

Research Trends in Inter-Library Collaboration

Anita Chhatwal

Sri Guru Gobind Singh College, Sector-26, Chandigarh-160019; Email: ac.maninder@gmail.com

Corresponding Author

Anita Chhatwal

Sri Guru Gobind Singh College,

Sector-26, Chandigarh-160019

Phone: 0172 2790311

Fax: 0172 2790312

Email: ac.maninder@gmail.com

Abstract

The Internet and online metamorphosis has made it convenient to access and share the requisite information worldwide. Correspondingly, the libraries are not a deviation from such transformations taking place in all the spheres of life. It has been also observed that due to economic constraints, the concept of self sufficient has become obsolete for the libraries. Maintaining the collections and services has become difficult due to financial constraints being faced by the majority of the libraries. Therefore, an emergent need was felt to develop some collaborative system to share the resources among the libraries which can act as a bridge to connect the libraries specifically the remote and rural ones. Thus, majority of the libraries looked forward to the collaboration and resource sharing as a solution to many of their economic problems.

The study in hand is an attempt to study the output of research in collaborative sharing. It aims to review the ever growing literature on collaborative or resource sharing, explore the comprehensive review of research carried out at national and international level. It includes about twenty nine researches undertaken by national and international researchers.

1. Introduction

The term ‘collaborative sharing’ is substantially used interchangeably for library cooperation, resource sharing, inter-library loan, document delivery, consortia, and several other library services. The study in hand focuses upon the term ‘collaborative sharing’ as an alternative to resource sharing given that the largest part of the deliberations in this study revolve around collection sharing.

The concept of sharing the library resources is as old as libraries themselves. The term collaborative sharing or cooperation can be traced back to 200 B.C. when Alexandria Library shared its resources with Pergamum Library. The concept of library cooperation also sustained among Monastery libraries around 13th century. According to Kraus¹ (1975), in 1740, the agreements for library cooperation were set in motion among the Universities of Lund, Abo and Greifswald. At the same time, Union Catalogue of the libraries of Weimar and Jean also entered the picture as an example of library cooperation. These were observed as the first cooperative ventures followed by physical resource sharing of books and periodicals through interlibrary loan and joint archiving. Similarly, collective acquisition was assumed at Walfenbittel and Gottengen. 1863 could see the publication of Part I of Sanskrit Manuscripts in private libraries of North-West provinces covering Varanasi. The publication of ‘Catalogue of Manuscripts in various parts of India’ in 1868 was compiled by Whitney Stokes. The first major Union List compiled by Henry C. Bolton in 1885 was named ‘A Catalogue of Scientific and Technical Periodicals’. In the last quarter of 19th century, for about one hundred years, the collaborative programmes centered around printed materials. Several such initiatives survived and flourished while a few became obsolete with time.

The revolution of ICT and Internet in 20th century made information accessible through cyberspace which involved speed, accuracy and was more economical than the traditional libraries. In the meantime, there was creation of National Union Catalogue by Library of Congress which could be seen as a commendable achievement of those times. Later on, online cataloging system through library network emerged which was seen as a beginning of electronic era. It was for the first time in the history that the information was stored in digital formats and retrieved over networks. Hence, the libraries started collaborative sharing of their resources electronically.

¹ Kraus, J.W. (1975). Prologue to library cooperation. *Library Trends*, 24(2), 169-181.

In order to understand the term 'Collaboration', there is a need to differentiate the term collaboration from 'cooperation' and 'coordination'. They were differentiated in terms of revelation and associations, structure, power and responsibility, resources and awards and people (Shepherd, Gillham, & Ridley², 1999). Cooperative efforts are unceremonious with limited customary objectives. They are deficient in formation and ceremonial scheduling also. Hence, communication is only as required and resources and rewards are separate. Coordination incorporates evaluation of congruence discrete ambitions, concentration on the individual task of preordained interval, act independently of each other, assigned roles for each organization, understand the need of information sources and probability of putting them together for access.

2. International Initiatives

Sinclair³ (1973) was the first to propose four models of collaborative activity among libraries that is still considered as a valuable guide today. The first is the bilateral exchange model which focuses upon the sharing of materials between two participating such as reciprocal borrowing agreements. The second is the pooling model between two libraries willing to contribute unsheathe from a collective pool of resources. The dual-service model is the third which involves two or more libraries taking advantage of the facilities of the participating libraries to generate a quality yield such as a shared OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue). The last type of collaborative activity is refereed by Sinclair as the service centre model between the participating libraries utilizing the services of a facilitating library to input and process materials for the individual libraries, rather than for common output OCLC is n example of this model.

According to Kraus⁴ (1975), sharing resources by sharing material between more than one libraries is perhaps the ancient and uncomplicated method as a single loan requires only a borrower, a willing lender and a means of transmission. In an 1876 article, Samuel Green proposed the libraries enter into agreements to make the practice most commonly accepted. The Library Journal published 19 articles on interlibrary loan from 1900-1915. ALA Committee on Coordination of College Libraries introduced the first interlibrary lending code in 1917. Revised codes were adopted in 1940,

² Shepherd, M., Gillham, V., & Ridley, M. (1999). Truth is in the details: Lessons in inter-university library collaboration. *Library Management*, 20(6), 332-37. Retrieved May 14, 2016 from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/01435129910280375>

³ Sinclair, M.P. (1973). Typology of library cooperatives. *Special Libraries*, 64(4), 181-186.

⁴ Kraus, J.W. (1975). Prologue to library cooperation. *Library Trends*, 24(2), 169-181.

1952, 1968 and an interlibrary loan procedure manual was published in 1970. (Kraus⁵, 1975, p.171-172)

The development of consortia was the outcome of the desire for resource sharing. The real drive for library consortium was seen after 1980 when more and more libraries started getting automated and used computers for bibliographic processing activities and database searching (Panchakshari⁶, n.d.). The global prime example of 1970's is OCLC (Online Computer Library Centre) in US along with Research Library Group and Washington Library Network. OCLC, being a library cooperative hand, collaborates with other libraries and provide cost-effective access to the end users. Of late, newer consortia came into existence viz Cape's CALICO, Georgia's GALILEO, Missouri's MIRACL, Ohio's OHIOLINK is a new consortia initiative to increase greater economic control over their marketplaces by pooling their collective financial resources, Washington's WRLC and SUNNYConnect etc.

Sloan⁷ (1986) explored that the only operational resource sharing being successfully implemented since five years is by Statewide Library Computer System (LCS), Illinois. The 27 participating libraries are contributing towards several resource-sharing activities to OCLC, LCS, interlibrary loan and Illinois Library and Information Network Systems.

The significant doctoral study that has addressed the issue of resource sharing is that of Khan⁸ (1991). He concluded that conventional cooperation is nearly found hypothetical in Pakistan. Informal cooperation in the framework of reprography is seen in existence for the purpose of interlibrary loan services only. Grosch⁹ (1995) distinguished the library cooperation movement as wide ranging access to information, inexpensive cataloguing, low cost document delivery,

⁵ ibid

⁶ Panchakshari, H.B. (n.d.). *Consortium of libraries: A successful way of sharing worldwide*. Mumbai: Tata Institute of Fundamental Research. Retrieved April 25, 2010 from <http://www.tifr.res.in/~libws/consortia1.doc>

⁷ Sloan, B.G. (1986). Resource sharing among academic libraries: The LCS experience. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 12(1), 26-29.

⁸ Khan, F. (1991). *Coordinated planning for university libraries in Pakistan: Prospects, organization and implementation*. (Doctoral Thesis). Islamia University Bahawalpur, Pakistan.

⁹ Grosch, A.N. (1995). *Library information technology network*. New York: Marcel Dekker

cooperative acquisitions, copyrights, governance and related projects based on development of libraries and information centres.

The concept of document delivery was investigated by the library professionals and research scholars. The literature was published in various library journals, books and other related sources. Ferguson¹⁰ (1996) opined that extensive advocacy of ILL will lead to reduced necessity of maintain the collections. He maintained that the libraries should continue with the practice of maintaining new collections. Hollerich¹¹ (1996) elaborated the manner in which the commercial document suppliers get in touch with their targeted patronage, i.e. end-users and conciliators with the help of fundamental marketing skills. Therefore, it was projected that the commercial suppliers will be successful by communicating with the end users directly, thus eluding library inter-loan services.

Similarly Khalid¹² (1997) in his study found that personal liaisons and ad-hoc basis cooperative and network systems prevailed in the developing countries. Khalid in his study also tendered a multi stage model for the developing countries to achieve the objective of cooperation and networking at local, regional and national levels. The major obstacle observed by Khalid in the development of sharing of resources was dearth of technical knowledge and standardization in services. Shreeves¹³ (1997) opined that digital aura will be developed owing to the cooperation among the participants. This will enhance their opportunities and challenges, thus giving way to the access of information resources to the end users to a large extent.

Cornish¹⁴ (2000) however took a broader perspective in his other study. He elaborated that participating in the collaborative sharing programs will definitely provide access to the broad range of information. Okerson¹⁵ (2000) found that cooperation at various levels in diverse libraries is sought-after owing to the advent of electronic information publishing and end users expectations

¹⁰ Ferguson, A. (1996). Document delivery in the electronic age: Collecting and service implications. *Journal of Library Administration*, 22(4), 85-98.

¹¹ Hollerich, M.A. (1996). Ordering, delivery and turnaround: how do document suppliers maintain their markets? In A. Chang, & M.E. Jackson, (Eds.). *Managing Resource Sharing in the Information Age*. New York: AMS Press

¹² Khalid, H. (1997). *Cooperation and networking in university libraries: A model for initiation and implementation in countries with less developed systems*. (Doctoral Thesis). Metropolitan University, London

¹³ Shreeves, E. (1997). Is there a future for cooperative collection development in the digital age? *Library Trends*, 45(3), 373-391.

¹⁴ Cornish, G.P. (2000). Empowering society through the global flow of information. *Interlending and Document Supply*, 28(1), 5-7.

¹⁵ Okerson, A. (2000). *Strength in numbers: Library consortia in the electronic age*. Paper Delivered at the ITD Conference, Paris. Retrieved April 24, 2010 from <http://www.library.yale.edu/~okerson/strength-numbers.html>

regarding availability and access to such material. He states that the partner members need to build trust on each other for the successful implementation of the consortium.

Bowler¹⁶ (2003) in his study construed that whether the document delivery is functional for end users or the libraries is still unanswered. He observed that the prospect of document delivery entirely hangs upon the state of the art ICT, information gateways, contemporary licensing agreements and joint venture with publishers and suppliers. Reitz¹⁷ (2004) elaborated that resource sharing is the outcome of the endorsement, be it formal or non-formal with a group of libraries to achieve the common objectives of sharing their collections, sharing their data, sharing their facilities, sharing their personnel etc. This in turn will be beneficial for the library staff as well as end users. Hence, initiate the process of trimming down the tariff on collection development. The resource sharing has been described by Usman¹⁸ (2006) as the arrangements that are habitually the services initiated by the libraries of the institutions. Such services are like inter-library loan service where collaboration between more than two libraries is triggered off with the help of written agreement.

Engard¹⁹ (2009) in his paper emphasized upon the need of collaboration among the librarians with the help of technology such as Internet and Intranet. He elaborated the value of collaboration while using web as just tool to enable that collaboration. He further explained that since the librarians have different areas of expertise, they should work together efficiently, collaborate using web tools such as RSS aggregators and Bloglines and collaborate with each other's expertise and learning experiences. He concluded that in order to become collaborative librarian, there is a need to collaborate across walls, lines and oceans. Hence, he accepts the introduction of technology to learn, share and collaborate online. Gaetz²⁰ (2009) explained that a peer reviewed and open access journal 'Collaborative Librarianship' was initiated with a task to eulogize and emphasize upon the needs of library collaboration. It was started as a campaign to encapsulate the prospective challenges and innovation in the respective theme. He studied collaboration in other sectors of the society, the growing literature on collaborative management theory and practice and of the Colorado experience

¹⁶ Bowler, J. (2003). Unmediated document delivery: The issues and possibilities. *Australian Library Journal*, 52(4), 327-329.

¹⁷ Reitz, J.M. (2004). *Dictionary for library and information science*. Westport: Libraries Unlimited

¹⁸ Usman, I. (2006). *New approaches in library resources sharing in the digital age*. Conference Proceedings of the Nigerian Librarian Association, Abuja, pp. 45-52.

¹⁹ Engard, N.C. (2009). Collaboration matters: A quarterly column. *Collaborative Librarianship*, 1(2), Article 6. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/collaborativelibrarianship/vol1/iss2/6>

²⁰ Gaetz, I. (2009). Collaborative Librarianship: new light on a brilliant concept. *Collaborative Librarianship*, 1(1), Article 1. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/collaborativelibrarianship/vol1/iss1/1>

in library collaboration. He found that collaboration in libraries is a splendid way to get in touch with the local library communities. He concluded that the collaborative agreements enable libraries to share and provide access to information, assist in accessing the information and also provides opportunity to participate in the decision making process too.

Early and Taber²¹ (2010) studied 37 colleges and universities providing electronic submission of Electronic Thesis Dissertations (ETD's) in North Carolina. They investigated the interdepartmental collaboration needs while introducing such programmes in the selected institutions. They found that with the idolization of ETD submissions, the point of convergence has been modified from choice of platform to discussions. Moreover, they explained that long-term preservation has also become one of the significant stuff in question that direct one's attention to the predicament of prospective information storage. They suggested the meeting of the ETD staff shall be convened on annual or half annual basis to discuss the problems involves, training to be imparted, share their information and relevant updates about the topic, besides formulating a strategic forum for the same. They concluded that since ETDs have been germinated from communication and collaboration, therefore they must keep on developing, growing and nourishing like sun and rain.

Shen²² (2012) investigated the impact and reasons of separation between librarians and faculty members with respect to the collection development of the library. She suggested that librarians must 'master the art of interdependence' with faculty members. She explained that both have different vision, expertise, status and priorities as far as collection development of the library are concerned. She also examined the obstacles to communication and collaboration. She explained that the main obstacle standing in the way of end user needs is inefficient communication. She proposed horizontal and vertical strategy to bridge the separation. She concluded by suggesting that librarians should provide individual, informal, and customized outreach services to the end users, be it faculty members or students.

National Initiatives

²¹ Early, M.G. and Taber, A.M. (2010). Evolving in collaboration: Electronic thesis and dissertation workflows in North Carolina. *Collaborative Librarianship*, 2(1), Article 3, 4-18. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/collaborativelibrarianship/vol2/iss1/3>

²² Shen, L. (2012). Improving the effectiveness of librarian-faculty collaboration on library collection development. *Collaborative Librarianship*, 4(1), Article 3. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/collaborativelibrarianship/vol4/iss1/3>

In contrast to the commencement of consortium in the developed countries like USA, Canada, UK, the developing countries like India was far behind in the said technology of sharing resources. Though, some libraries initiated the efforts to share their resources but could not achieve the desired results. Due to lack of funds, majority of the libraries in India remain deficient in acquiring the requisite information resources. The developments with the advent of ICT, Internet, WWW, artificial intelligence and human/ machine interface has given way to the concept of resource sharing. The developed countries have already been using the networked resource sharing since 1930s whereas the developing countries like India saw this development in 1979 only with the establishment of National Information System for Science and Technology (NISSAT). The National Union Catalogue of Current Serials in India (NUCCSI) of INSDOC has been initiated for the said purpose of sharing information resources. Many other networks in various cities of India like ADINET, BONET, CALIBNET, DELNET, MYLIBNET, PUNENET and INFLIBNET are some of the developments in library cooperation.

Raina²³ (1997) proposed a model for establishing a network among the IIM libraries for sharing the resources. He concluded that the future demands can be met only through resource sharing. Dasgupta²⁴ (2002) discussed that cooperation from local level to the global level is a pre-requisite for the consortium development in the new millennium. Cholin, & Murthy²⁵ (2003) emphasized that spurious growth in literature, price acceleration, budget limitations, restricted procurement of library resources has showed the way for resource sharing through networked libraries. Electronic resources are also transforming the academic libraries.

Azeez²⁶ (2007) highlighted the prevailing conditions of the libraries in Kerala Engineering colleges. He suggested for the development of library consortium to augment the qualitative collection and services to the end users. Malviya, & Anil Kumar²⁷ (2007) traced the history of library consortia, networking and consortia management techniques and future of consortia efforts.

²³ Raina, R. L. (1997). *Library resource sharing and networking: An approach to Management Schools in India*. New Delhi: Vikas Publication.

²⁴ Dasgupta, K. (2002). Libraries and librarians in India on the threshold of the third millennium: Challenges and risks. In T.V. Ershova, & Y.E. Hohlov, (Eds.) *Libraries in the Information Society* (pp.112-118). Berlin/Munich: K.G. Saur Verlag. Retrieved May 12, 2016 from <http://archive.ifla.org/IV/ifla66/papers/039-120e.htm>

²⁵ Cholin, P., & Murthy, T.A.V. (2003). *Sharing resources in the electronic information environment: role of INFLIBNET- UGC*. Seminar Papers 48th ILA Conference held at NIMHANS, Bangalore. pp.153-163.

²⁶ Azeez, A.T.A. (2007). *Development of a library consortium for engineering colleges in Kerala*. Kolkatta: University of Calicut

²⁷ Malviya, R.N., & Anil Kumar (2007). Networking and consortia management techniques. *DESIDOC Bulletin of Information Technology*, 27(3), 24-30.

He found that the foremost means of resource sharing in print era are interlibrary loan, document delivery, institutional membership and consortia. Walmiki, Ramakrishnegowda, & Prithviraj²⁸ (2010) in their questionnaire based survey observed that only 39.9% of the faculty members were aware of and use UGC-Infonet Digital Library Consortium resources while 39.99% were aware but do not use and 24.22% were not at all aware of any such consortium. Non-users belong to social sciences and humanities whereas science faculty makes frequent use of the consortium resources. Only 5.22% of faculty members know have the expertise how to use the digital resources.

Rezaul and Mirza²⁹ (2012) stressed upon the implementation of library cooperation, library coordination and inter library loan in libraries of Bangladesh. They reported the status of collection of information resources, networking, resource sharing, and automation of libraries of Bangladesh. They observed that majority of libraries are not very actively participating resource sharing programmes.

Gaps in Literature

The literature reviewed shows that majority of the studies on collaborative sharing shows increased access to interlibrary lending and information resources which is more economical in present times. The libraries in higher education system do not have sufficient information resources. The literature also inspected the strengths and weaknesses related to collaborative sharing. It has been seen that the libraries are providing access to information to their end users with the help of document delivery, borrowing through consortium, interlibrary loan facility, etc.

Various barriers are also being faced by the libraries all over the world such as lack of funds, deficient in technical knowledge, economic recession, inflation, etc. The review further reveals that the libraries in India are not only deficient in acquiring resources but also faces funds constraints and inappropriate infrastructure to meet the information demands of the end users. The extensive literature review does not found any new model of collaborative sharing, neither found the emergence of any new financial models for collaborative sharing. The present study indeed will go a long way to serve as a pedestal for prospect research studies in collaborative sharing and also help

²⁸ Walmiki, R.H., Ramakrishnegowda, K.C., & Prithviraj, K.R. (2010). Awareness and use of UGC-Infonet digital library consortium by the faculty members of Karnataka State Universities. *Annals of Library and Information Studies*, 57(1), 33-43. Retrieved May 16, 2016 from <http://nopr.niscair.res.in/handle/123456789/8283>

²⁹ Rezaul, I. and Mirza, M. (2012). Present status of library cooperation, networking, and resource sharing in Bangladesh: Web-based library cooperation for access to world-wide information. *Library Philosophy and Practice (eJournal)*. Paper 784, 1-12.

the libraries in designing and developing the need based sharing information systems / centres for meeting the information requirement of the library users.

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