CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
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6.1 Mission and objectives

The study is concerned here with the use of information technology (IT) and its application to library situations and can easily say that the entire philosophy of librarianship has been recasted. Information has not remained a ‘process’ or a ‘commodity’ freely available, it costs; in today’s ambience it can be sold like other things. Librarians will, therefore, have to be cost-conscious, balance their needs and alternative means of satisfying them. In other words, it is a movement from the purely philanthropic to the market place. Librarianship is at the cross-roads, a watershed, at which we find ourselves today.

It is in this context that networking, resource sharing and all other aspects should be studied. India is still far behind in exploiting IT for library use, though (of late) there is a general awareness of the gap that separates her from other advanced countries. Information is an important resource whose potential in all walks of life is undebatable and since in these days of everflowing cascade of information from all directions, no library can afford to be self-sufficient (it never was even in days past), which calls for resource sharing as a means for overcoming the shortfall.

Thus, the necessity of networking is obvious and librarians in Gujarat have realised the need for introducing computer applications in their library operations, information handling, to provide effective and efficient services to end-users.

What resource sharing is, known to all, it is the ‘how of it’ or the modus operandi that matters. It is also obvious that large scale information activities envisage pulling of resources, informational, financial, managerial, existing among number of institutions. Of course, in the nature of things, there can not be any uniform prescriptions, but some salient points do emerge today, however, thanks to information technology (IT), it is possible.
to have large networks, with on-line access, where information is shared world-wide. This, in essence, is resource sharing as is understood today. Here, it is necessary to draw a line between purely commercial undertaking and sharing of resources between institutions having similar goals, where the basic premise would, in the scheme of things, be to make large fund of information available to participants at a minimum cost. The key point to keep in mind here is the problem between autonomous participants-funding for their specialised (unique) needs on the one hand, and the resources that should minister to the wider needs of a cooperative structure, on the other. This calls for an attempt to strike a neat balance between conflicting pulls.

Librarians of today, will have to have a wider range of skills from management to marketing, from (information) technology to information processing, and as a result, their training must of necessity will have to be equally wide-ranging, that is to say, they will have to come out as information experts. Information technology (IT) should, therefore, be seen not as a challenge (Line Maurice, 1988) but an opportunity, not as a threat to his profession as some librarians may naturally react to the situation that is developing since a decade or two, but as a widening of the scope of their activities, which can metamorphose them into information providers, educators, mediators, leaders in information transmission, in the right sense of these terms. It may also be appropriate to note what Line Maurice has so aptly put it “There is an apparent belief on the part of some people that most scholarly literature has little if any value, that only that scholarship which can be applied to industrial or business purpose deserved any encouragement whatever, and that, therefore, by implication most of the contents of most libraries are of little ultimate value. This opens up much broader questions of the value set by the community on education and science with which I have no time to deal here. I would say that in the final analysis our belief in scholarship, in intellectual creativity, in knowledge and in libraries as resources of knowledge is an act of faith. Without these things a country is enormously impoverished, intellectually and culturally, and is likely to consist in the long term of narrow-minded, short-visioned people concerned with survival and profit and the profit too is likely to be short-lived”.
6.2 Budget

The general trend in the participating libraries as observed is that the budget allocation (yearly) is hardly sufficient to meet their acquisition needs for both books and periodicals. Not only that, the library is normally given a low priority as compared with other departments of the parent institution. Though the Parry Committee\(^3\) recommends that the university library should receive six percent of the university's total budget and the recommendations of the Radhakrishnan\(^4\) and Kothari Commissions\(^5\), as also the UGC Library Committee\(^6\) are also in line with these recommendations, no institutional document makes formal stipulations in these behalf.

There should be a separate and a balanced budget for these libraries in Gujarat. The share of the library, that is six percent of total budget of the parent organisation as recommended by various Committees and Commissions and endorsed by UGC should be accepted as rational. Budget fluctuations from year to year should be eliminated. This factor is very critical in the resource sharing and library network programmes. Increase in the library budget should be in proportion to the overall increase in the parent institution’s budget. Zero-based budgeting approach, should now find favour with administrators of the organisations.

6.2.1 Expenditure on books and periodicals

It has been seen that the expenditure on books and periodical publications accounts for almost 100 percent of the total expenditure on teaching, training, and research materials in all these libraries, except few important libraries, namely, ATIRA, Ahmedabad, CSMCRI, Bhavnagar, GV, Ahmedabad, IPR, Ahmedabad, MSU, Vadodara, NIOH, Ahmedabad, PRL, Ahmedabad and SAC, Ahmedabad, where 2 to 3 percent of their expenditure is spent on the library resource in other physical forms as well. Budget allocation on periodical publications has shown a consistent increase over the years in all these libraries in Gujarat. In the absence of any norms, the budget allocation of all these libraries has not only been inadequate but has also been fluctuating from year to year. Books and periodicals alone consume almost the entire library
budget. The trend is towards maximum spending on the latter (periodicals) which we discussed it in detail in para 4.1.1. This unhealthy trend has starved the libraries of equally important resource materials available in other physical forms like non-print document materials such as CD-ROMs, microcard, microfilm, microform, microfiche, etc. Since in days to come CDs, Internet, and the electronic media, will dominate. These libraries would have also to develop a two-pronged strategy too.

The sharing of information sources, irrespective of their physical form, is the only choice available with the libraries for better utilisation of the limited funds. The practice of spending the entire budget on books and periodicals alone, should be stopped. The increasing trend of spending more and more on the subscription of periodical publications should also be arrested. Expenditure on other resource material in various forms should be considered instead.

6.2.2 Library collections

Data furnished in Table 4.16 reveals the true multi-disciplinary nature of subjects available in these libraries in Gujarat. It is difficult to group different subjects into various broad-subjects. This being so, and for the sake of arriving at some rationale, a broad subject-wise break down as per Sardar Patel University Library, V.V.Nagar, categorisation was adopted which suits by and large to all these libraries. The other reason for using this approach was conveniently to arrive at some concrete and realistic findings. Broad subject-wise analysis of the book collection of these libraries as discussed in para 4.1.5 and also shown in Table 4.17, shows the strength of various broad-subjects represented in the book collection of these libraries in a consolidated manner. So far as periodical collection is concerned and discussed in detail in para 4.1.1, varies from library to library.

The data under various heads identified for resource sharing among these libraries in Gujarat has been analysed in para 4.1.7. In the area of acquisitions, duplicate subscription to periodicals among these libraries has been analysed and suitable suggestions regarding sharing of such subscriptions have been put forth based as they are on their preferred and
priority areas in the case of expensive ones. The data analysis as reported under paras 4.1.3 and 4.1.4 indicated that these libraries would be saving Rs.112 lakh annually if they considered sharing of the expensive periodical subscription alone. Further analysis of duplication of expensive periodicals revealed that by sharing of such common subscriptions, these libraries would save Rs.133 lakh annually. These savings are substantial. Similarly other facets identified for sharing under acquisitions were, a) high-cost reference material, b) databases in CD-ROMs and other magnetic media, c) audio-visual material, d) microfilm, etc. Depending on the strength of the existing library collections, and the present and future teaching, training and research programmes, it should be appropriate if all these 14 participating libraries develop their existing acquisition policies to ensure consistent and comprehensive collection development of resource materials in their preferred or priority areas. In view of multi-disciplinary nature of the subject available in these libraries, it is necessary to develop a balanced and up-to-date collection and also other forms of resource materials necessary for supporting teaching, training, and research programme.

7.2.3 Resource sharing: a way out

Resource sharing seems to be the only way out, in the present environment of financial stringency, to meet the demands of the end-users, particularly research and academic, and to improve the library service further in all these fourteen libraries and information centres in Gujarat.

All these libraries in Gujarat, with their limited financial resources, face serious difficulties in managing the enormous information flow generated in print and non-print document media. It has, therefore, become imperative as noted earlier for these libraries to share the resources and organise services on a co-operative basis to satisfy collectively the information needs of their respective users. In view of the similarity in the goals, objectives and activities of these libraries and the facilities now offered by the information technology, library resource sharing through networking, is an appropriate solution to insure better coverage and optimum utilisation of limited resources.
Chapter 4 presents a detailed analysis of the data under various heads identified and necessity for resource sharing among these participating libraries. In the area of acquisition, the data on duplicate subscription to periodicals among all these libraries have been analysed and suitable recommendations regarding sharing expensive periodical subscription based on their preferred or priority areas have been put forth in the case of expensive ones as discussed in detail in paras 4.1.3 and 4.1.4 and also shown in Tables 4.11, 4.12, 4.13, 4.14 and 4.15.

The foregoing discussion suggests that the information technology can influence these libraries in many fruitful ways by providing technological tools for document delivery, such as CD-ROMs, multi-media PCs, on-line catalogue search, bibliographic services and the use of Internet. Moreover, advances in IT will make them (all these participating libraries) perceive a global system in which all information handling activity takes place in the electronic mode.

6.3 Library computerisation activities

Library computerisation activities are no longer a luxury but a necessity for efficient functioning of library resource sharing and networking programme, and it is essential to equip the participating libraries with adequate computing resources. Participating libraries should, without any further delay, develop catalogues of their holdings and other databases in machine readable form. Working with a PC-based, single-user and stand-alone computer system and library software will not work in the resources sharing and a networking programme. The participating libraries should, therefore, adopt integrated and compatible library automation systems and softwares, capable of working in multi-user and network environment as discussed in detail in para 4.7. Automation, Internet connection and establishment of a website for these libraries will widen the use of library.

6.4 Library database activities

A database is not a function, but library computerisation rests on a database comprising a number of data files. These libraries have partially or fully
been computerised. Some of these libraries, namely, IPR, Ahmedabad, PRL, Ahmedabad, SAC, Ahmedabad are also able to access national and international on-line database system and have been operating for the last 6-7 years and they are also using e-mail services as well as Internet search facilities on their own computer and logon. Once the system will be fully operational into a network programme all these libraries in Gujarat will be able to access database services such as i) subject search, ii) retrospective searches, iii) author and title, iv) simple user inter-face (OPAC), v) local national and international database access, vi) non-bibliographic information, vii) SDI, viii) referral service, ix) CAS, x) e-mail, xi) servicing database on CD-ROMs, xii) abstract of articles, xiii) book review, and xiv) bulletin boards.

It is very important at this stage that bibliographical databases and union catalogues are developed for publications in Indian language using GIST Technology. DELNET has made a beginning in this regard and we hope participating libraries would like to use this technology for creating database of their books and periodicals publications in Gujarati as well as Hindi language which constitute a very less percentage of their total collection individually as discussed in detail in para 4.1.1. But, still improvement is needed due to various permutations and combinations problems in converting to other languages using GIST technology. This problem will get solved in due course in India. Meanwhile database in English language can be created easily as has been done in almost all these libraries as discussed in para 4.3 and also shown in Table 4.20.

6.5 Technical processing

In the area of technical processing, substantial savings could be effected if the processing data (classification number, catalogue data, and the subject headings) are made available, on-line or off-line, to the participating libraries as and when any new document is added to their respective databases. Such an activity will not only relieve these libraries of unnecessary duplicate processing tasks but would also ensure uniformity and standardisation in processing activities. In view of the wide variations in classification schemes used, catalogue codes followed, as well as in the
subject headings lists used (in all these libraries), they should agree to follow an uniform standard discussed in detail in para 4.6. This is an essential requirement for the resource sharing exercise to be successful. It will also ensure optimum benefits from the library network programme. Doing so in one shot is not that easy. Following the examples of the West, in such situations, one of the ways is to decide a cut-off year, and then to process documents as per jointly agreed upon methods and procedures and adopt the "Principle of Osmosis" for the rest. In deciding upon such issues, the decisions already taken by the existing national important networks such as INFLIBNET, CALIBNET, DELNET, etc. will have to be taken into consideration.

Participating libraries should follow mutually agreed upon, uniform standard for cataloguing and subject indexing for their documents. "Principle of Osmosis” should be followed for these purpose.

6.6 Tools to facilitate library network and services

The success of a resource sharing programme largely depends on fast and reliable documents database search, retrieval, and document delivery systems. All participating libraries should, therefore, be suitably equipped with a computer hardware, heavy duty photocopiers, microfilm-reader-printers, fax machines, CD-ROMs and other such equipment as discussed in para 4.7 and also shown in Table 4.26 to facilitate fast document search, retrieval, and transmission. These libraries should also be allowed to avail of such services as speed post, courier, computer mediated communication, etc. for quick and efficient information communication and document delivery system.

6.7 Networking

In view of such factors like, status of computerisation, status of library database activities, service available, technical processing, technical manpower and infrastructure facilities, which we discussed in paras 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.6, the objective could be fulfilled by offering various library network services as discussed in detail in para 4.5. They are: a) catalogue-
based services, b) data-based services, c) inter-library loan services backed up by a fast document delivery system, d) collection development i.e. acquisitions and assistance in selection and procurement, e) communication-based services, f) maintenance of authority files, and g) information standards and specifications for the input of resource material. However, for effective and efficient implementation of this library networking programme, the various essential pre-requisites are:

a) availability (in participating libraries) of compatible computers (hardware as well as softwares) of a very high grade as shown in Table 4.26,

b) computer mediated communication facilities (modems for e-mail, etc.) to be developed as discussed in Tables 4.26 and 4.27,

c) standard communication network protocols for computer-to-computer linkages must be established as suggested in Table 4.27,

d) computer node responsibilities and configuration versus network responsibilities and configuration must be developed as discussed in para 4.7 and also shown in Tables 4.26 and 4.27,

e) level of computerisation of library operations and services,

f) methods, codes and procedures followed in developing machine readable catalogues and other databases of their library holdings,

g) possession of sharable resources,

h) willingness to make a commitment to sharing,

i) planned mechanism for collaborative use,

j) acceptance of multilateral decision-making and multidirectional service among all these libraries,
k) precise understanding of the use of collection,
l) bibliographical apparatus to permit adequate access,
m) as rapid a delivery system as the clientele is willing to pay for,
n) delegation of network authority:
   i) power to purchase in a coordinated fashion;
   ii) administrative functions assuring consistent service.

This would necessarily involve agreements (in writing) among all these participating libraries in the networking activity. The agreement should include following items:

a) share currently owned materials/documents with protocols, limitations and priorities carefully spelled out as has been discussed in paras 4.1.7, 4.6 and 4.7,
b) acquisition policies ensuring consistent development of holdings to avoid redundancy as discussed in para 4.1.7,
c) bibliographical control through standardisation as discussed in para 4.6,
d) fixing of loan period/renewals/return of documents/payment for lost materials and other "house keeping" chores,
e) initiation of training programmes as discussed in para 4.9.

These agreements need to be ratified at the highest administrative level and updated when necessary. It would be a sound practice to take the personnel into full confidence who will be required operate library network successfully. One other requirement that must be met is the formulation of a plan for staff training in the philosophy of library network and the techniques needed to make it work.
6.7.1 Networking in a phased manner

It is necessary for the participating libraries to go for networking in three phases, each phase covering the appropriate tier. Once the network starts operating linkages with other local, regional, national and international online databases will be established with access easily available.

“0” phase

At these stage e-mail service, through leased-line modem for off-line request can be started among some of the participating libraries, namely, ATIRA,Ahmedabad, CSMCRI,Bhavnagar, GV,Ahmedabad, IPR, Ahmedabad, MSU,Vadodara, NIOH, Ahmedabad, PRL, Ahmedabad, SAC, Ahmedabad and SPU,V.V.Nagar who are having their own Internet connection facilities. These phase creates a platform on which other libraries will depend by producing/enhancing their hardware, software and other resources.

phase “1”

A better intermediate networking solution can be proposed in “phase 1”. It can be a basic leased line network with appropriate system access software with the file transfer mail utility to facilitate exchange of information among them.

In phase 1 the following steps can be taken :-

i) since most of these libraries are having their own facilities, it would be in the fitness of things to develop computer culture in these libraries,

ii) setting up of a central host,

iii) compilation of central host,
iv) procurement of hardware and software for library activities,

v) networking of central host and other nodes for off-line queries,

vi) the central host may start creating document database. Automation of retrospective conversion based on MARC which can be merged on a selective basis in the central host.

phase “2”

i) conversion of off-line to on-line query for users of all participating libraries having hardware and software setup to connect this network programme,

ii) updating and maintenance of union-catalogues,

iii) in this phase training of libraries’ professional staff should also be necessary at all stages.

phase “3”

i) creation of union catalogues,

ii) creation and maintenance of thesaurus and authority file.

6.8 Specialised information and library network products and services

Expenditure on the servicing of the documents to target user groups is equally significant. It is more expensive when undertaken individually and normally less expensive when taken up jointly. It is so not only in terms of cost, but also in terms of scope, comprehensiveness, coverage, speed, etc. The services provided by all these libraries have been discussed in para 4.4, the scope and utility of which could, therefore, be strengthened/enhanced through library networking, may include the following products and services:
a. catalogue-based services
   i. shared cataloguing of books, periodicals and non-book material,
   ii. union-catalogue of books, periodicals and non-book material,
   iii. on-line catalogue access for shared cataloguing and location identification,
   iv. catalogue production in card, book, magnetic tape/floppy, CD-ROM form, book processing and preparation,

b. database services
   i. bibliographic database service,
   ii. retrospective searches, SDI, current awareness services,
   iii. database of non-bibliographic information,

c. document supply services
   i. inter-library loan request processing,
   ii. document delivery (fax/non-fax),

d. collection development
   i. acquisition and assistance in selection and procurement,

e. communication based services
   i. electronic mail,
   ii. transfer/receive messages;
   iii. bulletin board view/update bulletin board;
   iv. academic communication through electronic mail, bulletin board, file transfer, computer/audio/video conferencing, etc.

f. maintenance of authority files and
g. approved standards for the input of resource material

It is thus that these services and access to all the participating libraries in Gujarat by pooling their library resources, facilities, and expertise to generate various specialised information products and services in their respective area can be promptly made available.

6.8.1 Service stages of library network

Services may be started in the following three stages:

First stage

e-mail (store and forward messaging through computer network), bulletin board, file transfer (transfers files from a remote computer), fax transmission and referral services are some of the facilities that can be started, once the library systems are inter-connected through reliable electronic communication channel. It will be good if in the first stage a high grade e-mail software like X.400 is used by these libraries until access to catalogue is made on-line from one library to another through the library network,

Second stage

in the second stage, catalogue and other database based services such as catalogue search, catalogue production, shared cataloguing, database searches, union catalogues and collection development can be taken up. The conversion of union catalogue into compact disc (CD) and the use of such products could also be taken up eventually,

Third stage

services like CAS, SDI, indexing, abstracting, and bibliographic could be taken up in the third stage. It should be the aim of the network finally to link all the operations of the participant libraries, including circulation and acquisition, within the network so that users get a clear picture of the
document/s needed by them, interconnection with other networks/databases in the country or abroad to facilitate data access and input could also be taken up at this stage.

6.9 Network topology, model and connectivity

In an environment where communication facilities do not have high width, library activities are not fully computerised and a local database is not available except few like ATIRA, Ahmedabad, CSMCRI, Bhavnagar, GV, Ahmedabad, IPR, Ahmedabad, NIOH, Ahmedabad, PRL, Ahmedabad and SAC, Ahmedabad, the selection of a network topology plays an important role.

Since centralised database approach, star topology/dedicated network has its own advantages (which DELNET has also preferred), this network should be selected here too, for specific reasons discussed in detail in para 5.1. However, the topology for this network must be evolved because there are several factors like funds, trained personnel, hardware, software and communication facilities that continually influence its growth.

As discussed in para 5.2 that since most of these libraries are located at a distance from one another Wide Area Network (WAN) environment may be more effective and efficient for a given purpose. So a Centralised database approach, Star topology/dedicated library network should be preferred for designing a model for these information and library network in which central host will be more responsible rather than all other nodes/central of participating libraries in this network as discussed in para 5.3.1.

So far as connectivity of all these university libraries and information centres with a central host is concerned, it can be developed and established in a phased manner as discussed in para 5.3. Once the network is operational, all the libraries' activities discussed in detail in para 4.3 and the library network services mentioned in para 4.5 will be available, functioning in an integrated library network system which can be accessed and used on their own PCs and log on all over Gujarat.
6.10 Computer hardware and software aspects

As discussed in detail about computer hardware as well as software in para 4.7 it is necessary that the participating libraries should have computer hardware to automate their library activities. The choice of the hardware as well as software, that would be most suitable for the purpose and also economical at the same time, will be crucial at the planning stage. It will be ideal if all these participating libraries in Gujarat are having the same library software (i.e. LibSys) as suggested and discussed in detail in para 4.7.

Recommendations in terms of compatible computer hardware, integrated library automation softwares, network topology, uniform standards and specifications, development of technical manpower, network policy and governance, etc. have been discussed in detail in paras 4.7, 4.7.1, 4.7.2, 4.7.2.1, 4.7.2.2, 5.1, 4.5.7, 4.6, 4.9 and 5.4.

6.11 Uniform standards and specifications for the input of resource material

Standards are necessary for compatibility, exchange, economy in costs and efforts in the library network. In 1948, Ranganathan examined the issue of standardisation, and its advantages, the principal advantage being uniformity. The adoption of different bibliographic standards creates compatibility problems and that acts as a major barrier in the use of bibliographic and related information. Therefore, participating libraries in this library network would have to follow certain procedures and practices without which the resources held by them can not be effectively and meaningfully shared. Uniform standards and specifications for library automation and network in specific areas have been discussed in detail in para 4.5.7.

6.12 Technical manpower

The Table 4.30 shows the strength of the library staff which includes both professionals as well as semi-professionals which varies from library to
library. Then again, the proportion among the categories is not well maintained, indicating a glaring absence of relevant norms and the situation is allowed to continue for a long time. Because of this the library resources in almost all these libraries are underutilised. Adequate provision for professional staff will bring a significant change in effective library and information services. Non-professional tasks are now performed by professionals. This is not an economical proposition. The growth of library staff has not been in proportion to the growth of resources and services of these libraries. In some libraries, particularly in six important national institutions, there is a marginal or no growth in the staff for decades, whereas in other libraries, particularly in all the eight university libraries, the growth has been negative and the most remarkable thing is that the universities have even failed to appoint competent librarians in most cases, as a result of which, there is lack of leaders to further the activities of the libraries. Moreover, library professionals do not enjoy parity of status and pay-scale with their counterparts on the teaching side. There are wide variations in the designations, salary scales offered, and the qualifications of the professional staff (in participating libraries). However, some of the professional staff, including the librarians and the information scientists, have undergone specialised training programme in computer applications. As the Table 4.31 shows only 52 (18.12%) out of 287 total library staff (including professionals and semi-professionals) of these libraries have had their hands-on training programme in library automation, which percentage is very low, and needs strengthening.

The success of the network depends mostly on manpower rather than on hardware and software. The handling of various network functions would require well-qualified and trained personnel in sufficient number as emphasised by the Working Group on Modernisation of Library Services and Informatics for the Seventh Plan period (1985-1990), Working Group of the INFLIBNET, CONPOLIS, and the CDELIS report. So the efforts should be made to have adequate provision for training of library personnel and provision for information specialists for information analysis, evaluation, consolidation and repackaging. Professional competency is necessary for a variety of emerging skills, latest IT methods and techniques and which should be ensured through continuing educational as well as
training programmes. With growing usage of IT, it is essential to train library professionals and information scientists and its networking personnel in innovative ideas, competence, knowledge structure and technological level so that it can fit with the users' needs. Therefore, these libraries should make the training of networking personnel their immediate concern. They may be trained locally or be deputed to attend the latest training programmes run by NISSAT, INSDOC, DRTC, ILA, IASLIC, IATLIS, NIC, the Department of Electronic (DOE) and many other government institutions which have been supporting the training of library personnel. They should also attend workshops, seminars, conferences, exhibitions, etc at national and international level to broaden their vision and expertise.

6.13 Library organisation as proposed

In view of the: i) objective of these libraries; ii) range of library activities and services performed; and iii) staff available, the organisational set up of these libraries should be such that no ambiguity exists between the technical services, aimed at acquisition and organisation of information, and user's services, aimed at dissemination of information. Accordingly, the organisational structure for all these libraries should be the one suggested in Figures 6.1 and 6.2.

6.14 Network policy and governance

Plato once said, 'the beginning is the most important part of any work' and so it is with building a sound library network system, which begins with analysing risks with a view to ensuring smooth functioning at all levels, necessitating in its turn, a strong controlling mechanism functioning under a central host related to the monitoring of the network activities, backed by sufficient funding, upgrading and replacements, requisite maintenance as also security and backup of data protection, as discussed in detail in paras 5.4, 5.4.1, 5.4.2, 5.4.3 and 5.4.4.
Organisational Structure for University Libraries

Vice-chancellor
(As a Chairperson)

Library Advisory Committee
(Policy Matters)

Librarian
(As a Secretary)

Technical Services

Users' Services

Library Administration

Acquisition  Periodicals  Technical  Automation

Circulation  Library Cooperation  Ref. & Inf. Services  Documentation

Reprography  CAS  SDI  On-line/Off-line Inf. Services

External Relation  HRD  Security & Maintenance

Figure 6.1
Organisational Structure for Information Centres

Director (As a Chairperson)

Librarian (As a Secretary)

Library Advisory Committee (Policy Matters)

Technical Services

- Acquisition
- Periodicals
- Technical
- Automation

Users' Services

- Circulation
- Library Cooperation
- Ref. & Inf. Services
- Documentation

- Reprography
- CAS
- SDI
- On-line/Off-line Inf. Services

- External Relation
- HRD
- Security & Maintenance

Figure 6.2
6.15 Conclusions

To achieve optimum benefit from the library networking process, it may be concluded that -

there is no simple formula or the 'one right way' to go about networking of these libraries. It is a long process of consultation and negotiation, made particularly difficult, on the one hand, by unpredictability and rapid change in the elements (both technical and human) that make up the information and library network, and inertia, resistance to change within the library, balance and judgment required on the other. With a view to meeting the current and future needs of end-users of the participating libraries, the network must be able to adapt to realities of the past and present, while keeping an eye on the possible changes that may come a boat in future. The network is the only logical way to connect and manage countless computer devices, applications and services (information) to match users' needs. It must provide new type of interfaces and efficient network applications which should, in their turn, enable those concerned to envision a global framework wherein all information handling takes place in a fully electronic mode. Absorption of these technologies will improve the skills both of library professionals and users, and enhance the communication process providing faster and easier access to knowledge resources. Therefore, the choice is definitely between opening up, sharing or just shutting the doors and working in once own capsule and be doomed. To recognise the need of the hour and arrive at a judicious decision, the future must belong to the participants, in as much as, the development so far has been in the right direction in these libraries. The status of resource sharing revealed in the study gives a positive feedback discussed in paras 4.10 and 4.11, indicating the possibility of a forthcoming growth potential. The success in application of the new technology is linked to imagination, forward look as also necessary enthusiasm in this behalf, and paucity of funds or technical capability can be surmounted if so desired. What is wanting is the support of those who matter (authorities concerned) backed by an equally vigorous crusade by library professionals.
From the survey and its analysis it can be concluded that

a. information and library network does have a positive impact on providing cost-effective and better quality products and services while sharing all available information among the participating libraries stands confirmed,

b. rationalisation of acquisition of library resources through network will be much more easy and possible at all levels among participating constituents stands confirmed,

c. there will be discontinuation of the subscription to several costly periodicals subscribed every year by these participating libraries will continue stands confirmed,

d. information and library network of the participating university libraries and information centres will give additional benefits at lower operational costs, while at the same time, providing optimum use of national resources stands confirmed.

6.16 Suggestions for further research

Since the basis of the survey conducted is rather limited area-wise as also in scope and the methodology adopted being one in common use in such undertakings, it should be admitted that though the results may not be academically fully satisfactory or economically viable, they do provide some useful guidelines for planning and implementing library and information networks. Even (otherwise) admitting that there is an urgent need for conducting studies of this type on different levels of the network before arriving at any generalisation regarding the positive impact of such networks in different functional areas, the present effort is one such step further in this direction.

It is, therefore, suggested that this study can be replicated on a relatively larger sample for establishing the correctness or adequacy of the results obtained with a view to arriving at a more dependable set of facts or
information because once the network gets going and is in operation, there will still be need for studying the networks' acceptance. Networks have a habit of changing when more terminals (PCs) are installed and new participants (users) come into the picture.

Moreover, the effect of library network as an independent variable in this study has been ascertained on one variable criterion i.e. products and services. In order to establish its effects on a more generalised scale, it is necessary to try certain other relevant variables, such as achievement, improvement and networks' acceptance at all levels.

Moreover,

a. a detailed study of books and periodicals use and the comparative costs of purchasing versus borrowing resource sharing,

b. behavioural studies leading to a deeper understanding of the attitude of administrators, authorities and professionals towards such a network,

c. deeper understanding of library users and their information seeking behaviour, and

d. the assessment of library networks and their impact on all concerned, at all levels of their activities, performance, etc. is also necessary for arriving at a comprehensive picture of the exercise which should ultimately prove, not only informative, but can adequately provide a model to be followed and that too convincingly.

References

2 Ibid., p. 311.