institutions that have a common interest, resulting in reduced information cost
- Improved resource sharing.

Technological developments, electronic publishing of scholarly journals, The emergence of consortia, and the pricing models of the publishers give new opportunities for libraries to provide instant access to information. Through consortia, every member of the consortium gets electronic access not only to the journals currently subscribed to but also to all the journals published by the publisher in most of the cases. Many libraries currently subscribe only to those journals that they can afford. Though interested in other journals, they cannot afford to provide access to them. This approach helps them to provide access to journals they cannot afford. Such a consortium agreement will give the library and also the user extended access - that is better service - and reduce the costs.

Major issues of the consortia approach :

- Selecting a coordinating agency to deal on behalf of the entire group of participants and executing and monitoring the work.
- Identification of libraries interested in participating and agreeing to common terms and conditions.
- Identification of potential publishers to provide access under consortia purchase.
- Negotiating with publishers to get a commonly acceptable and affordable price.
- Source of funding to meet the subscription cost.
- Legal issues involved in contracts and usage of material within the consortia
- Informing of the usefulness / importance of the consortia to the heads of the institutions, faculty, etc., to act upon the issue.
- Identifying the necessary infrastructure for electronic access to resources.
- Issues relating to backup of databases
- Identification and selection of databases to be acquired and hosted at one place (i.e., coordinating agency).
- Documentation and training to staff.
- Access rights-whether to provide direct access from publisher site or mount databases at coordinating agency.

In forming a consortium of libraries, a way of life to maximise the resource base to meet the genuine needs of users, the participating libraries need to take a active part. Major publishers are willing to come forward in the fast changing society, coming together and serving better.

5.5.4 Cooperative Storage Control

Several big libraries would like some of their less used materials to be weeded out, and kept at a place where from it can be recalled. when needed. Also, in these libraries the rarely used materials of all libraries are stocked in an economical way by making use of compact storage methods of various kinds such as rolling stocks, etc.

5.5.5 Cooperation in Inter-library Loans

Inter-library loans are an age old concept that our libraries have been practising, using traditional methods. In this era of networking and use of Internet, this process has become easier, more reliable and time saving. Most of the ILL transactions takes place at very informal level, i.e., understanding between individuals rather than institutions. An ILL policy and an ILL code are essential to achieve optimum results. Some important factors are:

- flexibility and choice to meet varied user needs;
- clearly defined and unambiguous service standards, for example, for turnaround time and delivery method;
- a specified turnaround time for a core level of service;

- greater predictability and consistency; and
- increased incentives for libraries to improve their ILL supplying operations.

The current manual ILL system is laborious, time-consuming, error-prone and inefficient. Much time is spent on searching, documentation and updating of data. Duplication of effort is required to complete the ILL loan form since the requester completes a separate form when requesting an ILL. Time is spent in contacting requesters when urgent requests are not fulfilled, filing ILL forms, carrying out manual periodic checks of overdue items and collating ILL statistics. The manual system is manageable if the requests are few but leads to a proportionate increase in administrative problems and overloads when ILL demand increases.

Such reasons, coupled with the rapid advancement of Internet technology, the availability of on-line library systems and OPAC have provided the impetus to provide a new computerized ILL system to manage the complete ILL process.

Impact of electronic technology on traditional inter-library services

Several articles have been written about electronic document delivery services and their effect on traditional delivery of material by ILL. Crawford and White (1997) address many of the issues associated with electronic information resources and the implications for libraries and librarians. The authors undertook a study to research the effects that the addition of a full text database had on traditional methods of information delivery, including the financial implications, and have included an analysis of the results. Cornish (1997) looked at the changing role of the library brought about by the widespread use of electronic technology. These issues raised are, what is available, who should request and who should supply and, possibly even more controversial, who should pay. The author concludes that individual researchers will eventually realise that they are faced with an information overload and will prefer to rely once again on the expertise of the skilled librarian. Traditional inter-library activity will continue but with the use of modern technology.

Another innovation which is having a considerable impact in this area is the implementation of electronic ILL management systems. In some libraries, Web-based ILL systems are replacing paper-based manual intensive systems. Foo and Lim (1998) describe the system designed and implemented at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. ILL is seen as a complement to acquisition. Inter-library loans, particularly of journal articles, is becoming increasingly synonymous with document delivery. Consequently, the term user-initiated inter-library loans is a general term encompassing user-initiated document delivery. Inter - library-loan is widely discussed in the next unit of this block.

However there are certain disadvantages listed below:

- First, there is the need for each participating library to use the same system or software in order to carry out the ILL process.
- Second, the difference in library policies among participating libraries makes it difficult to develop a generic system that would be acceptable to all.
- Third, as the number of ILL requests is traditionally low compared to normal borrowing, few resources have been allocated to administer or computerize the ILL service.

- Finally, different systems, even if they exist, suffer from interoperability problems owing to the absence of standards.

Thus, two different ILL systems will not be able to exchange information or data. This problem will only be solved over time when ILL systems become more commonplace.

5.5.6 Document Delivery Service

Despite rising costs, shrinking budgets, and the information explosion, the role of libraries remains to provide access to recorded information required by their users, even though unable individually to acquire and preserve it in its entirety. To continue to provide users with access to as wide an array of information as possible, libraries have had to shift away from the acquisition of materials for local collections to cooperating with other libraries to provide access to them. The primary mechanism for sharing materials is what has traditionally been known as inter-library loan, involving the mutual lending and borrowing of materials among libraries.

The general components involved in the process of document delivery are :

Requestors	Who requests to the document, the end user of the library
Document Types	Wide variety of document types acquired, stored and supplied by the library for use.
Document sources	The libraries, National and International document supply centres, commercial document supply services, publishers, etc.
Document selection	Finding out the bibliographic references, online searching, searching through CD-ROM's, locally mounted databases, network accessible catalogues, etc.
Request management	Verification of user request, compliance with copyright restrictions, and location of a potential document source(s) followed by request submission, request tracking, as well as a number of other possible transactions.
Document retrieval	Physical retrieval of document by library staff, numerous clerical activities, viz., photocopying, packing, posting or shipping, etc. Retrieval of documents from electronic database is a new concept.
Document transfer	Final delivery of document, forwarding the document to the requestor by fax, post or other modes.

Developments in the storage and communication technology have made the process of document delivery more efficient through electronic document delivery which is discussed in detail in Unit - 2 of this block.

Self-check Exercise

- 1) Discuss briefly the different areas of resource sharing.

Note: 1) Write your answer in the space given below.

- 2) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of this unit.

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5.6 PRE-REQUISITES FOR RESOURCE SHARING

5.6.1 Infrastructure

The essential infrastructure for resource sharing includes installation of hardware and software to create the bibliographical, content pages, abstracts and full text databases and networking. The infrastructure will help to build union catalogues and software to handle the user queries, etc. A library desiring to be a part of a resource sharing network should have computers, printers, scanners, databases, and networking softwares with specified standards, network connectivity, photocopying machines, fax, scanner, document delivery software, etc.

5.6.2 Staff Training

Skilled manpower is one of the pre-requisites for the success of any programme. The Library, being a man-intensive and service oriented organisation, needs a trained and motivated workforce essential for the success of cooperative programmes like resource sharing and networking. The organisation of resource sharing cannot be possible without competent, trained and dedicated manpower. Library professionals must get ready with adequate skills and the right attitude. A library resource sharing programme needs to design and conduct various programmes for the development of staff of the participating libraries. Proper education and training of the user in IT tools and techniques, exchange of library professionals among the libraries, participation in various professional meetings, seminars, workshops, conferences, etc., are some ways to develop the manpower in libraries.

5.6.3 Retrospective Conversion

The retrospective conversion of library collections is one of the pre-requisite for resource sharing. Though it is time consuming and expensive, it is necessary to convert the data in standard bibliographic format. A variety of sources and methods are available for retrospective conversion of library materials.

“Retrospective conversion is the conversion of existing bibliographic records in library is from manual to machine readable format according to specified policies and standards.”

The primary objective of retrospective conversion is to increase access as widely as possible to the collections already catalogued in the library. The process of retrospective conversion of library catalogue is a pre-requisite for creating a union list or a union catalogue of bibliographic data at local, regional, national and international levels. The converted data may further be useful for sharing bibliographic resources, facilitate collection rationalization allowing cooperative acquisition of library

materials. Retrospective conversion of the bibliographic data should be created using the set standards which helps sharing of records between libraries.

5.6.4 Document Delivery and Inter-library Loan

The success of resource sharing is mainly dependant on the delivery of the right material to the right reader at the right time. Effective document delivery on demand to the end user is one of the pre-requisites of resource sharing. Another pre-requisite of sharing of resources from one library to another is through the way of inter-library loan. Information dissemination services by themselves are of no value unless they are backed up by actual provision of copy of such documents. The user is invariably interested in going through the original source document of his interest. The document delivery service is one of the pre-requisite for the success of any resource sharing programme.

The inter-library loan service enables a library to request another library through the network for one or more books on an inter-library loan basis for meeting the demands of its users. This may include the facility for reserving a book, if it is on loan in the lending library. An efficient and effective mechanism for physical delivery / electronic delivery of materials needs to be developed. This success of this service depends on the cooperative spirit of participating libraries. An Inter-library loan code needs to be generated and adopted by all libraries.

5.6.5 Internet and the Role of Librarians

The Internet and the facilities of World Wide Web (WWW) provide easy means for information communication not available earlier. One can access information and communicate with an individual throughout the world. The development of the Internet is leading to formation of information super highway, where rapid access to information resources is possible irrespective of the place of initiation of search.

Computer networks help the people to tap into variety of information services. These information services include research, publication of journals, books, reports etc., data sharing, email and other such facilities. Internet and WWW are networking systems that support these information services. Scientific community use Internet as a tool to share their research findings. The concept of universal database that is not only accessible to people around the world but information that links to other pieces of information in other forms as well-data archives, electronic library, electronic journals, video conferencing etc. have become common place. The communication technology and networks are transforming the way we live and work. The future of the world looks to be a single source of information and the enormous expansion of communication facilities will open up new ways of learning, thinking and of sharing. The development in these technologies and the need for sharing resources lead for evolving networks.

Sharing of resources from one network to another network or from one computer to another computer has become possible irrespective of the networks they are connected to. Perhaps no other recent innovation has impacted the library profession to such a great extent as Internet. It has created profound impact on L&IS by offering new modes of information delivery and a vast information source. Innovative use of Internet technologies enable us to reach both local and distant users much more easily and effectively than hither to possible.

Technologies such as email and web provide tremendous opportunities for library & Inf. Scientists to deliver the information to the desktops of users. Web offers

significant advantage by integrating different library & information services with a common user interface offered by Web browsers. Realising the potentials, many libraries are rushing to get the connectivity. The internet facilities can be used by the librarians for most of the library activities viz. collection development, cataloguing, circulation, classification, services, preservation, etc.

5.7 BARRIERS TO RESOURCE SHARING

- Libraries even in the present situation prefer to own the materials, rather than accessing them from other libraries or a network. They do not think of increasing their information base by adding the item that is not available with other libraries.
- The fear of losing an identity is another aspect. The libraries who participate in a network or consortium feel that they are losing autonomy. They will have to follow the guidelines set for a group of libraries.
- Centralization of activities and services under a network is still not preferred or accepted by many libraries.
- Benefits gained through participation in consortia are hard to explain or convince the authorities, particularly in the beginning stage.
- Resource sharing is done for marginal benefits in the peripheral areas as no one likes core areas or collection to be covered for resource sharing, resulting in little saving.
- Lack of institutional support might effect successful resource sharing. Availability of infrastructural facilities, support from authority and users is most essential for the success of a resource sharing programme.
- Lack of a well tested mechanism of transfer of document or information to build confidence in the end users, which requires timely delivery of required information in an efficient manner.
- There are several other barriers such as geographical, legal, administrative, etc, which also pose certain problems in resource sharing.

How to overcome the barriers for successful Resource Sharing?

How are none Number of factors that can contribute to the success of resource sharing among the libraries:

- Willingness on part of the libraries to share the resources
- Clear commitment to the resource sharing policy, adhering to the agreements. And abiding by the guidelines and rules
- Making adequate preparatory studies and analysis with clear objectives.
- Ensuring technical compatibility among participating libraries.
- Adequate arrangements for monitoring of services and feedback information.
- Ensuring good transport, courier and communication facilities.
- Resource sharing needs to be treated as a routine job and not to be considered as a burden.

- Proper planning on the part of each individual participating library, and also the group of libraries as a whole, is a must. This plan should take into consideration both long range and short range factors.
- Compatibility, when it comes to sharing resources through the networks following standards, etc., needs to be studied and adopted by all.
- There need to be mechanism to monitor the whole process and collect the feedback from time to time
- Treat with equal importance with other functions, and one should take into confidence all participating libraries, when the major decisions are taken at consortium level and with staff members at the individual library level.
- Resource sharing costs money and does not bring benefits immediately. Benefits are likely to accrue in the medium and long range. As far as possible one should avoid looking at the immediate benefit of consortia.
- Improving the document provision it an acceptable speed is necessary.
- Frequent meetings with participating libraries, reviewing various issues involved, can make the programme more successful.

5.8 RESOURCE SHARING : CASE STUDIES

An attempt has been made here to study cases on resource sharing with a few countries. However more examples can be studied.

Resource sharing among agricultural libraries in Malaysia by Shaheen Majid et al (1999) investigates resource sharing activities undertaken by such libraries in Malaysia. It was found that resource sharing was basically limited to inter-library lending and document delivery. On the average, each scientist from the participating research institutions made 1.25 document delivery and inter-library loan requests per annum. Nearly 74 per cent of these requests were met from local libraries. The participating libraries preferred to make their overseas document delivery requests to the BLDSC. Only a limited resource sharing activity was observed between the participating libraries and libraries in the ASEAN region. Heads of the participating libraries were in favour of a “loose” resource sharing scheme where it should be at their discretion to decide with whom to share their resources and at what level. The study offers several suggestions for improving resource sharing activities among agricultural libraries in Malaysia.

Beyond Cooperation in Australia by Steve O’Connor (1999) explores the nature of the new mode of operating styles in Australian academic libraries, the nature of collaborative models and, in particular, a description of the work and agenda of one of the collaborative vehicles currently in use in Australia. Cooperation on each continent has meant something different, and the nature of their collaborative activity will have different dimensions as well. Librarians in Australia have always tended to know each other well, operating as they do in a small community across a vast inhospitable continent. The movement for collaborative activities had be different from elsewhere in the world as a result of this culture.

Collaboration recognises that each library has different pressures and resources. Collaboration seeks to ensure that each party gains something for itself out of the

collaborative exchange. In this way the financial pressures of the large library are compensated to some extent by the smaller paying for access to resources, which they would not have otherwise afforded. The larger and smaller libraries gain financial advantage as they come together for dataset purchases. The smaller libraries widen considerably their capability to access resources for their clients while being able to relate to their larger cousins on a more equal footing. Both groups emphatically gain politically as they increase service in fiscally difficult times.

Libraries in their academic communities are no longer the powerful players they were once. Their share of institutional budgets has fallen and the Internet has created the illusion that libraries are no longer relevant. In a publishing environment where, despite falling dollars and increased costs, the rate of publication has increased dramatically, the share of current year published materials in our libraries has fallen dramatically. According to a major book supplier the percentage of annual US published output in ARL libraries has fallen from around 75 percent in the major libraries to just over 50 percent. As such, these libraries need both to engage in collaborative activities and to sacrifice some independence in order to redress operational inadequacies. Initiatives in Australia such as the major project JANUS are seeking to establish appropriate business models for the provision of research information. In this, JANUS has proposed a set of collaborative information centers to be established to address the diminishing national financial resources for research information services in Australian universities. The centres will provide a focus for national collaborative purchasing in their disciplines, and provide one-stop shops for access to research information in those disciplines (JANUS, 1998). There is a discussion also on different models for collaboration in Australian libraries.

Resource Sharing in Indiana

Resource sharing has long been an important part of library operations in Indiana. At first informal, mostly local, sharing, combined with hierarchical inter-library loans, provided through the Indiana State Library, met the needs of patrons in public libraries. The librarian filled out a paper form and sent it through the mail to a single lending library. Maybe the library had been identified through a published catalogue or, more often, was selected because of its size or proximity, and received a "blind search" request. A few large libraries received and supplied most of the requests. The tedious paperwork and the time and expense required to make the request were substantial barriers to be overcome for those who needed information not held in their own library.

The Indiana Telecommunications Network (TWX) began in 1965 with funding from the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA). Its objectives were to establish and operate a library communication system, encourage inter-library cooperation, increase the use of inter-library loan and reference service, and decrease the transaction time in inter-library exchanges. If a local library was unable to fulfil a request, it called one of 13 TWX centers in large public libraries. The library first attempted to fulfil the request from its own collection, and if it could not, forwarded the request via teletype to the State Library. If the State Library could not fulfil the request, it was forwarded, again by teletype, to other libraries. Five state university libraries, 190 public libraries, and five special libraries were affiliated with the TWX network. Although the TWX network did increase participation in inter-library loans, problems remained. A number of small public libraries and most school and special libraries still did not participate. Because of the hierarchical patterns of referral, the

time to fulfil requests was still lengthy and the process labour intensive. Continued reliance on large libraries as suppliers and on LSCA funding was worrisome.

By the mid-70s, Indiana had developed multi-type library networks at both the state and regional levels. Area Library Services Authorities (ALSAs) took over the management of many of the TWX center operations and by the early 80s, had replaced the teletype technology with OCLC. By that time too, virtually every public, school, and academic library was a member of an ALSA, and request traffic tripled. Lending still relied on a relatively small number of large libraries whose records were now available through OCLC. A myriad of lending arrangements remained, with libraries borrowing through ALSAs, through other agreements, and through OCLC, and with LSCA funds supporting ALSAs as well as providing reimbursement to Major Urban Resource Libraries and State Resource Centers (university libraries). Conversion from print to MARC records continued in larger academic and public libraries, slowly but steadily increasing the number of potential lenders.

By the 1990s, technological developments and tightened funding forced rethinking of library resource sharing on several fronts, resulting in the merger of the nine ALSAs and INCOLSA in 1995, the initiation of a statewide courier service in 1997, the transformation of federal library programmes from LSCA into a new Library Services and Technology Act, OCLC and large libraries experimenting with unmediated ILL, proliferation of sources for full-text digital information, and rapid deployment of Internet access, which made inexpensive data transfer widely available to libraries and individuals.

With expanded access and collaboration among libraries and other information providers, library patrons have raised their expectations. In 1997, they want “one-stop shopping” full-text information delivered with a few keystrokes to their desks.

Resource sharing among major libraries of Kuwait by Mumtaz A Anwar and Dheya Abdulqader focuses on resource sharing in Kuwaiti Libraries, which due to many factors, has now become an economic and information provision necessity. The study presents the results of a survey of 17 major libraries of Kuwait. It was found that the current resource sharing activities are at a minimal level, also that all libraries do not actively participate in these. However the librarians consider resource sharing very important for their libraries, are aware of its benefits, and know the hurdles in developing a resource sharing network. They are willing to participate in such a network if one was developed. The study also recommends that, the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters should create a National Task Force to develop a detailed plan for a national resource sharing network. It proposes that the National Library should be designated as coordinating agency for this network and suggests the establishment of a permanent national committee, with representation from all major libraries, to be responsible for policy making.

Another case study by Naomi C Broering on a “A LIBRARY INFORMATION SYSTEM RESOURCE SHARING PROJECT” discusses a project being carried out at Georgetown University. In 1992, the Dahlgren Memorial Library at Georgetown University received a grant to launch a three-year Library Information System (LIS) Resource Sharing Project from the US Department of Education. The project enables Georgetown to spearhead a collaborative programme with a consortium of 41 libraries to design several dynamic “next generation” library system modules. The consortium, founded in 1986 to engage in joint LIS development activities, is known as the Friends of LIS (FLIS).

The project goals are to enhance electronic access and improve delivery of information in various print and non-print formats for resource sharing, and through this advanced system, improve medical education, research and patient care. There are four project objectives: (1) Create Internet Access to Share Databases; (2) Accelerate Transmission of Documents to Users; (3) Provide OPAC Access to Digi-tized Images; (4) Generate Outcomes and Evaluations by developing a Library Management Information System (LMIS). The well qualified Georgetown project staff were joined by a Project Design Advisory Panel consisting of FLIS Board and Task Force members.

The project's implications and significance are profound in potentially, changing the library service paradigm and shaping the delivery of information in the future. The unique project features are use of the Internet not only to access other library catalogues, but to have a central menu of FLIS databases with transparent transfer capabilities to whatever data-base a user chooses regardless of geographic location. Automatic online access to document delivery directly from a literature search is provided from miniMEDLINE, Current Contents, Bioethicsline and the OPACs. An innovative milestone under development is the search and display of images through the online catalogue. Users will navigate easily, unaware of the underlying technical complexities. Another significant milestone is the development of a Library Management Information System (LMIS) to allow the FLIS libraries to organize data efficiently, improve their reports and complete national library association questionnaires such as ARL and AAHSLD. Georgetown's commitment is demonstrated by its generous contribution to the project from its scarce operational funds and resources. Without the grant this project could not have become a reality.

The GOALS of the project are:

- To improve medical education, research and patient care by expanding the Library Information System (LIS), an integrated system used by over 40 medical libraries.
- To enhance access to and delivery of information by providing LIS member libraries and their users with access to the collective resources and information formats at Georgetown and the FLIS libraries.

To accomplish the project there are four OBJECTIVES:

- Create Internet Access to Share Databases.
- Accelerate Transmission of Documents to Users.
- Provide OPAC Access to Digitized Image Collections.
- Generate Outcomes and Evaluations via a Library Management Information system (LMIS).

5.9 NATIONAL INFORMATION POLICY ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

We have entered a new millenium. During the latter half of the 20th century, the world has witnessed remarkable strides in the form of inventions and innovations in information processing, storage and retrieval. Information communication technologies have taken a quantum jump as it were during the last couple of decades. India, like

many other developing countries, is striving to catch up with the developments and benefit from them. Liberal policies of the national and also some state governments together will hasten developments in information technology (IT) in the country during the decade in particular and push towards a stage of being noticed among IT giants. The National Task Force on Information Technology and Software Development, the Information Technology Bill (1999), attempts to rationalize and expand the telecom sector, the establishment of various network facilities (such as ERNET, NICNET, INFLIBNET) and the rapidly expanding access to and use of the Internet in the country are just a few of the noteworthy developments in the country.

The formulation and implementation of a national policy should be an integral part of the national development policy and should receive high priority. A policy is a set of principles and strategies which guide a course of action for the achievement of a given goal. The National Policy on Education, which was announced in 1986, has advocated a nation-wide movement for improvement of existing libraries and the establishment of new ones as well as for provision of library facilities to end users.

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To formulate a national policy on library and information system, the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, set up a committee in October 1985 under the chairmanship of Prof. D.P. Chattopadhyaya. The committee submitted its report in May 1986.

This document contains ten chapters, viz. 1. Introduction, 2. Objectives of National Policy, 3. The Public library System, 4. The Academic Library System, 5. Special Libraries and Information Systems, 6. The National Library System Bibliographical Services, 7. Manpower Development and Professional Status, 8. Modernization of Library and Information Systems, 9. General Professional issues, and 10. Implementing Agencies and Financial Support. Library and information Systems are vital for all sectors of national activity.

The overall objective of the National Information Policy for Library and Information System is that, "Relevant information accelerates the pace of national development. An informed citizen is an asset to a democratic system of government and the proper utilization of information can improve the quality of life of citizens. The Government of India therefore realizes the value of coordinating and upgrading the existing library and information systems and services and initiating new programmes relevant to our national needs, taking advantage of the latest advances in information technology."

The availability of information expeditiously and pinpointedly supports the decision making processes at all levels. Relevant information accelerates the pace of national development. An informed citizen is an asset to a democratic system of government and the proper utilization of information can improve the quality of citizens.

The main aims of the library and information policy are:

- 1) To foster, promote and sustain, by all appropriate means, the organisation, availability and use of information in all sectors of national activity.
- 2) To take steps for mobilising and upgrading the existing library and information systems and services and initiating new programmes relevant to our national needs, taking advantage of the latest advances in information technology.

- 3) To encourage and initiate, with all possible speed, programmes for training of library and information personnel, on a scale and of a caliber adequate to provide library and information services and to recognise their work as an important component of the quality and level of such services.
- 4) To set up adequate monitoring mechanisms for ensuring a rapid development of library and information facilities and services for meeting the information needs of all sectors and levels of the national economy.
- 5) To encourage individual initiative for the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge, and for the discovery of new knowledge in an atmosphere of intellectual freedom.
- 6) In general to secure for the people of the country all the benefits that can accrue from the acquisition and application of knowledge.
- 7) To preserve and make known the nation's cultural heritage in its multiple forms.

In the network environment Prof. Neelameghan(2000) mentions some of the elements of networks which network policy makers might consider. These elements are basically based on the international organizations especially UNESCO.

The goal of a national information network policy would be to facilitate the achievement of the goal of a national policy on information systems and services, namely, to ensure the availability of and accessibility to as well optimal utilization of specialized and professional knowledge, scientific, technical, economic, social, cultural and managerial information and expertise generated and/or available within the country and elsewhere in the world as a resource for problem solving, education, research, innovation, and applications for development, in all sectors of the national economy and all sections of society.

The specific objectives of national the information network include:

- Ensure availability and timely access to relevant and reliable data and information in conveniently usable forms at an affordable cost to all those contributing in diverse ways to the achievement of national development goals.
- Preparation and implementation of a plan of action for the establishment of a national information network that would interlink existing sectoral and subnational networks and information infrastructures, coordination of the systems, networks and services, providing for feedback from the nodes and users, identification and correction of deficiencies filling up of gaps and inadequacies in information resources, trained human resources, physical facilities, and productive interaction with regional and global networks and information programmes.
- Securing and ensuring support for the components of the networks through public and private financing and collaborative arrangements.
- Ensuring sustained growth of the information network by formulating and prescribing guidelines for assigning areas of responsibilities, choice of means and methods and standards, setting up priorities, financial arrangements, coordination mechanism and provision for feedback.
- Ensure that the network development accords with national information policy and development, and coherent with economic, social, political, government and administrative structure as they evolve with time.

- Coordination and compatibility among networks at different levels and also with overall national policies relating to information systems and services.
- Improve compatibility between various legislative measures and ordinances relating to national systems and services.
- Better responsiveness of the concerned entities to the implications of new developments in information and communication technologies.
- More effective participation in transitional and global information systems and networks.
- Efficient management and governance of information networks.

Information networks policies should be fully incorporated into national policies on information systems and services; the latter in turn should be fully incorporated into national development policies and plans so that the national information system and its components effectively support national social economic development efforts at different levels and, in turn receive adequate support from development plans and projects.

The key Elements of the National Policy on Information Networks include the following:

- 1) Identification of information resources in the country
- 2) Cataloguing, common communication and database formats and norms for cataloguing and profiling the resources for the resources.
- 3) Software and computer programmes for creating database and retrospective conversion of records.
- 4) Information communication technologies suitable for networking in the country's infrastructure environment.
- 5) Information processing and networking manpower-availability, training required and training facilities available.
- 6) Existing networks that may be interlinked.
- 7) Sharing of information resources, and services to be provided by the network.
- 8) Research and development to support network development.
- 9) Promotion and marketing of the network and its services.
- 10) Participation of the national network in regional and international information networks and systems.
- 11) National network coordination and governance agency

Self-check Exercise

- 1) Explain the concept of National information Policy for Library and information systems.

Note: 1) Write your answer in the space given below.

- 2) Check your answer with the answer given at the end of this unit.

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5.10 SUMMARY

In this unit you have studied the basics of resource sharing, the concept, definition, areas and pre-requisites for resource sharing. The discussion on the role of library networks is discussed in the next unit of this block. Various published case studies give details of resource sharing in different countries. However the unit contains only a few case studies. Students may identifying more case studies for better understanding.

Resource sharing is like give-and-take operation. Libraries should facilitate mutual coordination in the use of materials and provide access to resources of their collection. Funding is to be provided to ensure an effective service. Subscription to journal collections should be based on mutual benefits. Necessary standards need to be followed for effective delivery of material. Activities need to be identified and necessary rules and regulations governing the activities are to be defined.

While each library will need to proceed at a pace suitable to its size, budget and expertise, it is simply a matter of taking the first step that will help build a resource sharing network at city, state, region or national level. As electronic systems continue to drop in price and interest in these systems continues to increase in our culture, libraries will enter into more and more networking partnerships to meet the information demands of individuals and groups neglected by the larger public and academic institutions. As opportunities for collaboration and world-wide information dissemination grow, so do the challenges for maintaining a system to meet the requirements of end users.

5.11 ANSWERS TO SELF CHECK EXERCISES

- 1) Resource sharing has been used in different forms in different contexts. Library cooperation, inter-library loan, consortia, library networks, etc, are the terms used to mean resource sharing. Resource sharing in the context of library and information centres includes all types and forms of resources and services-personnel, equipments, facilities, etc.

Libraries have shared their resources for many decades through formal and informal agreements using traditional means. During the past two decades things have drastically changed due to more and more libraries automating their catalogues, acquiring resources in electronic form, and getting connected to one or the other networks. This has resulted in easy accessing of resources

from the remote nodes, adding a new dimension to the nature of library services. In a nutshell, resource sharing is a method of overcoming the limitations of individual libraries in respect of their resources by way of cooperation and coordination among participant libraries.

“Resource sharing is a sort of implied agreement amongst participating libraries wherein each participant is willing to share its resources with other members and in turn is privileged to share the resources of its partners.”

The main objectives of resource sharing include:

- 1) Facilitating sharing of resources in an efficient, timely and cost effective manner.
 - 2) Facilitating the enhancement of utilization of resources.
 - 3) Promoting cooperative programmes and services of libraries.
 - 4) Providing communication among the libraries.
 - 5) Increasing the access base for users.
 - 6) Avoiding duplication in resources.
 - 7) Overall improvement in library services.
- 2) Some of the prominent areas which are widely practised and are of much relevance are:

Union Catalogue Preparation is the first step in resource sharing when two or more libraries agree to cooperate, they generally begin with preparation of a union catalogue of their holdings. These union catalogues will help the participating libraries in having access to the collections available in other libraries and in having resource sharing depending on requirement.

Collection development at the higher level is essential for developing a core collection that serves the immediate needs of their users. In this situation it is necessary that libraries cooperate in developing their collections. The objective of collection development is to help the libraries to identify and select the publications which are worthwhile for acquisition.

Consortia aim to achieve what the members of the group cannot achieve individually. A consortium means a “group of libraries come together with a common interest”. Due to continuous increase in the electronic publications, libraries can have access to collections much more cheaply in they form a consortium.

Document delivery and Inter-library Loan Developments in storage and communication technology have made the process of document delivery more efficient through electronic means. In this era of networking and use of the Internet, the Inter- library process has become much more easy, reliable and time saving. Most of the ILL transactions take place at a very informal level, i.e., understanding between individuals rather than institutions. ILL policy and ILL code is most essential to achieve optimum results.

- 3) Libraries, information systems and services play a crucial role in education, research, literacy and overall socio-economic development. The formulation

and implementation of a national policy should be an integral part of the national development policy and should receive high priority. A policy is a set of principles and strategies which guide a course of action for the achievement of a given goal. The National Policy on Education, which was announced in 1986, has advocated a nation-wide movement for improvement of existing libraries and the establishment of new ones as well as for provision of library facilities to end users.

Library and information services are vital for all sectors of national activity. The availability of information expeditiously and pinpointedly supports decision-making processes at all levels. Relevant information accelerates the pace of national development. An informed citizen is an asset to a democratic system of government and proper utilization of information can improve the quality of citizens.

The main aims of the library and information policy are:

- 1) To foster, promote and sustain, by all appropriate means, the organisation, availability and use of information in all sectors of national activity;
- 2) To take steps for mobilising and upgrading the existing library and information systems and services and to initiate new programmes relevant to our national needs, taking advantage of the latest advances in information technology;
- 3) To encourage and initiate, with all possible speed, programmes for training of library and information personnel, on a scale and of a calibre adequate to provide the library and information services and to recognise their work as an important component of the quality and level of such services;
- 4) To set up adequate monitoring mechanisms for ensuring rapid development of library and information facilities and services for meeting the information needs of all sectors and levels of the national economy;
- 5) To encourage individual initiative for the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge, and for the discovery of new knowledge in an atmosphere of intellectual freedom;
- 6) In general to secure for the people of the country all the benefits that can accrue from the acquisition and application of knowledge; and
- 7) To preserve and make known the nation's cultural heritage in its multiple forms.

The goal of a national information network policy would be to facilitate the achievement of the goal of national policy on information systems and services namely to ensure the availability of and accessibility to, as well as optimal utilization of, specialized and professional knowledge, the scientific, technical, economic, social, cultural and managerial information and expertise generated and/or available within the country and elsewhere in the world as a resource for problem solving, education, research, innovation, and applications for development, in all sectors of the national economy and all sections of the society.

5.12 KEYWORDS

- Acquisition** : The process of obtaining books and other materials for the library collection; also, the books and other materials added to the library collection.
- Collection Development** : A planned process of selecting and acquiring library materials to meet the needs of a library's community. Cooperative collection development refers to a group of libraries working together.
- Inter-library Loan** : If a book or other item needed by a library user is checked out or not available for some other reason, or if the library does not own the item, a registered borrower may have the privilege of filling out a form at the Inter-library Loan Office or online to request the item from another library. Some libraries permit inter-library loan requests to be submitted electronically via e-mail or on the World Wide Web.
- Network:** A structured arrangement of connecting devices such as computer terminals, or libraries, created for the purpose of communications, information exchange, computer and cooperative services.
- Resource Sharing** : A cooperative arrangement among libraries to make available the resources of a library for use by the patrons of another library, usually through inter-library loan or reciprocal borrowing.
- Retrospective Conversion** : The conversion of previously cataloged library materials to machine (computer) readable form. Retrospective conversion is most often undertaken in preparation for installation of a local automated (circulation/catalogue) system or for a cooperative resource-sharing project.

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