Chapter 2: Objective and Scope

2.1 Objective

The objective of this study is to survey the bibliographic and full-text databases produced and maintained in the country and to study their qualitative and quantitative parameters like scope, coverage, format, level of indexing, retrieval efficiencies, extent of use, and other relevant aspects and draw useful comparisons to the extent possible. The objective will also cover suggesting gaps in subject disciplines in which databases need to be developed.

2.2 Scope of the Study

Since a large number of organizations would have the potential to produce databases, even bibliographic and full-text databases, and it would not be worthwhile covering all such organizations/institutions, the scope of the study will cover only the academic institutions of higher learning like the top grade universities, IITs, etc., and research institutions (like those under DRDO, CSIR, ICMR, ISRO, ICSSR, ICHR, etc) and publishing organizations. Also, the study will cover only the bibliographic and full-text databases produced in India.

2.3 Limitations of the Study

Although the study aims to cover all the bibliographic and full-text databases in India, it has some limitations. The main limitations are briefly discussed below:

- **Less than complete coverage**

  Firstly, there is no source available at present giving a list of all the databases produced in the country. In the case of journals or periodicals, every such publication
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is to get registered with the Registrar of Newspapers of India (RNI) and so there is some sort of bibliographic control on periodicals, although many periodicals such as newsletters of some organizations and some less known journals are not registered with RNI. Similarly, in the case of books, as per the Delivery of Books Act, 1958, two copies of each book published in India are to be sent to four designated libraries, namely, the National Library, Kolkata; the Connemara Public Library, Chennai; the Central Library, Mumbai and the Delhi Public Library, Delhi. Thus, in this case also, there is some bibliographic control, although not completely practiced by all the publishers. But in the case of bibliographies, there is no such central registering authority and so it is very difficult to get to know the existence of some of the databases and whom to contact for knowing their existence. So, this study aims at covering the major academic and research organizations – both in public and private sectors – which are likely to be maintaining bibliographic and full-text databases.

- **Inadequate Response from the Database Producers**

  Even if all the database producers (bibliographic and full-text) are contacted with a questionnaire for getting the details, many of them wouldn’t respond in spite of serious follow-up, as happens with many surveys conducted in the country. Also, out of those responses received, the complete details may not be given which again constraints detailed analysis of data.

  However, since rigorous efforts have been made to get detailed information from almost all the important databases. The study is expected to provide a single-point information service for potential database users in India and abroad.
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- Subject-Coverage

The research and development organizations in Science and Technology and Social Sciences are actively involved in producing databases. Moreover, information regarding the databases on these two disciplines is likely to be available more systematically than in any other discipline like Humanities, Arts, etc. It is not possible to cover other areas in the study. The study therefore limits to databases produced in Science and Technology and in Social Sciences.

2.4 Hypothesis

1. Bibliographic and full-text databases are more prevalent in science and technology fields as compared to social sciences and humanities.

2. Full-text databases developed in the science and technology field in India are better in quality and coverage as per the evaluation on the basis of selective qualitative parameters.

2.5 Methodology

First, a list of academic and research organizations/institutions covered under the scope mentioned above, was compiled. Then the individual institutions were scrutinized to study, if any of them get merged with others or closed or scope changed. Thus, the list of institutions to be contacted was finalized. Simultaneously, literature survey was carried out to find out the standard qualitative parameters for evaluation of bibliographic and full-text databases including the standards issued by Indian and foreign standards bodies like Bureau of Indian Standards Organizations (BIS), International Standards Organisation (ISO), etc. After literature survey, a list of parameters was finalized which are relevant to the study. A questionnaire was then
dispatched to all the institutions/organizations listed in the final list and follow-up was done to get the filled-in questionnaire from as many institutions as possible. This data has been analyzed from different angles of the qualitative parameters and they have been rated in terms of ranking of individual databases. Then, conclusions have been drawn on what the data has revealed and suggestions were made for further qualitative improvements in the databases and on the gaps in subject areas or application fields in which databases need to be developed.