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INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The library consortium is not a new concept. For quite some time the library cooperatives have been working towards –

- Inter library lending
- Cooperative acquisition
- Cooperative cataloguing
- Shared library system
- Physical storage facilities
- Seminars/Training programmes

The development of consortia, in its new terminology in library and information services, has its footing from cooperative and coordinated collection development. The ground that made libraries to think of cooperative movement was due to meet the maximum information needs of the users at lesser investment (Goudar 2001). It was well-established fact that even the largest libraries hold not more than a fraction of the world’s literature. Early 1980s, the philosophy of collection management—overshadowed the idea of library interdependency. Again in early 1990s cooperative collection development nearly disappeared due to sharing of resources through fax, computer-communication facilities, and establishment of national information centers (Bostick, 2001). Majority of the national and international information centers started fee-based information service. International Centers like OhioLINK’s one among the major BLDSC started providing faster service due to full text database of
journals like ADONIS, downloading and forwarding through electronic communication (Sanville 2001). Late 1990s e-journals have increased. World's largest e-Book Consortia - Housed in World e-Book Library Multi-Terabyte server network is the world's largest digital archive more than 100,000+ PDF e-Books and e-Documents (NETLIBRARY, 2005). Surprisingly, the publishers, aggregators or subscription agencies all over the world mooted majority of the consortia, looking at budget constraints and that of the libraries. One important observation here is that spend less and access more principle has been consistently tried from the libraries although and continued even after the evolution of computer communication systems, the biggest initiative to accomplish this principle is “Open Access Initiative” (OAI) (Nfila and Darko-Ampem, 2002).

The consortia development in libraries is taking place in parallel to many other changes in the context of information communication technology. The rationale for consortia use is for better coordination and maximizing the access to information. Libraries from the day they started thinking of resource sharing among the libraries, struggling for effective formal agreement among the participants and with publishers or aggregators. Many consortia have perceived administrative inconvenience, and workload often wrenching changes in relationships, program development requirements, timing and ultimately program effectiveness.

Consortia, in its maturation stage, have obvious and serious lack of expertise, establishment of coordination and cooperation among the participant libraries and with the management of host organization. The host of the consortia, particularly, has the responsibility of consolidating the activities and conducting the cost-benefit analysis, developing suitable feedback system from the participating centers as well as users and on par updates with the technology/users expectation. There are many issues need to be considered while initiating consortia like - when is consortium
needed? Under what circumstances? Is it proper to force consortia? What guidance and definition are required? In fact, consortia need to heighten the sensitivity of relationship for improved resources access, communication and openness with each other.

The sophisticated computers and communication systems, suitable software tools and techniques and integration of information have broadened the demand and strengthened network-to-desktop information resources/services. However it needs structural-functional adaptation to new environmental challenges for boundary-spanning library services. The consortia initiators need to look at streams of problems, solutions, participants, and opportunities to foster collaborative realignments between organizations. It is also essential to work out suitable methods and systems for training and expertise development as a part of the consortia activities.

Most important functional convergence that library may face are technical, political, cultural, cognitive, and economic aspects of consortia. It is very difficult to scientifically find out the complexities that may crop-up due to cultural and cognitive aspects until one starts the consortia. Majority of cooperative moves are more of a culture than resembling paradigm conflicts between traditional, print-medium, knowledge structures or electronic and network-based skills. Technically the consortia host has to plan and buy a server, bring up a system, expand network connectivity, design a gateway, adopt suitable interoperability protocols and standards for the network including integration, administration and collaboration to retain its initial focus. In development and maintenance of consortia, libraries may have to collaborate with computer centers of the host organization in the creation of software and in reengineering of computer network. Some times computer center maintains all the major library servers and audits security of library-
operated systems, which calls different kind collaboration. It is difficult to expect the involvement of users (inside and outside) of the library in taking decision about the consortia.

Based on the observation from the existing consortia, it is noticed that the publishers response to the consortia purchase varies from one consortia to another, one library to another. For example publishers may offer a discount of 15% to a consortia with a minimum of 5 libraries or 25% discount for a consortia with 20 or more libraries and so on. It is noticed that pricing policy for consortia purchase varies from publishers to publishers and by the same publisher among different consortia groups. The same observation holds good in case of subscription agencies and the aggregators. Usually consortia pricing quotes are available upon request.

The changing trend, particularly in e-environment, created a paradigm shift in its culture and information dissemination in libraries. Even the users approach for timely information and their access mode is drastically changing with developments in web technologies. On top of all these changes, publishers driven-market in providing access to maximum resource at minimum cost in various approaches similar to consortia approach like negotiated for bundled e-journals, etc. In addition there are aggregators providing access to bundled embargo journals, Open Access Initiatives of e-journals and free e-journals on Internet.

In addition to these changes it is noticed that publishers, database producers, subscription agents and other intermediaries are already in the market with their own integrated electronic services directly to the users. Cooperation of publishers in offering bibliographic data to database producers and linking bibliographic database to full text is increasing the demand for their electronic full text journals and usage promotion at individual user level. In this competition and cooperation, indeed cooperation between libraries and publishers, database producers,
subscription agents and other intermediaries, the demand for consortia purchasing is increasing. The consortia pricing offers are extended even to the single library to get better market deal and also to penetrate new journals into market as a bundle. Some of the larger publishers, such as Lexis-Nexis and Oxford University Press, are offering layered consortia or multi-consortia and even multi-national consortia deals. Keeping these changes and constraints in mind, the study aims at deriving a suitable model for accessing e-journals through consortia.

Core aims of the consortia are:

- Improving both increased access and efficiency through cooperation; and

- Capacity Building for the libraries to enable them to meet the ever increasing needs of users.

In any establishment, one needs to assess as to what works well, various management models, advantages and disadvantages of management of commercial products; staff required and future development and sustainability. In case of collective works, it becomes essential to work out the structure and functions in terms of membership, decision-making and management structure, personnel involvement – dedicated/ voluntary, resources procurement, contracts in operation, contracts management and their problems. When any team considers the purchase of materials, particularly the copyrighted ones, like e-resources for libraries, it needs to look at the issues and concerns of members. In case of consortia of e-journals, one needs to consider the issues and concerns of the libraries regarding e-resources that are intended to be the part of consortia. Also it needs to look at the issues in detail, the future in terms of e-content, and as to how should it be delivered, should e-resources and traditional
procurement be integrated, and if so how? What about the licensing and technical issues?

At the same time, consortia planners need to examine the existing electronic and print resources available in the list of their subscription, selection criteria, mode of access that consortia planned to provide, technical issues like user login and passwords, IP addresses, skills issues for staff and users and the content that is going to be provided. Consortia planners have to analyze the information value chain and the procurement cycle in understanding the challenges and opportunities of procuring e-resources in a rapidly developing marketplace.

At the international level there are many consortia. BC Electronic Library Network is a partnership between the Province of British Columbia and its post-secondary libraries to develop, promote and maintain system-wide mechanisms that allow post-secondary libraries to meet the expanding information needs of the province's learners and educators, at the lowest possible cost. Center for Research Libraries [CRL] an international not-for-profit consortium of colleges, universities and libraries that makes available scholarly research resources to users everywhere. CRL is governed by the major research libraries of North America and is funded by fees, grants and contributions. Illinois Digital Academic Library [IDAL] provides high quality collection of full text and image digitized resources that supports instruction, study, and research by students, faculty and staff in all eligible Illinois higher education institutions (Brooks, 2002). Library Consortia in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho provides an overview of selected library consortia active in Oregon, Washington and Idaho, with an emphasis on those that include academic libraries. South Asia Library Consortia. Members of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation [CIC] with major South Asia collections joined together in 1993 for a program of cooperative activity. Washington Research Library
Consortia is a regional resource-sharing organization established by several universities in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area to expand and enhance the information resources available to their students and faculty.

"International Coalition of Library Consortia [ICOLC]" is an informal, self-organized group hundreds of library consortia from around the world. The Coalition serves primarily higher education institutions by facilitating discussion among consortia on issues of common interest. It conducts regular meetings to keep members informed about new electronic information resources, pricing practices of electronic providers and vendors, and other issues of importance to directors and governing boards of consortia (Foster 2003, ICOLC 2005).

In India, although late, a satisfying note is that few forward looking libraries have made a modest beginning in forming consortia. Some of the initiatives include – Consortium of Indian Institutes of Management, CSIR Laboratories, FORSA, Hyderabad based Virtual Information Centre of Knowledge Park, MHRD funded INDEST, INFLIBNET's Infonet, HELINET and GE's Global Research (Arora 2003, Cholin 2002, Pandian 2002).

1.2 THE CONCEPT OF 'CONSORTIA'

The general definition as per the Oxford dictionary, consortia is "an association of several business companies". In professional activity like education it is "Associations of institutions, which cooperate to provide a range of higher education programs within their community (http://www.athabascau.ca/misc/glossary.html).

The consortia can be defined as "a strategic alliance of institutions having common interest". The main aim of a consortium is to achieve what the members of the group cannot achieve individually. One of the library or
the agency works as coordinator for identification of member libraries along with e-sources to be covered through consortia and concerned publishers. A committee appointed by the group will workout in detail the access mechanism, pricing models, payment mechanism, archival and copyright issues. However consortia is not only economic model for providing access to e-journals. For example in case of some society publications consortia mechanism may not work and one has to workout alternative model.

There are two types of popular consortia: a) Centralized consortia b) Decentralized consortia (Sanville, 1999). In decentralized consortia members including the host of the consortia are loosely affiliated to one another or to the host. Decentralized consortia suffer from the exclusive staff and not institutionalised of its identity. Many adhoc decisions, less participation and responsibility from the participating libraries and not conform with the agreement signed by the host are big problem.

Centralized consortia have top down approach, planned by top level management experts, tightly affiliated or open ended approach, centralized fund management, deploying the permanent staff for its maintenance. Sustainability is better if the participating libraries are involved in decision-making and training is a continued process.

The very terminology consortia calls for collective management or governance. The scope of consortia may be international, national, regional, local or libraries under one apex body or loosely affiliated subject cluster libraries.

Consortia or otherwise, accessing the electronic resources is infrastructure (IT) intensive and the IT infrastructure is more volatile. There is general lack of willingness to cancel the printed edition of the journals in the institution. The investment on IT infrastructure or Initial
investment for entering consortia is also important for which general lack of interest from the management. The library staffs are yet to be trained in handling electronic documents, integrating and popularizing the electronic resources and deriving the advantage to the users as well the management. Management of the host organization or apex bodies needs convincing and the users pressure for the e-resource and updating the infrastructure. In addition library staff are expected to maintain or ability to employee technical person and maintain central hardware set up, mounting of data, development of interfaces, administration of access, under the administrative headship of librarians.

1.3 NEED FOR THE STUDY

The adaptation to e-environment both by libraries and users in India is picking up. The library consortia developments are still in the initial stage. The existing consortia, more or less have adopted publishers/vendors driven pricing models. There are many other burning issues related to consortia like consortia governance, management, administration, technology, collection development, licensing, access, archiving, copyright, information literacy for librarians and users. While there have been some efforts to follow certain standards and guidelines by existing consortia initiatives in India, there is no consistency among the existing initiatives. In view of this there is need for designated government or professional body or forum in line with ICOLC to discuss the issues concerned for the development of consortia in India.
A need is felt to develop a viable and sustainable consortia model for accessing e-journals for science and technology institutions in India, considering homogeneous and heterogeneous nature of activities (academic/research/corporate) and organizations. There is also need to evolve suitable guidelines for consortia development in the Indian context.

1.4 **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To study in depth the existing e-journals consortia in India;
2. To study the IT infrastructure/facility/services of the existing consortia and its member institutes;
3. To study the developments in consortia in consonance with the changing attitude of users and publishers;
4. To study the existing expertise in consonance with the changing trend of e-publishers, users expectations and publishers attitudes;
5. To study the user's awareness and satisfaction in accessing e-journals;
6. To compare single library approach with consortia models in providing e-journals;
7. To evolve suitable guidelines for the development of consortia and
8. To develop suitable proposed consortia models for India.

1.5 **HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

On the basis of the need for the study and its objectives, following hypotheses were formulated:
**Hypothesis 1**: Consortia help to provide access to maximum e-resources at less cost compared to print/single library subscription.

**Hypothesis 2**: The success of consortia depends not only on adequacy of e-resources, but also on IT infrastructure and retrieval/access mechanism.

**Hypothesis 3**: The sustainability of consortia depends on the assured funding support either through government or an apex body or through contribution by participating libraries/institutions.

**Hypothesis 4**: The Centralized governance through Governing Body, Task Forces and Coordinating Committee and decentralized governance at implementation and operational level is the key for the success of consortia.

**Hypothesis 5**: The Librarian/Library Manager plays a crucial role at all levels of consortia development including its management, implementation and operation levels and also marketing for effective use of resources by users.

### 1.6 METHODS AND MATERIALS OF THE STUDY

The study has undertaken the descriptive survey of the consortia host management, participating libraries and the users of consortia across the host and participating libraries. The study also included special libraries having good e-journals without consortia and its management to compare the advantage and disadvantage of the negotiation at individual library and consortia level. The study used inferential statistical analysis.

The scope of the study is confined to science and technology institutions in India. The study sample is confined to the existing consortia
hosts and its member institutions including new initiative during the study. Also the study includes an individual library having good e-journals resources for comparison. The development of consortia model is based more on the library perspective. The changing trend of publishers/aggregators is taken into account through reviews of various studies.

1.6.1 Variables of the Study

- Participation
- Fund
- IT Infrastructure
- E-resources
- Expertise
- User awareness

1.6.2 Issues and Parameters for Providers

- Types of organization
- Funding of the libraries
- Field of interest
- Library budget
- Library collection
- Consistency in maintaining the e-resources
- Preparedness for e-culture- by IT infrastructure and library automation
• Client end IT support and its comprehensiveness

• Use of web enabled resources and Internet bandwidth

• Training and expertise of library staff

• Management attitude towards the training of library staff

• Attitude on print + online journals

• Use of free e-journals on the Internet

• Preferences of payment terms by the individual libraries as well as consortia host

• Type of subscription services utilized by the libraries

• Number of publishers covered by the institution and consortia

• Use of aggregators service in case of e-resources

• Preference for the type of collection in e-media like books, journals, reports, etc.

1.6.3 Issues and Parameters for Consortia

• Source of knowledge about the consortia

• Factors responsible for initiating consortia

• Suitable person to take initiative for consortia

• Preference in Governance and governance structure

• Coordination and its decision making body

• Suitable authority for execution control
- Staffing for management and operation
- Participating interests in various decision making and operation roles
- Preference of funding
- Preference for payment and expenditure control
- Fund management
- Preference access mechanism
- Preference search methods for users
- Value addition to consortia
- Web-enabled value addition
- Preference in sharing expertise
- Factors contributing for the success of consortia
- Preference in training of library staff
- Preference in training users/ information literacy
- Preference in technology issues
- Preferences for archiving
- Repercussion on library budget
- Membership interest in single or multiple consortia
- Preferred models of consortia
- Preference in licensing issues
• Constraints/factors affecting consortia
• Forum suitable for discussing consortia issues

1.6.4 Issues and Parameters for Users

• Type of resources preferred by the users
• Media preference of users for resources
• Adequacy of e-resources in their library
• Access to bibliographic databases
• Usage of e-resources
• Users acquaintance with e-resources
• Preference of web enabled e-resources
• Types of searches and preferred elements for searching
• Preferred format to use and download
• Preferences in desk top support
• Expectation of IT infrastructure
• Knowledge of consortia in India

1.7 CHAPTER SCHEME

The entire study is divided into six chapters. The brief description of each chapter is given below:

Chapter-I: Provides an introduction to the research problem. Traces the historical aspects of consortia developments in India and
International scene. It also deals the need for the study with objectives, hypotheses, methodology and parameters of the study.

Chapter-II: Covers the literature review under various headings and summary on consortia developments.

Chapter-III: Gives an overview of Indian consortia initiatives including the major ones namely FORSA, CSIR, INDEST, UGC-Infonet, VIC of Knowledge Park, HELINET, GE-Global Research, IIMs and others. The chapter briefly describes the resources, the governance structure and other aspects of concerned consortia.

Chapter-IV: Analyses the responses received against two types of questionnaires circulated among the librarians/consortia managers and Consortia users, SWOT analysis of Consortia in the Indian context and presents the interpretation of the data and discusses the results.

Chapter-V: Gives an account of guidelines evolved for consortia development and describes the proposed consortia models for India based on survey results and existing models world over through reviewed literature. This chapter also gives an outline of setting up of a National Coordination Committee for Consortia (NCCC) in India.

Chapter-VI: Deals with findings, recommendations further research and conclusion of the study.
REFERENCES:


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