4

LIBRARY AND RESOURCE SHARING

INTRODUCTION

In the previous lesson, you have read about automation in libraries. Libraries acquire books to satisfy all the needs of their users but they still fall short of users demands at many times. In such situations, libraries bank on the collection of other libraries. This has led to cooperation among libraries. The cooperation started in the form of inter library loan, where libraries borrowed books from other libraries. Later, libraries started sharing other resources and services for providing better services to their users. The advances in information and communication technologies enabled library networks to materialize and this made it possible to share all type of resources from anywhere.

In this lesson, you will learn about the cooperation among different libraries with each other in computerized environment.
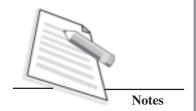
OBJECTIVES

After completing this Lesson, you will be able to:

● explain the concept of and need for resource sharing;

● state the objectives of resource sharing;

● discuss the concept of a library network; and

● describe the activities and services of INFLIBNET and DELNET.

4.1 RESOURCE SHARING

The term 'resource sharing' means using resources jointly. We do share our resources

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at home, office and elsewhere. We share when resources available are less than required. Sharing rooms and other basic facilities like computer, printer, telephone, etc. among staff is common in institutions. All organizations share, then why not libraries too should share their resources. Libraries share books and other reading materials besides human resources. Inter library loan (ILL)service is an example of resource sharing. Other reading material includes journals, databases, etc. It may be a little difficult to understand how we share human resources. By sharing of human resources, we mean to say,sharing the expertise of library staff in two or more libraries. The staff maynot work simultaneously in more than one library, but they may create products(like library catalogue) that may be used in more than one library.

4.1.1 Need

We have already discussed above that we share resources when they areavailable in numbers less than required. As already indicated, the basic function of a library is to provide users access to information which they require. It is, however, not possible for any library to have all the material its users need due to following reasons:

- Information explosion

- Cost of needed materials

- Advances in modern technologies

- Wide disparity between resources available to individuals

- Increased users needs

- Inadequate budgetary resources

- Shortage of information

- Lack of relevant information

4.1.2 Advantages

Resource sharing enables libraries to save on resources. The following are the most important benefits of resource sharing to participating libraries:

- Improves access to material

- Enables co-operating institutions to stretch limited resources

- Allows greater staff specialization

- Improves services to users

- Avoids unnecessary duplication

- Reduces the number of places which users will need to go for services

- Improves working relationship among cooperating libraries, and

- Assists staff to keep them up-to-date

Thus, it helps in the following ways:

● 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 limited space for storing them.

● Libraries by sharing would have access to larger number of documentsthus satisfying the increasing demands of users for documents.

● It would also allow them to share the expertise of staff, thus saving costs as well as the time of the staff. Staff would be freed from some of the routine technical activities, as that would be done on a common basis among them.

It has to be added that resource sharing does not reduce the library's currentcosts. It may even increase the cost, but on the whole it will enable the libraryto provide improved services at a cost much lower than what otherwise wouldbe incurred.

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INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.1

State True or False.

1. Libraries share their resources through Inter Library Loan(ILL).

2. Resource sharing does not help in avoiding unnecessary duplication of documents

3. Information Explosion is one of the reason for resource sharing.
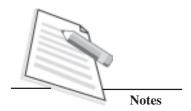
4.2 OPERATIONALIZATION

Library cooperation started with the introduction of ILL service, the origin of resource sharing in libraries. As discussed earlier, ILL was provided in a limited way due to inherent problems. The reasons for not providing the service so actively were:

● Availability of books in limited numbers making it difficult for the libraries to part with their books for other libraries, even for a limited duration;

● Users' demand for the books in their library was prime, giving secondary view to the demands from other libraries;

● Transporting the books to other libraries was difficult resulting in hindrance in the service, and

● Generally the books that were requested to be acquired on ILL were costly and not easily available.

Developments in Information Communication Technology (ICT) have helped to overcome these problems enabling cooperation to grow and evolve. Library cooperation that existed between two or more libraries located geographically close has now evolved into resource sharing taking place among libraries located far apart

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in different cities and even different countries. ICT has brought in changes in the production, duplication, storage and transmission of books. Digitized books can be sent to any location easily. Multiple user scan use a book at the same time. Downloading and saving is possible enabling users to use digitized books anytime.

Philip Sewell opines that resource sharing is an evolution of the concept existing earlier as Library Cooperation, the only difference being that library cooperation assumes two or more libraries working jointly to achieve their goals. In resource sharing, it is presumed that there exists 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 refers to the documents and infrastructure, whereas the latter refer to the human resources (expertise), which libraries can utilize to plan, implement or evaluate their services and routines. Library cooperation can be done in two ways: by working separately and sharing or by working together. The sharing could be of materials or information (reference or bibliographical). While working together, they collaborate to produce bibliographical tools, software, acquire material, organize 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,

b)   Transmission and duplication of documents not being possible.

This made the cooperation among libraries difficult. It is only due to the developments in technology for production, storage, duplication, processing and transmission which has made resource sharing possible. 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 materialize and this made possible sharing of all types of resources at any time, from anywhere across the globe.
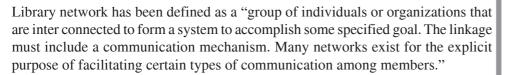
INTEXT QUESTION4.2

Fill in the blanks.

1.   In the context of resources sharing, the resources may be physical or _____.

2.   Library cooperation could not work successfully due to _____ distance between participating libraries.

4.3 RESOURCE SHARING AND LIBRARY NETWORKS

If we go back to recapitulate what we said about the limitations of cooperation among

libraries, it was geographical barriers and lack of means for duplication of the books that prevented libraries to share resources. Difficulty in transporting books to other locations and in parting with them caused libraries to discourage sharing. Information Communication Technologies (ICT) have helped us to overcome these barriers to share resources. Libraries are connected to each other through library networks. They are connected locally as well as globally through these networks. Computers made possible electronic documents, and telecommunication technology made possible their transfer and the availability of electronically, thus, overcoming the barriers of geographical distance and time.

Library network has been defined as a "group of individuals or organizations that are inter connected to form a system to accomplish some specified goal. The linkage must include a communication mechanism. Many networks exist for the explicit purpose of facilitating certain types of communication among members."

Another definition of a network describes it in terms of its characteristics, viz.

● A network's function is to marshal resources from its environment to accomplish results beyond the ability of any one of its members.

● A network develops an organizational design and structure that allows it to establish an identifiable domain and exercise appropriate influence over its members. It is based on communications technology.

4.3.1 Objectives of Networks

Libraries have joined hands to cooperate and coordinate at various levels to form networks. These are formed at local, regional and national level. These networks exist to:

● Maximize the resources of the libraries

● Provide far and wide access to information

● Make rational acquisition and saving of financial resources

● Make optimal use of resources, and

● Create uniform practices in routines.
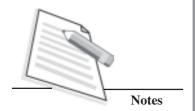
Maximize the resources of the libraries

The primary objective of resource sharing is to maximize the resource base,i.e., collection, staff, infrastructure, as well as services of the participating libraries. They would be benefited by the resources of other libraries adding to their own resources.

Provide far 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 a resource as important as energy. Information is required for decision making at different levels. In view of this scenario, one should not be deprived of information needed. Libraries have different document collection. They are strong in some areas and weaker in others.

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They lack resources to excel in all areas. If libraries share amongst each other, they can overcome this limitation of poor document collection by having wider access to resources of various libraries.

Make rational acquisition and saving of financial resources

Resource sharing results in a rational acquisition of documents. A library should only acquire those documents that are core to the area of its organization. It can satisfy minor or auxiliary needs from other libraries with which it shares. Similarly it can satisfy the minor needs of other libraries. There should be no or minimum possible duplication of documents among the libraries in the same vicinity. It would result in a rationalized acquisition of documents.

Make optimal use of 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.

Create uniform practices in routines

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

INTEXT QUESTION 4.3

Fill in the blanks

1. Information as a resource is as important as _____.

2. Library networks are formed at local, regional and _____level.

4.4 LIBRARY NETWORKS IN INDIA

Efficient resource sharing can be achieved by using recent advances inInformation Technology, i.e., networking of libraries and information centres through Local Area Networks, Metropolitan Area Networks, Wide AreaNetwork and so on.

The beginning of library networks in India can be traced back to the mid eighties with the conceptualization of Calcutta Library Network(CALIBNET). It is an example of a Metropolitan Area Network (MAN).The others in library network in category are Local Area Network (LAN) and Wide Area Network (WAN). As the names suggest, they are created to serve institutions in a metropolitan city, within the campus of the institute and on a national and global scale respectively.

The National Information System for Science and Technology(NISSAT) had a major role in setting up MANs in India. These started withthe setting up of Calcutta

Libraries Network, CALIBNET (1988) followed by Developing Libraries Network, DELNET (1992) (earlier known as Delhi Libraries Network), Ahmedabad Libraries Network, ADINET(1993), Madras Libraries Network, MALIBNET(1993), Bombay Libraries Network, BONET(1994), Mysore Libraries Network, MYLIBNET(1994) and Bangalore Libraries Network, BALNET(1995).

CALIBNET has participating libraries in Kolkata that includes university, college, research and government libraries. It aims to provide access to the collection of libraries in the city as well as to global information required by its users.

BONET started in 1994 with the support of NISSAT in the building of National Centre of Software Technology (NCST), now C-DAC (Centre for the Development of Advance Computing). It planned to provide centralized access to databases of participating libraries and other specialized databases. It conducted training programmes for the professionals working in the participating libraries.

The Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET), a project of the Inter-University Centre (IUC) of University Grants Commission (UGC) has played a significant role in sharing of library and information resources and services among academic and research institutions.

Of the different MANs, DELNET has been actively providing services to its members and has been initiating new services. Others have not been so active in achieving the objectives set up by them.

Let us know discuss some more details of INFLIBNET and DELNET two networks in India.

4.4.1 Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET)

Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET), Inter-University Centre(IUC) a project of University Grants Commission(UGC) has played a significant role in sharing of library and information resources and services among academic and research institutions.

Activities of INFLIBNET

Document Delivery through JCCC

INLIBNET provides inter library loans and document delivery services from the comprehensive collection of subscribed journals under JCCC@UGCINFONET.It has designated 22 libraries to fulfill ILL request from the users, affiliated to 149 universities covered under UGC. The ILL libraries together subscribe to 2000 plus journals which are not available through consortium.
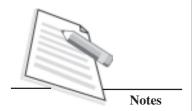
Universities can request for articles which are not available in their own libraries from the journal holdings of those libraries wherever they find them in JCCC search.

INFLIBNET has been developing the following bibliographic databases pertaining to the collection of participating libraries to enable sharing of resources:

● Serials Holdings

- Current Serials
- Secondary Serials Catalogue
- Thesis
- Books

NLIST

National Libraries Information Services Infrastructure for Scholarly Content(N-LIST) is a project being jointly executed by the UGC-INFONET DigitalLibrary Consortium, INFLIBNET Centre and the INDEST-AICTEConsortium. The N-LIST project provides access to e-resources to students,researchers and faculty from colleges and other institutions. The authorized users from colleges can now access e-resources and download articles required by them directly from the publisher's website once they are duly authenticated as authorized users through servers deployed at the INFLIBNET Centre.

Shodhganga

The Shodhganga@INFLIBNET Centre provides a platform for research students to deposit their Ph.D. theses and make it available to the entire scholarly community in open access. The repository has the ability to capture,index, store, disseminate and preserve Electronic Thesis and Dissertations submitted by the researchers. Others details of INFLIBNET are available on its website http://www.inflibnet.ac.in

4.4.2 DELNET

The DELNET was started at the India International Centre Library in January1988 and was registered as a society in 1992. It was initially supported by the National Information System for Science and Technology (NISSAT),subsequently supported by the National Informatics Centre and the Department of Culture, Government of India. It has been established with the prime objective of promoting resource sharing among the libraries through the development of a network of libraries.

It aims to collect, store, and disseminate information besides offering computerized services to users, to coordinate efforts for suitable collection development and also to reduce unnecessary duplication wherever possible.The DELNET provides an array of facilities including e-mail to its member libraries,both institutional and associate institutional members.

Services

- **Database Development**

    DELNET has developed databases of different kinds of material, e.g.,books, periodicals, theses, experts, etc. which provide various services.

- **Inter Library Loan and Document Delivery Services**

    DELNET offers Inter Library Loan & Document Delivery Services to its member libraries. ILL requests can be registered online for books. For the resources not available in the union catalogues and journal articles,requests can be sent to DELNET through E-mail.

Referral Service

DELNET maintains a referral centre which provides reference facilities to Networking and participating libraries. This also looks after the access to the central databases and provides prompt replies.

Other details of DELNET are available at its website http://delnet.nic.in/

ACTIVITIES 4.1

1. Visit the website of INFLIBNET and list its services.

2. Prepare a list of libraries in your city participating in DELNET.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.4

Match the following statement

a) Metropolitian Network   1. University Campus Library Network

b) Local Area Network   2. Calcutta Library Network

c) Developing Library Network   3. ADINET

d) INFLIBNET   4. DELNET

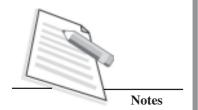e) Ahemdabad Library Network   5. Information and Library Network

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

● Resource sharing is an important activity of libraries. No library can think of satisfying its users on its own. It has to depend on other libraries. Resource Sharing was difficult to conceptualize and opertationalize prior to the developments in ICT. Networks have connected libraries and there are a number of library networks varying in scope and specialization.

● INFLIBNET is one such example in India. It was set up by UGC for the academic and research community in the country. It provides remote access to global literature in all fields to its users. Its persistent efforts have resulted into creating varied databases which is continuing with the latest being Shodhganga that includes these submitted to Indian universities.

● DELNET is another network that is providing services to users across the globe. Starting as a metropolitan library network for Delhi, it has spread its wings to libraries in different countries. It maintains a union catalogue of the participating libraries and provides access to their holdings to the members. It also has other specialized services and provides training programmes on topics/areas related to developments in library and information science.

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- With resource sharing and networking, we can pool together all resources of libraries, resources of all universities, colleges, research institutions, various departments and also the resources of individuals. It will be possible for us to acquire a greater number of information sources taken together in all the libraries in the country. These can inter-connect various category of users.

It is, therefore, assumed and expected that in order to have quick access by educated or creative member of the society to whatever is happening in their own country or the world over, networks are considered as a boon.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Describe briefly the importance of library cooperation.

2. Explain in detail the activities and services of DELNET or INFLIBNET.

3. Discuss the advantages of resource sharing networks.

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

4.1

1. True

2. False

3. True

4.2

1. Intellectual

2. Geographical

4.3

1. Energy

2. National

4. 4

1. (a) - (2)

   (b) - (1)

   (c) - (4)

   (d) - (5)

   (e) - (3)

TERMS:

The terms covered in this lesson which require further explanation are given below in an alphabetic order. The learner is required to explain each term.

ILL:

LAN:

Library Cooperation:

Library Networks:

Resource Sharing:

WAN:

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