

LIBRARY CONSORTIA: - AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract: - *The Paper Deals with the Library Consortia, What is Consortia and its Need.*

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The sharing of resources among the participating libraries is what library consortiums do. Increasing the number and functionalities of formal agreements between two or more libraries in their respective fields.

Every element of life has been impacted by information and communication technology, which has become increasingly user-friendly in recent years. Another business where technology has become widely used is publishing.

Modern information technology and new publishing methods have encouraged users and

librarians to choose electronic publications for new purchases. Several locations throughout the world have developed library consortiums. Resource sharing has become necessary due to the rising demand for information and libraries' inability to keep all resources on hand.

This idea has been more popular among academicians, publishers, and librarians during the past ten years. The 'consortia' is the plural form of 'consortium' but is often used in place of singular form. It comes from the Latin word for "fellowship," and its meaning stresses the joining together of many organisations for a certain goal. Synonymously the term is used as alliance,

coalition, collaboration, cooperation, partnership, etc. Consortium is a complicated organization.

Although some organisations of libraries participate in consortium activities, this is "an association" in a meaning that is not usually recognised. For example, a consortium is not a library association. A consortium is not a state or regional network of public libraries, despite the fact that these networks may negotiate access to electronic resources on behalf of their member institutions.

To put it simply, consortia range from somewhat informal cooperatives established just to obtain economies of scale in purchasing to highly organised, centrally staffed, and centrally subsidised organisations; meant to share the resources, and to engage in all manner of collaboration within the member libraries.

What is a Library Consortium?

A Library Consortium consists of a number of libraries, preferably with some homogeneous characteristics by subject, institutional affiliation, or affiliation to funding authorities that come together with an objective to do certain job collectively.

Historical Background:

The phrase "library consortium" may not have been used for the first time on exactly the same day, but the idea of a consortium as a "association or partnership" has long been a cornerstone of librarianship. It generally refers to cooperation, coordination, and collaboration

between and among libraries with the aim of sharing information resources.

However, it wasn't commonly adopted by libraries until the 1980s or thereabouts. The term was first used in contemporary language in the 17th century in reference to the affiliation and cooperation between husband and wife. In law the term still applies to the husband and wife relationship. According to published sources, Melvil Dewey wrote about "library cooperation" in a *Library Journal* article that ran in 1886 and a year before E. Mac presented views on "co-operation versus competition" in the same publication (Kopp – 1998, p.7).

Furthermore, R. B. Down outlined in a paper his futuristic concept of library collaboration "One for all – a historic sketch of library co-operation, 1930-1970" included in the 1939 symposium on "The Library of Tomorrow" organized by the ALA. Nfila & Darko-Ampem traces the history of library consortium from 1960 through 2000 and report that an International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC) was formed in 1997. Recently, many libraries have found that the creation of consortia is an appealing answer. Since it integrates the past, present, and future, even "consortium" becomes a positive term for libraries. Electronic consortia are already sprouting up in all corners of the globe in a dizzying array of forms and shapes, and many libraries are already a part of at least one consortium. It is important to note that the

'consortia' are still in their infancy in many nations, including India

Need for Library Consortia:

Due to the ever-rising cost of journal subscriptions as well as the budgetary constraints, universities are struggling to keep their subscriptions, especially to key publications. Academic library professionals must discover ways to meet the research needs of a rising number of teachers and students while managing new technology, escalating workloads, and shrinking staff numbers. Libraries are under increasing pressure to deliver more information with less resources. The library consortia network has been around for a while, especially in the USA, but its primary function was to share print copies of the materials. Today, that function is replaced by online access to electronic resources.

The average number of subscription to international journals by Indian University is even Less than 500 titles; whereas the average number of American universities is more than 4000 titles.

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