



Methods of Resource Sharing in Library: An overview

Mr.Papu Pruseth

**Facult of Library and Information Science,
Government Autonomous College,
Rourkela.**

Abstract

The landscape of libraries has evolved significantly in recent years, driven by technological advancements and the growing demand for diverse and extensive information resources. This paper provides various methods of resource sharing, including interlibrary loans, consortium agreements, collaborative collection development, and other methods of resource sharing. It delves into the benefits of such practices, emphasizing the positive impact on user experience, cost-effectiveness, and the ability to meet the ever-expanding information needs of library patrons. In conclusion, library resource sharing as a transformative approach is essential for addressing budget constraints and meeting the dynamic information needs of users. It underscores the pivotal role of librarians in navigating challenges, facilitating collaboration, and ensuring that resource-sharing initiatives remain a cornerstone of library services.

Keywords: Library, Resource sharing, Interlibrary loan, Library consortium, Resource sharing networks.

Introduction:

A library is a systematic organized collection of information sources. It is a social institution charged with the responsibility of disseminating knowledge to the people without any discrimination. Libraries are transitioning from single platforms to networks, their services are changing from document-based to information-based, and their collection-based system is becoming access-based. Additionally, in addition to their physical access, their services are increasingly virtual and digital. Meeting users' information needs is the library's motto. The abundance of information available, the growing expense of papers, and the constraints on library budgets push the libraries to share their resources. Cooperation on a range of library operations, including acquisition, cataloguing, circulation, collection development, microfilming, photocopying, processing,



referral services, storage, union lists, abstracting and indexing, and management and accounting, may help resolve these issues. The employees, records, space, and services of the library are regarded as its resources. In order to benefit both parties and provide services to its users that meet their needs, these resources are shared.

Concept of Resource Sharing and Definition:

The practice of sharing library resources was not new until it was dubbed "library cooperation." The phrase "library cooperation" was originally used to refer to resource sharing, but it was first recorded in the 13th century when cooperation was practiced between monastery libraries. In libraries, resource sharing is the process of working together and sharing resources and knowledge to improve availability and accessibility for patrons. It entails exchanging digital resources like databases and e-books as well as tangible goods like books, magazines, and audiovisual elements. By pooling their resources, libraries can reach a wider audience with their collections than they might otherwise, giving users access to a wider variety of materials that might not be available in their area. Numerous techniques, including as digital delivery systems, cooperative purchasing, consortia borrowing, and interlibrary loans, can be used to accomplish this. Especially for patrons in smaller or impoverished libraries with limited resources or specialised needs, resource sharing is essential to guaranteeing equal access to information. Libraries can maximise their resources, cut down on duplicate content, and give their users a more complete and engaging library experience by promoting resource sharing.

Sujatha, G. (1999) "Resource sharing is nothing but sharing library resources by certain participating libraries among themselves based on the principle of cooperation. This applies to using documents, manpower, facilities, services, building space, or equipment".

According to A.L.A. Glossary of Library and Information Science, "A term covering a variety of organizations and activities engaged in jointly by a group of libraries for the purposes of improving services and/or cutting costs. Resource sharing may be established by informal or formal agreement, by contract or may operate locally regionally, nationally and internationally. The resources shared may be collections, bibliographic data, personnel, planning activities, etc. In



simply terms library cooperation or library resource sharing is that when two or more libraries in existing and working jointly on agreements to achieve their goals”.

To put it briefly, resource sharing amongst libraries refers to the cooperative activity of exchanging books, articles, and other materials with one another. Libraries now share more resources than just actual books in the digital age. Sharing digital resources cooperatively is a part of it. It also helps to create a more complete and user-friendly information environment by improving patrons' access to resources.

Aims of Resource Sharing:

These days, documents are widely accessible and ever more expensive. Every day, more and more literature are produced in every area of expertise. There is always a chance that they will be reproduced because they are available in multiple formats. Because current publications are more expensive, libraries cannot afford to purchase all the necessary documents. On the other hand, there is an abundance of materials available in a variety of subjects, languages, and formats, and more subjects and subject specialisations are sprouting up. Libraries can overcome this challenge and operate successfully and efficiently through resource sharing.

- Regardless of the scope or depth of the local library's collection, resource sharing attempts to give patrons access to a broad variety of materials and knowledge. Users have access to a greater pool of resources and are more likely to locate the information they require when libraries share resources.
- Sharing resources among libraries reduces the needless duplication of content. Rather than obtaining identical resources separately for every library, they can exchange and lend from one another, maximising the utilisation of existing resources and saving expenditures.
- Sharing resources can result in considerable financial savings. Libraries can borrow or access resources from partner libraries rather than having to buy all item consumers want. As a result, less costly acquisitions are required, and libraries are able to better manage their budgets.
- Sharing resources encourages collaboration and teamwork among libraries. Libraries can collaborate by forming networks, consortia, or partnerships that



enable the exchange of resources, skills, and knowledge. Through this partnership, innovations, best practices, and cooperative projects are encouraged, which benefits library patrons by improving services and creating better results.

- The goal of resource sharing is to increase access to a wide range of resources outside the specific collections held by one library. Libraries can satisfy the different information demands of their users more often by pooling their resources to offer a wider range of books, periodicals, multimedia materials, and digital content to its patrons.
- By minimising the need for duplicate purchases, resource sharing helps libraries economise on their spending. By pooling their resources, libraries can purchase goods and services that would be too expensive for one library to purchase on its own. With this method, libraries can give additional resources while staying within their budgetary restrictions and also encourage cost efficiency.
- Networking and collaboration among libraries are encouraged by resource sharing. It promotes cooperation, knowledge sharing, and the growth of win-win partnerships among libraries. Libraries can create cooperative resource-sharing agreements through partnerships and consortia, which can result in better service delivery, collaborative projects, and shared best practices.

Methods of Resource Sharing in Library:

Today's resource sharing involves several activities such as ILL (Inter-Library Loan), Library Consortia, Centralized/Cooperative cataloguing, Shared collection, Cooperative purchasing, Digital resource sharing, Document delivery, Resource sharing networks. By various means of cooperation libraries all over the world can certainly run their cooperations smoothly and satisfy majority of readers.

There are many methods of resource sharing. Some of the major methods includes:

- **Interlibrary Loan:**

Libraries provide the service known as Interlibrary Loan (ILL) to make it easier for patrons to borrow and lend resources between different library systems. The



main objective of interlibrary loan is to give library users access to materials that are not part of the collection at their local library. This service broadens the scope of materials that people can access for research, study, or personal enrichment by allowing them to request books, articles, multimedia materials, and other items from libraries outside of their network.

Usually, the procedure entails a user submitting a request for a particular item that is not accessible at their local library. After then, the library employees try to find another library that has the desired item and is ready to lend it. The requested material is transmitted to the patron's home library, where they can check it out and use it for a predetermined amount of time, after a lending library has been found. In addition to lending out physical materials, many libraries also take part in electronic interlibrary loan programmes, which give users access to digital resources from libraries all over the world, including e-books and journal articles. In order to ensure that users have access to a wider and more varied selection of materials, promote resource sharing, and establish a collaborative network among libraries, interlibrary loan is essential. For academic scholars, students, and anybody else looking for information that could be uncommon, out of print, or not available locally, this service is invaluable.

Many libraries have embraced the digital age by taking part in electronic Interlibrary Loan programmes, extending the reach of Interlibrary Loan services beyond physical items. Users can now request and access digital resources from libraries all over the world, including e-books, articles, and multimedia content. Interlibrary Loan's cooperative structure encourages libraries to share resources, forming a network that cuts across national borders. It makes sure that library users have access to a wider range of items by allowing libraries to optimise the use of their collections. This service gives academic researchers, students, and the general public access to specialised, uncommon, or out-of-print literature that might not be easily found locally.

- **Library Consortia:**

Collaborative networks or alliances known as library consortia are groups of libraries, usually academic, research, or public libraries, that come together to share resources, exchange knowledge, and work towards shared objectives and difficulties. These consortia encourage collaboration, resource sharing, and cost-



effective tactics among member institutions with the goal of optimizing library services and operations. Library consortia enable their member libraries to exchange items, including books, journals, and databases, giving their patrons access to a greater variety of resources. Additionally, they give libraries a platform to work together on advocacy initiatives, professional development courses, technology infrastructure development, and digitalization projects. Through collaboration, library consortia improve the efficacy, impact, and efficiency of libraries, which benefits both the employees and the communities they serve.

- **Centralized and Cooperative cataloguing:**

Libraries often struggle with funding, and the best cataloguing strategy should be centralized and cooperative to save money and time. Machine Readable Catalogue (MARC) is the best example of centralized cataloguing. In cooperative cataloguing, two or more libraries share the labor in centralized cataloguing, a single library or central agency does the cataloguing task. This time-saving measure, together with consistency and quality enhancement.

- **Digital resource sharing**

Libraries can currently more readily share electronic content because to the expansion of digital resources. Digital resource sharing is the practice of libraries exchanging databases, e-books, e-journals, and other digital resources. To ensure that users have access to a variety of online resources, libraries might take part in programs or consortiums that share digital resources. These programs give libraries access to a large range of digital items.

- **Document delivery**

Libraries can obtain and grant access to particular documents or articles that are not available in their collections by using document delivery services. Libraries can make these requests of other libraries or document providers, who can supply the needed papers digitally or on paper. Getting conference papers, book chapters, or research articles is advantageous when using document delivery services.

- **Resource sharing networks**



Networks for exchanging resources that promote resource exchange link together libraries, organizations, or consortia. These networks build systems or platforms that let libraries exchange resources, knowledge, and skills. Libraries can sign up for these networks in order to request items, access shared catalogues, and work together on resource-sharing projects with other participants.

- **Shared collections**

With shared collections, many libraries work together to compile a collection of resources that is available to all of the participating libraries. By using this strategy, libraries can provide their patrons with a greater variety of resources and diversify their collections. Shared collections might be digital, where libraries pool electronic resources for shared access, or physical, when libraries lend and contribute artefacts to one another.

- **Preparation of Bibliographic database**

These days, every library is being computerized, allowing for the creation of a computer database on likenesses with interest. Libraries that collaborate with one another can produce bibliographies and share them with one another.

Conclusion:

Libraries have been utilising computers to gather, store, process, and distribute information in order to maximise user access to it. Controlling and distributing the rapidly expanding amount of information is difficult. Because it facilitates greater access to information and resources, minimises duplication, fosters cooperation, and increases efficiency, resource sharing is essential in libraries. Libraries can provide their patrons a greater variety of resources and services by means of the following: cooperative cataloguing, shared collections, document delivery, interlibrary loans, consortia, and access to electronic resources. Sharing resources reduces costs and maximises resource use for libraries, while also improving. However, there are drawbacks to resource sharing as well, including complicated legal issues, unequal resource availability, technological demands, and financial limitations. Libraries can get the most from resource sharing by addressing these issues with clear policies, interlibrary cooperation, dependable



systems, skilled staff, technology infrastructure, metadata standards, and copyright compliance.

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