

# Library Consortia and Collaborative Resource Sharing Models for Technical University Libraries in India

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## Abstract

*The role of Librarian is continuously changing in the digital era. The format of libraries and the user expectations are also changing accordingly. Today we do not need the largely stacked libraries, but we need the libraries with large content base. The enormous growth of knowledge in each of the disciplines can never be owned by any individual library. The Technological University Libraries need to get equipped with a huge collection of content which can meet the diverse needs of engineering teachers, and students. Hence shared and collaborative resource sharing models are need of the day. Hence, this paper attempts to help the Technical Universities to setup their Library E-resource Consortia. The paper also covers other collaborative initiatives that a Technological University Library can initiate among its member Libraries.*

**Keywords:** Collaborative Resource Sharing, Library Consortia, Tech University Library Consortium, Technical University Library

## 1. Preamble

Library Cooperation is one of the oldest practice of our traditional libraries. Sharing the resources from resource rich library to the resource poor libraries is one of the best practices of LIS Profession. As the quantum of information grows and information requirements of researchers and academicians grew in to multifold, the physical transfer of Inter Library Lending could not be sufficient. Further the format of publishing also grew from print to the digital. Though the fair use clause of Copyright Law allows the libraries to share their resources from one library to other, it is not possible to share beyond a limited number of resources. Hence, the mode of cooperation has been transformed with introduction of new information technology from print-based

environment to digital environment. The growth of Internet as a new media of information delivery has given rise for proliferation of Web-based full-text online resources. Most of the global publishers instead of spending money on printing and transportation of books and journals opted for using the Internet as a global way to offer their publications to the international community of information users. This enabled the user community with instantaneous access without loss of time between the period of publication to that of access. Now the technology has provided an unparalleled media for communication of information with greater speed and economy.

The libraries being the major consumers of electronic resources, could make benefit greatly from this technology-driven revolution. The abundantly available e-resources through the internet is effecting ever-increasing pressure on libraries,

which, in turn, are consuming larger portions of their budgetary allocation for either procuring or accessing web-based online full-text search services. The libraries with their diminishing financial allocations have no other option to consider new ways to acquire at least the basic resources in order to maximize their limited financial resources and meet their user needs.

The mix of these developments resulted in opting for “shared subscription” or “consortia-based subscription” to e-books & journals from everywhere in the world. Subscription of electronic resources through the Library Consortia permits successful deployment and desktop access to electronic resources at a highly discounted rate of subscription. On the other hand, it helps to match between the increased user’s demand and rising cost of journals at the instance of limited budget.

The library consortia, with their strength of member institutions, commands a major bargain for the individual libraries and also offer healthy business growth opportunities to the publishers. This attracts the best possible price and terms of agreements between the consortia and Publishers. With this new welcome change, the library consortia are being formed across the globe with an objective to take advantage of current global network to promote better, faster and more cost-effective ways of providing electronic information resources to the information seekers.

## **2. Consortia for e-Resources – e-Journals and eBooks:**

Now-a-days libraries are facing the new challenges such as increase in the information resources and their cost, high user expectations and limited budget.

To overcome these shortcomings, the Libraries are experimenting the cooperative purchase through consortia. This helps libraries to obtain better prices by buying joint access for a larger number of users, expanding access to print and electronic collections and developing newer services to meet their user needs.

Digital divide is clearly visible in higher education sector also. We find a few resource-rich Institutions and many resource-poor. This situation is affecting the student community of such institutions. The resource poor institutions are denied of the exposure to the scholarly information. Hence we find the inferior production of output from these institutions.

Hence a consortium for cooperative acquisition of e-Resources will enable the institutions to access the rich and scholarly resources at an affordable cost.

Networking and Resource sharing among University and college libraries.

Cataloguing was a herculean task during last decade, whereas today we have many online tools to create catalogue records. Hence to enable the libraries with lesser exposure, a Common Platform can be developed for cataloguing by all participating libraries. When there are standard fields among all participating libraries, creating a Union Catalogue of all the University Libraries will be easy and guidelines can be worked out for developing the System for ILL. Further, creating a common web portal for Universal and tiered access of Union Catalogue and other shared services will enable the Librarians assured of backed up support of the Network. Later policy and guidelines for shared collection can be developed.

### 3. Tech University Library Consortium

All the Tech Universities can form an E-Resource Consortium and fill in the vacuum generated by the changed policy of AICTE & INDEST Consortium. The Tech University Library Consortium can attract competitive rates of subscriptions, benefit of cap on the annual increase, provides access to the high-quality and scholarly e-resources and to develop an information rich society among Tech Universities and their affiliated as well as autonomous institutions to facilitate end users to have an access to the online resources with minimum investment by its member institutions.

The Consortium can follow the best practices of VTU Consortium and negotiate the subscription prices with original publishers and can achieve more than 60% of bargain from the list price of different Publishers. However, the IEEE's IEL-Online cannot be included in the consortium due to the non-negotiable attitude of IEEE.

### 4. Revenue Models for the Consortium:

- ❖ **Grants from the MHRD/ respective State Governments:** The Tech Universities Consortium can seek the financial assistance from the MHRD or the respective State Governments. Annually based on the E-Resources requirements of the Consortium, the University shall prepare a budget proposal and get the required grants approved by the Governments.
- ❖ **Member Institutions Contributory Model:** One of the feasible and easily adoptable model is Member Institutions Contributory Model. It is the basic responsibility of the Institution to cater to the information requirement of the

Teachers, Research Scholars and students. In this regard, the Institution Managements shall join together and seek the leadership of the Tech Universities to form a Consortium and negotiate for the e-resources from the respective Publishers.

- ❖ **Assistance from Industries from their CSR Funds:** The Tech Universities Consortium shall seek the assistance from the Industries from their CSR Funds. The Affiliated Colleges in collaboration with the University shall plead with all the Industries in the respective Locality and seek their support.
- ❖ **Students Fee Model:** The Tech Universities can opt for introducing the Student Fees Model similar to the HALINET Consortium of Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences(RGUHS), Bangalore and VTU Consortium, Belagavi. The students being the end stake holders of the Consortium can bear a small component of consortium fees.

Accordingly, the VTU Consortium has fixed the fees to students' fees as under:

Student Fees:

- UG Students-750/-,
- PG Students-2000/- and
- Research Scholars 3000/-.

College Annual Membership Fees:

- Autonomous Colleges: Rs.2000/-
- Other Affiliated Colleges: Rs.1000/-

This student fee model will fill the gap between Resource Rich Colleges; Resource Poor Colleges and Resource Nil Colleges. There will not be any

burden on the college managements except an annual Membership Fees.

NAAC/NBA have also appreciated VTU Consortium while inspecting the VTU affiliated colleges for getting access to very rich resources with best negotiated price specially IEL Online Database.

### **5. Aims and Objectives of Tech Universities Consortium**

- ❖ Provide access to the high-quality and scholarly electronic resources to the member institutions evolving competitive pricing models at best terms and conditions suiting to the Libraries;
- ❖ Instantaneous access: reduction of time between point of publication to that of use;
- ❖ The concept of inter-library cooperation among the cooperating libraries will be more strengthened;
- ❖ Helps to promote information literacy programs among the students, research scholars, faculty members and librarians of the institutions in using the electronic resources efficiently;
- ❖ Helps in evaluating the usage of the subscribed resource and decide on renewal of the same and to identify other substitute resources that are more in demand by the stake holders of the institution;
- ❖ Enables to bring qualitative change in teaching, learning and research and address the ever growing challenges of globalization of higher education; and
- ❖ Research productivity of the institutions will grow both in terms of quality and quantity of publications.

### **6. Benefits**

The consortia-based subscription to e-resources has proved its importance in increasing the access to electronic resources across the academic and research community at competitive rates of subscription. Major benefits of The Consortium are as under:

- ❖ The Consortia act as a single-window service for Academic and Research Institutions;
- ❖ The collective strength of participating institutions under the consortia, attract competitive rates of subscription, annual increase on the price of the resources can also be restricted with most favourable terms of agreement for a wider range of e-resources;
- ❖ Back files access is an added advantage, users would get access to material previously not subscribed;
- ❖ The Consortia are expected to achieve remarkable increase in sharing resources amongst participating libraries;
- ❖ The Consortia can also keep their option open for extending the associate membership open for all other Technical Institutions Polytechnics through their “Associate Membership Programme”. Private institutions and other institutions can join the Consortia and get the benefit of not only competitive rates of subscription but also the favourable terms and conditions;
- ❖ The participating institutions will have less pressure on space requirement for storing and managing print-based library resources as the

subscribed resources are accessible online in electronic format;

- ❖ The Libraries can overcome all the problems associated with print media such as their wear and tear, location, shelving, binding, organizing, etc.; and
- ❖ The participating institutions can increase their research productivity with increased access to international databases and full-text resources.

### 7. Governance of Tech Universities Consortium

The governance of the Consortium comprises:

- i. The Governing Council
- ii. The Steering Committee, and
- iii. The Nodal Officers Committee.

#### a. Governing Council

The constitution of the Governing Council may be as follows:

- ◆ Vice Chancellor, Tech Universities : **Chairman**
- ◆ The Registrar: **Member**
- ◆ The Finance Officer: **Member**
- ◆ The Dean Academic: **Member**
- ◆ Two LIS expert members involved in the formation of the Consortium : **Members**
- ◆ Two Nominees from the Steering Committee: (Other than the Dean Academic & The Registrar): **Members**
- ◆ Two Nominees from the Nodal Officers Committee: **Members**
- ◆ Nominee from the AICTE: **Member**

- ◆ Nominee from the DTE: **Member**

- ◆ Librarian, Tech Universities/Coordinator Consortium: **Member Secretary**

The Governing Council will be the apex policy/ decision making body of the Tech Universities Consortium. This will meet at least once in a calendar year. The recommendations of steering committee, nodal officer committee and negotiation committee are to be approved by the Governing Council.

#### b. Steering Committee

The constitution of the Steering Committee will be as follows:

- ◆ Executive Council Member of Tech Universities: **Chairman**
- ◆ One Nominated member from Academic Senate: **Members**
- ◆ Five Principals/Nominee among all member institutions: **Members**
- ◆ Five Librarians / Nominee among all member institutions: **Members**
- ◆ The Dean Academic: **Member**
- ◆ Two LIS expert members involved in the formation of the Consortium: **Members**
- ◆ Nominee from the AICTE: **Member**
- ◆ Nominee from the DTE: **Member**
- ◆ Librarian, Tech Universities/Coordinator Consortium: **Member Secretary**

The Steering Committee will be the General body of the Consortium. This committee will form the policy for the Consortium from time to time and send its recommendations to the Governing Council. This

will meet at least once in a calendar year. This committee will also submit the financial requirement of the Consortium by forming a subcommittee of finance under the Chairmanship of the Chairman of Steering committee and propose annual budget for the approval of the Governing Council. It will also review the recommendations of the Nodal Officers committee and recommend the same for approval of the Governing Council. The steering committee will also negotiate the prices of E-resources and terms and conditions of the publishers. Two LIS (Library and Information Science) experts nominated to Governing Council may also be invited to this subcommittee. This committee will review the proposals/offers received from the publishers/aggregators and negotiate prices and terms and conditions as and when required. The steering committee may also propose organizing training programmes / workshops / conferences/ user meets, etc., on aspects of concern.

**c. Nodal Officers Committee**

The constitution of the Nodal Officers Committee will be as follows:

- ◆ The Chairman of Steering Committee:  
**Chairman**
- ◆ The Dean Academic: **Member**
- ◆ Two LIS expert members involved in the formation of the Consortium: **Members**
- ◆ The Librarians of all member institutions:  
**Members**
- ◆ Librarian, VTU/Coordinator Consortium:  
**Member Secretary**

All Librarians of member institutions will be the Nodal Officers of the Consortium. Each nodal officer will be the contact point for the Consortium. This committee will review the needs and usage of the e-Resources, discuss inter library cooperation and suggest need based training programmes and workshops. This committee will meet at least twice in a calendar year.

**8. Areas of Collaborative Library Initiatives:**

**a. Common Repository for less used books in Libraries:**

Father of Library movement in India Dr.S.R.Ranganathan's Fifth Law of Library Science – i.e., Library is a growing Organism - substantiate that the libraries continues to grow with their collection and users and, hence, the natural growth process in living organisms will also apply to the Libraries. Therefore, as long as we add collection to the libraries, we should also withdraw the older collections from the shelves in order to make the current collection visible. But no book is useless, though it is less used. Hence, storing them for the future use is the responsibility of Libraries by maintaining older collection. This is being addressed to by western Universities by establishing a Centrally Located Centre for less used collection, which can be used by all the participating Libraries.

**b. Common web portal for Academic libraries:**

Library Networking necessitates a common portal to share the resources as well as services mutually. The teachers and students of member institutions will be able to learn many search skills through eLearning. Every Library need not build the access page. They can access all resources and services through this portal.

**c. Manual for Common Standards, Policies and Procedures for Academic Libraries in the State:**

All the academic libraries in the state need to structure common standards, policies and procedures. This will enable to strengthen the Academic Librarianship stronger. This will also help the Academic Libraries to address their common problems efficiently.

**d Online, full-text and Interactive Database of prescribed Text Books of all Universities:**

Till date the UG students are mostly Text Book and Guide Book oriented as reference books are often inaccessible to them. While this is not a happy state of affairs, efforts must be made to gain them access to the prescribed text books all the same. Efforts may be put to purchase the rights of the text books and collaborate interactive multimedia with them and enable the teachers and students to access all the text books with multimedia effect. This will enable teachers and students to get interest in teaching and learning. The Library shall concentrate in building the reference collection.

**e Development of state of the art e-publishing system & Infrastructure for publications of University Publication Division:**

The publication divisions of most of the universities in the country have become defunct now-a-days. Specially the Technical Institutions in India are giving very little importance for promoting the publication among its Teachers and Research Scholars. The universities have not been successful in initiating the teachers and Research Scholars into writing as very often their content level does not cross the confines of the class rooms and the examination requirements. As a result the publication divisions have not been able to market their

publications and there is no ROI policy either. Hence, digitizing of all publications of publication divisions and promoting teachers and research scholars to write more and more in order to publish the same from University publication divisions and market these publications through single portal of e-commerce will enable them to be economically self-sustained.

**f. Registry of ongoing Research & Research output in Universities:**

Universities are awarding PhD degrees to their Research Scholars but there is no common registry of Research output. It is essential to make a registry of Ongoing Research to avoid duplication of Research. Funded research projects of different Universities are also experiencing duplication. Hence, the state can establish a state level Registry with mandate to all research Scholars of all Universities register compulsorily.

**9. Short Term Goals:**

Consortium can be quickly started with formation of a small and cohesive core working team. The group will focus on designing a framework, formation of policies and procedures for the consortium – both for short-term and long-term.

Short term goals would focus on addressing immediate needs and also to ensure early success stories to create a positive and winning environment.

Some of the proposed goals or objectives are given below:

- ❖ Creation of web presence – Portal, Facebook & Twitter
- ❖ Conceive, Design, Develop and Launch Copyright Compliant IR for Technological Universities in India

- ❖ Resource Sharing among Universities and Colleges
- ❖ Demand based Document Delivery Service
- ❖ Technical Translations System/Services
- ❖ Begin Big Projects: Ex. MOOCs, Customized e-Readers with prescribed Text books, etc.
- ❖ Develop Apps to drive e-Content usage among students & faculty
- ❖ Alerts on 'call for research project proposals'
- ❖ Organizing Conferences /seminars/workshops
- ❖ Trainings on Project proposal writing, IPR, Academic Writing, MOOCs...

## 10. Conclusion

The Library Consortium, in a sense, is a cooperative venture which will help the resource-rich institutions to strengthen their resources and put them to optimum use while helping the resource-poor institutions to contribute their mite in resource development and make it accessible to the needy learner. Thus the proposed project has a social dimension along with its being basically an academic venture

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