CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION
1.1 Introduction

Change is the law of nature. Access to information, despite number of limitations, has now changed its path in such a way that it can be accessed by users in any corner of the world. Access rather than ownership, has become a key consideration of the information resources. It is no more a property of an individual, a nation or a region but it has become a rivulet crossing all the borders. The widespread, electronic dissemination of information and its easy availability for users represents a revolution of thoughts in education and other sectors. No longer is access to information restricted to a fraction of the population, but is accessible to masses.

The emergence of the Internet has radically changed the generation, flow and utilization of information. A wide variety of information access tools like UseNet, World Wide Web, (File Transfer Protocol) FTP, Telnet, Electronic Mail (E-Mail), Internet Relay Chat (IRC); etc are available through the Internet. Among them the most important are the E-Mail and the World Wide Web or simply Web. Castro (2000) views WWW as the Gutenberg press of his times. Web is a massive source of 'digital information', stored in the form of web pages as opined by Soni and Soni (2002). A working definition of Web has been provided by Okin (2005) who describes this miraculous service as "an Internet based hypermedia initiative for global information sharing. It is a successful marriage of hypermedia with global computer nexus-internet as viewed by Shafi (1998).

Web has become a gateway for every subject to enter into the electronic era by providing information generated by different organizations, institutions, research centers, individuals, etc all over the world. A number of resources are available on the Web, browsable for sharing and accessing.

A wide variety of resources are enriching the Web day by day in the form of journals, books, research papers, conference proceedings, ETDs and a lot more. Even Tim Berners Lee, the master mind behind the Web did not know that his creation will dominate the whole Information Flow Market. Web resources are pointers to web pages that we can access with any Web browser (e.g.; Netscape, Mosaic and so on).
These are the most versatile kind of resources; available with images, sounds and links to other Web pages and even link us to other resources. In a layman’s language, a Web resource is a unit of replication on Web. It is an entity referenced by a URL. Typically, a resource corresponds to a single file. A Web resource may contain a set of logical URLs to refer other resources. Web resources are many things to millions of its users. These serve as a market place, art gallery, library community center, school, publishing house, subject gateway, directory, bibliography, paper report, article, Web log, and whatever else their authors wish them to be.

Web resources have been developing at a very fast rate from time to time in every discipline, including Social Sciences. The subjects under the umbrella of Social Sciences are expanding their scope with the passage of time, and this is only because of Web. Online journal providers like Emerald, JSTOR, Kluwer, Ingenta, Science Direct, New Jour (Electronic Journals and Newsletters), and many more are giving life to journals by making their debut online. Digital Libraries like California Digital Library, New Zealand Digital Library, and Australian Digital Library, Social Science Virtual Library (under the purview of The WWW Virtual Library); etc provide access to the contents of the books online now. Even search engines like Google have launched such programs like “Google Book Search” previously known as “Google Print”, to provide access to millions of online books. American Research Library has developed a database which provides access to journals and conference papers online in a wide variety of disciplines including Social Sciences. Even ETD repositories like Virginia Tech, and the participants of Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (NDLTD) provide access to works of scholarly minds worldwide.

With the inception of new resources on the Web, it is difficult for a common user to avail their opportunities properly. Even with the aid of search engines, meta search engines or directories, one is lost in the vast ocean of information resources. But to grab the right information, at right time and to the right user, subject gateways have come up with a promise as they provide filtered, classified and indexed information. They provide highly evaluated resources and contribute to teaching, learning and research in a definite subject area and help in systematic resource discovery. Campbell (2000) characterizes subject gateways as a Web based
mechanism for accessing a collection of high quality, evaluated resources identified to support research in a particular subject discipline. Commenting on subject gateways, Koch (2000) deems them as Internet services which apply a rich set of quality measures to support systematic resource discovery. This service is based on resource description.

Thus, it has become necessary to trace the growth and development of Web resources to understand their landmarks, trends and forecast future developments. The study is undertaken for tracing the growth and development of Web resources in select fields of Social Sciences. Further, the study also helps in designing a model subject gateway for providing links to quality resources.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The theme of the thesis reads: “Development of Web Resources in Select Fields of Social Sciences with a view to Design a Model Subject Gateway”

Millions of Web pages and Websites on Internet are appearing. Out of them, a large number of resources are useful for Social Science research and development. Day by day, these resources increase at a very fast rate on the Web. The study encompasses the development of Web resources with greater emphasis on online journals and online books. The growth trend of Web resources is also traced with projections for future also.

Various Web resource providers are analyzed and their features and quality of resources are also observed in order to organize them in scientific way to evolve a "Model Subject Gateway".
1.2.1 Terms used in the statement of Problem

1.2.1.1 Development. Encarta Word English Dictionary comments on development (2008 a) as the process of changing and becoming stronger, larger, or more impressive, successful, or advanced. However, Cambridge Advanced Learner’s dictionary remarks on development (2008 b) as a process when someone or something grows or changes and becomes advanced.

In view of the Web resources, the research undertaken traces the development of various Web resources in select fields of Social Sciences. Their chronological, geographical and subject wise development on the Web is mapped out.

1.2.1.2 Web. Web as opined by Gillies and Cailliau (2000) is like an encyclopedia, a telephone directory, a record collection, a video shop, and speaker’s corner all rolled in to one and accessible through many computers. In the context of Encyclopedia Britannica Concise, Web (2008) is the leading information exchange service of Internet. However, Web has been visualized by McIntosh and Turnbull (1997) as a system for finding information on the Internet, in which documents are connected to other documents using hypertext links.

The research taken in hand highlights the various resources of the Web that have given new life to the resources in Social Sciences.

1.2.1.3 Resources (2006). Encyclopedia Britannica Concise in the context of Web, views resource (2008) as any type of file stored on a server, such as a Web page, a text file, a graphics file, or an application program. The concept of resource is primitive in the Web architecture, and is used in the definition of its fundamental elements. The term was first introduced to refer to targets of Uniform Resource Locators (URLs).

The study focuses on the various Web resources which have enriched the Web since its dawn. Resources in the form of online
books, online journals, Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETDs), and online papers etc are studied carefully to trace their history and development. Their features are keenly observed to facilitate in deducing their growing trend. The foremost focus is on online journals and online books.

1.2.1.4 Select. A large number of subjects fall under the umbrella of Social Sciences. It is not possible to study the development of each and every subject in the present study. So, the subjects available in the select sources are chosen.

1.2.1.5 Fields. Fields vary from the traditional Social Science subjects; i.e.; Political Sciences, Economics, Public Administration; etc. to the emerging subjects like Women Studies, Hospitality, Tourism and Travel; etc. The study is confined to the fields which are incorporated in the sources consulted.

1.2.1.6 Social Sciences (2006) as commented by Encyclopedia Britannica Concise are any disciplines or branch of science that deal with the sociocultural aspects of human behaviour. However, Crystal (1993) identifies Social Sciences as a general term designating a number of disciplines such as Sociology, Economics, Political Science and Geography, which have explored various aspects of society- such as social structure, the market, power, and the spatial relations- through methods which are conventionally understood to be scientific.

One is aware of the snail pace of the Social Sciences in the past. But the Web has revolutionized every discipline and Social Sciences have also fallen in the trap. Web technology has boosted the Social Sciences and these are now trying to unveil themselves and embrace new areas and new facets of life and processes.

1.2.1.7 View is what can be seen in a range of vision. The research taken in hand provides various views regarding the building of a model subject gateway after analyzing the growing trends in the Web resources and
their providers.

1.2.1.8 **Design** is used as both a noun and a verb. "Design" as a verb refers to the process of originating and developing a plan for a new object (machine, building, product, etc.). As a noun, "design" is used both for the final plan or proposal (a drawing, model, or other description), or the result of implementing that plan or proposal (the object produced).

The word design here highlights the steps for building of a model subject gateway. Keeping in view, the present study various views are given in order to develop a **Model Subject Gateway**. The views are drawn after analysing various subject gateways and other Web resource providers.

1.2.1.9 **Model** may refer to an abstract representation of an object or a system from a particular viewpoint. After the completion of the study a model view is given for the construction of a gateway that will suit the modern information needs of the users at the time of access and retrieval of information resources. The views for the development of a model gateway are generated after analysing various gateways and other Web resource providers.

1.2.1.10 **Subject.** Sharma (1996) identify subject as an organized or systematic body of ideas, whose extension and intension are likely to fall coherently within the field of interest and comfortably within the intellectual competence and the field of inevitable specialization of a normal person.

1.2.1.11 Web Masters define a **Subject Gateway** as a Web based mechanism for accessing a collection of high quality, evaluated resources identified to support research in a particular subject or discipline. (Campbell, 2000).
1.3 Objectives

The study aims at identifying the various Web resources in select fields of Social Sciences. The objectives set for the study are basically with regard to the following:

1.3.1 Explore the various Web resources in select fields of Social Sciences

1.3.2 Make a comparative study of Social Science Web resources with other disciplines

1.3.2 Study the growth and development of Web resources in select fields of Social Sciences chronologically

1.3.3 Trace the development of Web resources subject wise

1.3.4 Trace the geographic output of Web resources

1.3.5 Evaluate and organize different Web resources

1.3.6 Design a model subject gateway

1.4 Scope

It is not possible to consider each and every resource for study due to the vast boundaries of Web resources. Thus, the study in view of the exponential growth of Web resources is confined to the resources devoted to academic sector in general and online journals and online books in particular for being the representatives of the academic scholarly literature.

1.5 Methodology

The study was designed to cover select fields and sub fields of Social Sciences in a programmed way. It was followed by survey cum observation method to identify various Web resources by consulting different Web resource providers. A detailed study of the quality resources was undertaken and their growth and development was studied using Web related facilities (Digital Archives, Directories, and Digital Libraries etc.). The resources consulted for the study emphasize mainly on online journals and online books in view of the growth of these two resources on Web, and these two being the dictating resources. The sources selected were comprehensive
and exhaustive. The sources mentioned below were selected after a careful and intensive survey of literature. The sources were also consulted because of their valid authenticity by well recognized Institutions and their intense usage which was seen from the user statistics portion of their home pages.

The sources selected for the study were:

1. Project Muse (http://muse.jhu.edu/)
2. Directory Of Open Access Journals (http://www.doaj.org)
4. eScholarship Edition (http://www.escholarship.com)
5. Oxford Scholarship Online (http://www.oxfordscholarship.com)

The full information regarding the above mentioned sources is available in Chapter IV.

A brief introduction about the method followed for carrying out the study is given in the following paragraphs:

1.5.1 Chronological Development

Chronological development of Web resources was studied to help in understanding the escalation of Web resources year wise. The cumulative frequency helped to trace the growth of online journals and online books over the previous years. The data was collected from the sources selected for study. The online debut of the journals and books was extracted and arranged chronologically to trace the development. However, for tracing out the debut of online journals, the consulted databases provided the required data. The data about some journals couldn’t be traced out and was collected through mailing the editors of the respective online journals.

Due to highly confidential nature of information or non availability of data
the chronological output of online books couldn’t be traced out. Chronological output of online books from only one source “Oxford Scholarship Online” was available.

The online debut of some resources couldn’t be traced and were included in a separate group (NT). The future projection was also traced out by “Time Series Analysis” process using “Minitab Statistical Software”. The method of Time Series Analysis helped in visualizing the anticipated future of Web resources in Social Sciences.

1.5.2 Subject Wise Development

The study concentrates on the development of subjects in the Social Sciences family. The results were studied comparatively with each other to find dominance of the Social Science subjects in the Web resources family and identify subjects which show a slow or a steady growth.

The subjects were selected as per the classification policy adopted by the source agencies and the resources for which the subject content was not clear or not provided by the source agency, classification was done using “Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme”. (22nd Edition). The broader classes like 300, 310,320---390 were taken to develop a comparative outlook of the subjective growth in Social Sciences under the purview of Web resources.

1.5.3 Country Wise Development

Nations worldwide are showing a good trend in the arena of Web resources. The study exposes the geographical output towards Web resources in Social Sciences. The development of Web resources nation wise helped to mark geographical productivity towards the intensification and progress of Web resources. This helped to know about the developed and developing countries in the field of Web resources.

To achieve this objective “Ulrich’s Periodical Directory” was used to trace the nationality of journals. Furthermore, the editors of the journals were also mailed whose nationality couldn’t be traced out due to their non availability in Ulrichs
Periodical Directory. **SCOPUS** database was also consulted for locating the geographic output.

For tracing out the geographic output of books, world’s largest online catalogue “**World Cat**” devised by OCLC was consulted and the nationality was traced accordingly. Furthermore, the nationality of some books was also traced out by Google’s “**Book Search**” programme and from **Amazon** database.

However, the geographical output of some journals and books was not traceable and hence were put under a separate category, **NT (Not Traceable)**

### 1.5.4 Designing a Model Subject Gateway

For designing a model subject gateway various providers of Web resources and the resources were studied critically and the best features of them were studied more vigilantly, so that the information storage and retrieval processes and problems with precision and recall could be eliminated. The study lays more emphasis on the subject gateways in Social Sciences. The features of existing subject gateways were studied more exhaustively so that views could be generated in order to evolve a "**Model Subject Gateway**".

### 1.6 Standard Used for Citations and References

One is aware that the references and citations are an important part of the research, as they add value to the research work. For proving citations and references, **American Psychological Association Style (APA)** is used. Some examples of APA Style are:

**BOOK**

**CITATION**

(Busha & Harter, 1980)

Busha and Harter (1980)

**REFERENCE**

1.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

The data analyzed from various sources was first of all organized to help in recalling better results. The data was then given a tabular arrangement so that one could have a bird’s view while conferring with the data. For making the study more attractive and informative, the tabular data was supplemented with graphical representations. Further, the tubular data was complemented with a textual description of the conclusions drawn.

The information regarding the data collected and the criteria selected for the selection of the data can be fully scrutinized from Chapter V.

The data analysis was done with the following objectives in mind:

- To trace the chronological development of Web resources
- Sketch out the geographic output of Web resources
- Map out the subject development of Web resources
- Design a model Subject Gateway
REFERENCES


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