Internet based information sharing in Higher Educational Institutional Libraries in India

Pradip Joshi   **Dr.Satyaprakash Nikose**

Librarian   **Lecturer,**

Rajiv Gandhi College of Engineering   **Deptt.of Library and Information Science**

Chandrapur   **R.T.M.Nagpur University ,Nagpur**

Abstract

The paper presents the development of computer neteoworking and Internet bases services in higher educational institutional libraries in Indian in 21st century, Development of consortial agencies, like Indest is the dominant one in Engineering, Science and Technology while UGC InfoNet for social Sciences.

1.Introduction

India has a large higher education sector – the third largest in the world in student numbers, after China and the United States. Next to China, India is the most populated country in the world. The purpose of education is well-rounded development. Students need a combination of arts, computer science, science, and humanities or literature courses to achieve this kind of development. A well-equipped and well-managed library is the foundation of modern educational structure. It is said that education without library services is like a body without soul, a vehicle without an engine, and building with bricks but no cement. The library is the chief instrument for accumulating and using our intellectual heritage. Formal education can be conducted effectively and efficiently only with well-equipped libraries. Today, libraries are connected to a vast ocean of Internet-based services. Electronic resources are developing rapidly. Academic libraries are the nerve centres of their institutions, and must support teaching, research, and other academic programmes. The situation in academic libraries in India is the same as that of academic libraries the world over; however, Indian libraries must provide maximum information with limited resources.[7]

2.College Education in India

India has one of the largest higher education systems in the world. The growth rate of educational institutions in India was slow before independence in 1947, but now there are 543 universities, including 18 central universities, 275 state universities, 96 deemed universities, 13 national importance institutions, 136 research institutes, 5 institutions established under states Legislature Act, along with 16,885 colleges that

provide education in all disciplines. The number of teachers is nearly half a million, with about one hundred thousand students enrolled in higher education.[1]

3. Institutonal Library Networking   and UGC

The University Grants Commission (UGC) was established by an act of Parliament in 1956. It is an autonomous advisory organization for the promotion and co-ordination of university education and for the maintenance of standards. The UGC directs higher education in India.

The UGC has played an important role in the improvement of university and college libraries. Realizing the value of the library and its role in higher education, the UGC accepted most of the recommendations of the several committees and commissions. UGC providing financial assistance for collection development, acquisition of books and periodicals, purchase of furniture and equipment, and construction of new library buildings. Working groups on information and library networks, modernisation of library service and information centres, and the developmental programmes of NISSAT, NIC, DESIMET, ERNET, CALNET, DELNET and CIRNET have covered things like standardization of information handling, networks, and training. [4]

4. Library Consortia in Electronic Environment

A consortium is a group of organizations who come together with a combined objective that requires co-operation and resource sharing. A library consortium can be local, regional, state, national, or international.

Libraries need consortia because of

- Information explosion
- Diversity of user needs
- Financial crunch
- Impossibility of self-sufficiency

Important advantages of library consortia are:

- Consortia-based subscription to electronic resources provides access to wider number of electronic resources at substantially lower cost.
- Optimum use of funds
- Facilities to create digital libraries
- Services like CAS and SDI
- Cost sharing for technical and training support
- Electronic journals demand neither library space nor shelving nor can they be stolen

Consortia have been offered better license terms, archival access, and preservation of electronic resources, which would not be possible for any single institution, and they are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with economy in maintenance.[1]

5. Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET)

Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) is a versatile, integrated library and information system created in 1991 to support teaching and research in higher education. The information and library network centre will network 123 universities, 23 institutions, 6,100 colleges, and 200 libraries affiliated to other organizations through UGC. It promotes automation, creates union catalogues, provides access to information sources, provides training, etc. INFLIBNET has developed "SOUL" (Software for University Libraries) software for automation in-house functions. SOUL is installed at 15 university libraries and has developed five utility software packagess for participating universities.[2]

6.UGC-INFONET

UGC has a consortium for e-journals through UGC-INFONET. It is uses the Education and Research Network (ERNET) infrastructure. On behalf of the UGC, INFLIBNET is executing the UGC-INFONET project in collaboration with ERNET. This consortium promotes the use of electronic database and journals by the research and academic community. INFLIBNET Centre is the nodal agency for coordination of UGC-INFONET. It facilitates linkage between UGC, ERNET, and universities and coordinates the programme. UGC-INFONET is a boon to higher education in India. The programme helps mitigate the severe shortage of periodicals faced by university libraries. The consortia gets a discount of 85 to 90 percent of list price. In the year 2008, there was a tremendous growth in overall use of e-resources.[3]

7. INDEST Consortium

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has set-up the "Indian National Digital Library in engineering Sciences and Technology (INDEST) Consortium" on the recommendation made by the expert Group appointed by the ministry under the chairmanship of Prof. N. Balakrishnan. The Ministry provides funds for subscription to electronic resources for 38 institutions through the consortium headquarters at the IIT Delhi. Besides 60 government or government-aided engineering colleges and technical departments in universities have joined the consortium with financial support from the AICTE. Moreover, the INDEST-AICTE Consortium welcomes other institutions to join. The INDEST-AICTE consortium is the most ambitious initiative so far. The benefit of consortia-based subscription to electronic resources is not confined to 38 major technological institutions in the country but is also extended to all AICTE-accredited and UGC-affiliated institutions.[5]

8.Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)

CSIR has also formed a consortium with National Institute of Science, Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR) (formed with the merger of INSDOC and NISCOM) as the nodal agency. To augment CSIR research and development activities, NISCAIR implemented an agency for access to electronic journals. On behalf of CSIR, it has entered into an agreement with Elsevier to access its 1,500 e-journals and intends to subscribe to more. CSIR consortium has extended its access to other providers of e- journals.[6]

8.Other Miscelleneous Networks

There are a number of other national networks and library networks, including NICNET (National Informatic Center 's network), INDONET, CALIBNET (Calcutta Library Network), DELNET (Developing Library Network), etc. ADINET is associated with INFLIBNET, DELNET with NIC, and MALIBNET with CFTRI. A number of educational institutions are members of such networks. These networks, especially DELNET (which has 752 member libraries including 742 from India and 10 from outside), are engaged in compiling union catalogs, creating databases of experts, providing training to library staff , ILL, online facilities, reference service, assistance in retrospective conversion, etc. [7]

9.Conclusion

With declining budgets and higher subscription costs, it is becoming difficult to meet the demands of library users. The age of library consortia brings cooperation locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. It is a toolkit to help libraries survive and provide the best information to their users.

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