

Collaboration and Sharing Resources and Services among Institute Libraries of the National Universities in Sri Lanka: with recommendations for improvement.

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Abstract

The need for resource sharing among libraries has become even more important today with constraints of finance, space, and manpower. Specific objectives of this study were to develop a database / directory on the resources available in the institute libraries, to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the institute libraries and librarians in the University sector and to help each other to overcome the weaknesses. Study used a multi-strategy approach called ‘triangulation’ to collect data. Literature review, questionnaires, interviews and the documents generated by the organizations were used as study instruments. This study delineates the ways of collaboration and web-based library cooperation with the conclusion that the automation of libraries and effective formation of country consortium can only promote the effective library cooperation for access to worldwide information and global resource sharing. Current study also recommends that the government or UGC should take up development projects to provide appropriate digital library databases and provide ICT training at global standard. Further, the study recommends that the libraries should seek for workable partnership efforts. Therefore the benefits derivable will help them to optimize information services delivery. Partnership among libraries and related institutions should be strengthened by the leaders of the organizations through understanding. The partnering parties should cope with changes through professional development, so that they can adapt to their new roles. Institute libraries should develop alternative sources of funding than depending solely on their parent institutions.

Keywords: Institutes Libraries, Collection development, Resource sharing, Collaboration

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Introduction

Academic libraries are central to the learning, teaching and research enterprise of their institutions. As emphasized by Brophy (2005), “Academic libraries are here to enable and enhance learning in all its forms – whether it be the learning of a first year undergraduate coming to terms with what is meant by higher education or the learning of a Nobel Prize winning scientist seeking to push forwards the frontiers of her discipline”.

There appears to be limited communication and collaboration among institute libraries and librarians in Sri Lanka despite the development of technology and specific resources and services that promote collaboration. It was observed too that with the problems that the institute libraries face due to lack of space and limited resources, it is important to share resources and services.

Under the Universities Act no: 16 of 1978, the Universities in Sri Lanka were established and the institutes attached to them were established under section 24 A.

There are 16 National Universities in Sri Lanka namely Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka, University of Colombo, Eastern University of Sri Lanka, University of Jaffna, University of Kelaniya, University of Moratuwa, Open University of Sri Lanka, University of Peradeniya, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, University of Ruhuna, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, University of Sri Jayawardanapura, Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka, University of Visual Performing Arts and Wayamba University of Sri Lanka.

There are 18 institutes attached to these 16 Universities. Seven of them are attached to University of Colombo (Postgraduate Institute of Indigenous Medicine (PGIIM) was established in 2021). They are Institute of Agro – Technology and Rural Sciences. (UCIARS), Institute of Bio – Chemistry, Molecular Biology and Bio-Technology (IBMBB), Institute of Human Resource Advancement (IHRA), Institute of Indigenous Medicine (IIM), National Institute of Library and Information Science (NILIS), Postgraduate Institute of Medicine (PGIM) and School of Computing (UCSC). Swami

Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies. (SVIAS) is attached to Eastern University. Gampaha Wickramarachchi Ayurveda Institute (GWAI- This has become a University in 2021) Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology (PGIAR) and Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies (PGIPBS) are attached to University of Kelaniya.

Institute of Technology. (ITUM) is attached to University of Moratuwa. Open University of Sri Lanka has Postgraduate Institute of English (PGIE).

University of Peradeniya has 03 postgraduate institutes. They are Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture (PGIA), Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences (PGIHSS) and Postgraduate Institute of Science (PGIS). Postgraduate Institute of Management. (PIM) is attached to University of Sri Jayawardanapura.

The only institute that is not attached to one of the State Universities is the National Centre for Advance Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences (NCAS).

Each and every institute has been setup with specific aim. Each institute has a unique mix of goals, programs, and expectations influenced by its history and its current mission. As a result, the library serving the institute is unique. Even though the institutes are attached to Universities, they are different from the Universities and the Faculties with their aims, objectives, organizational structure and activities.

PGIA (1975), PGIM (1976), IIM (1977), IHRA (formally Institute of Workers' Education-IWE) (1975) and PIPBS (1979) were the institutes established in 1970s. Basically PGIA, PGIM and PIPBS provide only Postgraduate Programs while IIM and IHRA provide both undergraduate and postgraduate programs. From these institutes, IHRA (IWE) was established targeting providing Education to employed personnel preferably engaged in Trade Union activities. Therefore, each and every institute has its uniqueness in its objectives, organization and designed programs.

Aim and Objectives

The purpose of this study is to recommend a mechanism to improve the cooperation among the institute libraries of Universities in Sri Lanka.

Specific objectives are;

1. To develop a database / directory on the resources available in the institute libraries.
2. To find out the strengths and weaknesses of the institute libraries in the University sector.
3. To identify a mechanism to help each other to overcome the barriers faced by the libraries attached to the institutes.

IFLA Medium-Term Programme (1981-85) for the Section of University Libraries and other general Research Libraries has drafted the Statement of Standards for University Libraries with special reference to developing countries as one of their main tasks. They have stated their purpose as “to provide a means by which the quality of the library serving a university can be assessed, to offer guidance for improvements in the library, and to suggest a framework within which various countries or regions could develop their own statements of standards “(Lynch, 1987).The Standing Committee has submitted statements under 10 criteria explicitly Purpose, Organization and Administration, Services, Collections, Staff, Facilities, Budget and Finance, Technology, Preservation and Conservation and Cooperation. Since the institute libraries attached to Universities are also academic libraries, these criteria can be applied to them as well.

There is limited communication and collaboration among institute libraries in Sri Lanka even with the development of the technology. No attempt has been made to find out what action has been taken by individual libraries to share the resources and services among them. The problem is highlighted further where there is total lack of the will to engage in collaboration and sharing some of these resources even when the technology is there to make it happen.

This study is intended to recommend how to collaborate and share resources and services among institute libraries in the University sector in Sri Lanka.

Literature Review

The need for resource sharing consists of four underlying trends in modern society: the growth of all forms of literature, the reliance on information for society to function effectively, the inflation of materials, and the increasing potential of technology. Because of these trends, it has become economically essential to consider resource sharing (American Library Association, 1993).

According to Chatterjee (2010), information resource sharing is more than just sharing information sources among libraries; it also entails utilizing information resources and generating services from one library services to another.

The use of equipment, personnel knowledge and expertise, materials, facilities, and/or information resources by two or more libraries is referred to as resource sharing. Resource sharing, in common parlance, refers to the transactions in which a library makes its items available to a user of another library upon request. The goal of resource sharing is to obtain materials not available in the local library upon the request of a library user. Information resources and library resources are not synonymous; library resources can include things like staff and equipment in addition to information resources. Resource exchange is not a cost-cutting mechanism but an expansion of the range of information available to those who have no direct access to information for economic, technological or social reasons. (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2000)

The need for sharing of resources has increased with time. In the early years (1950s – 1985), the rapid growth of library collections, and the better management of the collections led to attempts at cooperative collection development. In the later years (1985 – 2000), economic constraints, changing expectations and needs of users, changing communication patterns, limitations of library staff and the emergence of digital information resources, contributed to the need for better collection management and resource sharing. (Branin, Groen and Thorin, 2000).

Efforts at efficient resource sharing in India seems to have come to naught and this is tied to the inadequacy of existing resources, lack of

information about them, inadequate security of materials, uncooperative attitude of parent bodies, lack of policies, inflation, and unstable budgetary allocation (Banjo, 1984; Nwazuoke, 2001).

Table 1 revealed that the challenges/barriers or obstacles militating on resource sharing in the University libraries. Barriers are divided into six sub themes. Literature gathered according to the sub themes namely technology challenges, financial challenges, informational challenges, social and personal challenges, infrastructure challenges and legal, political and administrative barriers.

Table 1: Barriers to resource sharing

No.	Barriers to Resource Sharing	Examples
1.	Technology challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of requisite skills in ICT. • lack of well-developed ICT infrastructure. Tanvir (2005), Nwalo (2008), (Fatoki, 2005). Nok (2006)
2.	Financial challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of funds and poor finance management Nwalo (2008), Aina (2001), Tanvir (2005), Odini (1991), Eshijo (2011) Debagha (2012)
3.	Informational challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in the importation of books and journals from abroad due to the high rise in foreign exchange. Fatoki (2005).
4.	Social and Personal challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone calls, local transportation, courier services, and other expenses take time and money. • Inadequate access to current union catalogues and other resources. • Outside of one's library, non-print materials are not permitted.

		Nwalo (2008). Debagha (2012)
5.	Infrastructure challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erratic Internet services, lack of hardware and software
6.	Legal, political and administrative barriers	<p>Fatoki, (2005). Eshijo (2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copyright, jurisdictions, and initial dual operations, and resultant economic burden. Sridhar (1995), Eshijo (2011) • Lack of firm national policy of libraries. Eshijo (2011), Debagha (2012)

Methodology

This study was carried out as a descriptive one. The study population was all the 18 institutes attached to the national universities in Sri Lanka.

Data collection method

The study used a multi-strategy approach called ‘triangulation’ to collect data because it allows the use of more than one method or source to collect data in a study of a social phenomenon so that the findings may be cross-checked (Taole, 2008). The data collection methods applied in this study were questionnaires, interviews and the documents generated by the organizations such as, reports, minutes of meetings, newsletters, brochures and websites.

A questionnaire was drafted consisted of mainly close ended questions. It was designed to obtain basic information about the institute, organization of the library, types of readers, available physical and human resources and the provided services.

To avoid missing data, respondents losing interest, and low response rate, the questions were short, clear and unambiguous. The questionnaire was pre-tested to clarify any anomalies that may cause misrepresentation among the respondents. Pre-testing was done with few Senior Assistant Librarians of the institutes. It was sent to the Directors/Senior Assistant Librarians/

Assistant Librarians in these 18 institutes related to National Universities in Sri Lanka on March 2019 and was revised in 2021.

Data analysis and interpretation

Out of these 18 Institutes, 08 institutes namely PGIM, PGIAR, PGIPBS, PGIE, PGIA, PGIHSS, PGIS and PIM offer only postgraduate degrees and rest of the institutes except NCAS offer undergraduate as well as postgraduate degrees.

From these 18 Institutes, 12 have separate libraries while 06 institutes namely UCIARS, PGIE, PGIA, PGIHSS, PGIS and NCAS do not have separate libraries. From these 06 institutes, 04 of them are catered by main libraries or faculty libraries. Therefore, only two institutes do not provide library facilities (UCIARS and NCAS). This study was mainly focused on the 12 institutes which have separate libraries.

Organization and Administration

The IFLA standards for University Libraries says that “The internal administrative organization of the library should bring together its various material, human, financial, and technical resources and coordinate them effectively to accomplish its objectives.” (Lynch, 1987, p.122) Since each and every library has diverse goals, its collections, services, budgets and technical resources are used to achieve them successfully. Out of the 12 institutes which have libraries, 09 are managed by professional librarians namely IHRA, IIM, NILIS, PGIM, SVIAS, GWAI, PGIAR, PGIPB, ITUM and PIM. There are no Deputy /Senior Assistant/ Assistant Registrars in the institute libraries like in main libraries in the Universities.

According to IFLA standards “A library committee including representatives of the faculties, the University’s administration, the chief administrative officer of the library should advise on matters pertaining to the budget and policies for collection development and use.” (Lynch, p.122) Library Committee is the main body that discusses and advises about most of the library matters including finance and collection development.

Only IHRA, IIM, PGIM and PGIPBS conduct Library Committee Meetings. The librarians of PGIM and PGIPBS represent in their institutional Audit/Finance Committees. IHRA and IIM librarians represent their respective Boards of Studies. The librarian of PGIPBS represents its Board of Faculty. The librarian of PGIM represents its Committee of Information Technology. This shows that there is no uniqueness in conducting Library Committee Meetings or librarian representing other boards among the institutes attached to National Universities in Sri Lanka.

Having good relationship with the other institutes of their respective universities is very important to build up a network among libraries and librarians and for resource sharing. Except IHRA and IIM, other institutes have stated that they have a good relationship with other institutes within the particular university.

Services

As per IFLA guidance, the services provided by the library should be related clearly to the purposes to the University. It points out that “The library’s services should be designed to promote and facilitate effective use of recorded information in all formats by all of the library’s clientele.”(Lynch, p.122).

Table 2: Services provided by the institute libraries

		IBMB	IHRA	IIM	NILIS	PGIM	UCSC	SVIAS	GWAI	PGIA	PGIP	ITUM	PIM
01.	Lending Service	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
02.	Reference Service	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
03.	ILL Service			✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
04.	SDI Service			✓		✓	✓						
05.	User Awareness program		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
06.	Photocopy Service	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
07.	Network Facilities	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				✓	
08.	Internet Searching	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
09.	Printout Service					✓					✓		
10.	Binding					✓					✓		

In spite of PGIM library, the other institute libraries provide open access facility to their readers.

According to the table, all the libraries provide both reference and lending services. As IFLA standards describes, “Services offered by the library should include reference and information services, which are available at adequately identified and designated points during established service hours, and specialized and in-depth assistance to individuals in the use of the library’s resources.” (Lynch, p.122) Further it says “Terms of loan and access to the library’s collections for all user categories should be described. Circulation procedures should be effective and efficient.” (Lynch, p.122)

Inter library loan services are provided by IIM, PGIM, PGIAR, PGIPBS, ITUM and PIM while user awareness programs are conducted in IHRA, IIM, PGIM, SVIAS, GWAI, PGIAR, PGIPBS, ITUM and PIM. IBMBB, IHRA, IIM, PGIM, UCSC, SVIAS, GWAI, PGIAR, PGIPBS, ITUM and PIM provide photocopy service.

Network facilities are available only in IBMBB, IHRA, IIM, PGIM, UCSC, SVIAS and ITUM, while internet facilities are provided by IBMBB, IHRA, IIM, PGIM, UCSC, GWAI, PGIPBS, ITUM and PIM.

Only PGIM and PGIPBS provide printing and binding facilities.

From those 12 institutes which have separate libraries, only 03 of them have separate library buildings (GWAI, PGIAR, and ITUM). Even though all the libraries provide reference services, 06 institutes complained about the space of their libraries and they were not satisfied with the reading environment (IBMBB, IHRA, IIM, UCSC, PGIAR, and PGIPBS). Only PGIM, GWAI, ITUM and PIM were satisfied with their reading environment.

Collections and other resources

While dedicating the IFLA standards on Collections, it says “The library’s collection should be of sufficient size and scope to support the University’s total instructional needs and to facilitate the University’s research programmes.” (Lynch, p.123). It further says “Most items in the library’s collection should be readily available for consultation in the library and should be available to authorized clientele within the context of the library’s purpose, goals and objectives.”(Lynch, p.122)

As academic libraries, the institute libraries also have specific collections. Main subject areas of the institutes which have separate libraries are given below.

Table 3: Subject Specialization.

	Institute	Main Subject Areas.
01.	IBMBB	Molecular Biology, Bio -Chemistry, Bio - Technology
02.	IHRA	Labour Education, Human Resource Management, Service Management
03.	IIM	Ayurveda, Unani and Indigenous Systems of Medicine
04.	NILIS	Library Information Sciences
05.	PGIM	Medicine &Dentistry
06.	UCSC	Computer Science
07.	SVIAS	Aesthetic Studies
08.	GWAI	Ayurveda
09.	PGIAR	Archaeology and Related Discipline
10.	PGIPBS	Buddhist Studies
11.	ITUM	Mechanical, Electrical, Marine, Polymer, Textile
12.	PIM	Management

As per IFLA standards, “The library’s collection should include required and assigned readings, reference and bibliographic materials, basic journals and serials, as well as any other library materials students are expected to consult regularly in the course of their studies or in the preparation of their theses or dissertations.”(Lynch, p.123) All the institute libraries have books, periodicals and theses/dissertations among their collections.

According to IFLA standards, “The library should maintain and make available for use records of its total collections which are consistent and in conformity with recognized standards of cataloguing and classification.” (Lynch, p.122). From these 12 institute libraries, 09 use Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) as the classification system. IBMBB uses Universal Decimal Classification System (UDC). National Library of Medicine Classification system (NLMC) is used by PGIM. PGIAR uses Senaka

Bandaranayake Special Classification System. AACR 2 Rules are the cataloguing rules, used by all the institute libraries.

From the institutes which have separate libraries, only 06 (IIM, PGIM, UCSC, PGPBS, ITUM and PIM) have Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). These can be used by other institutes too.

All the libraries have special collections such as ola leaf manuscripts (IIM, GWAI and PGRIAR), handwritten manuscripts (IIM, SVIAS and GWAI), research paper collections IBMBB) and medicinal plant collections (IIM).

Table 4: Special collections

	IBMBB	IHRA	IIM	NILIS	PGIM	UCSC	SVIAS	GWAI	PGIAR	PGPBS	ITUM	PIM
01. Books	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
02. Periodicals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
03. Theses / Dissertations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
04. E-Resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
05. Ola Leaf Manuscripts			✓					✓	✓			
06. Hand Written Manuscripts			✓				✓	✓				
07. Quick Reference Materials		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
08. Research Paper Collection	✓											
09. Medicinal plants Collection			✓									

Librarians who are responsible for collection management, should be leaders in organizing information sources with extensive knowledge of print collections and digital collections. Librarians should provide resources and services over the internet, help synthesize and aggregate digital resources, help create new publications, manage web printing collections to new repositories and electronic access and distribution options, and maintain a record of knowledge. All these activities should be done in a very distributive and collaborative manner. (Branin, Groen and Thorin, 2000).

For sharing to be successful, mutual objectives, joint decision-making processes, and continuous improvement for all participants are required. Because of economic restrictions and the erroneous notion that a single library's collection could adequately serve all of its user needs with only the rare need for interlibrary loan, Wolfe and Bloss (1998) claim that library collections are becoming increasingly similar.

Libraries are spending more and more of their budget on the same core titles as the acquisition costs rises, leaving them with fewer resources to dedicate to growing a broad collection. According to Burgett, Haar, and Phillips (2004) "similar libraries tend to develop similar collections." Cooperative collection development helps to reduce homogeneity by allowing libraries to reduce duplication in their collections and focus on acquiring unique materials, ultimately improving all of the cooperative's collections.(Burgett, Haar, & Phillips 2004).

Staff

According to standard 5 of IFLA Standards for University Libraries, "The library should have a sufficient number and variety of personnel to develop, organize and maintain the collections and provide information and reference service necessary to meet university needs. The size and qualifications of staff will be determined by many factors including size and scope of collections, number of separate library units, number of service points, number of service hours, rate of acquisition, rate of circulation, nature of processing, and nature of service demand." (Lynch p. 123). As the document says, "Ratio of librarians to clerical and other staff will vary depending upon the range of operations and services provided by the library and upon its total workload requirements."(Lynch, p.123).

Table 5: Number of staff

Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Not Responded
IIM	IBMBB	NILIS
PGIM	IHRA	PGIAR
GWAI	UCSC	
PGIPBS	SVIAS	
PIM	ITUM	

According to the Table 5, IIM,PGIM, GWAI, PGIPBS and PIM are satisfied about the number of staff in their libraries, though IBMBB, IHRA, UCSC, SVIAS and ITUM are not satisfied. While NILIS has not responded to the questionnaire, PGIAR has not responded to this particular question.

As per IFLA standards for University libraries, “Librarians perform the core academic and professional functions of the library: collection development, reference and information service, and substantive activities related to bibliographic control of materials. They should have the appropriate academic and professional education and experience including, when necessary, graduate or professional degrees in their particular specialties.” (Lynch, p. 123). Even though there are 12 institutes which have libraries, only 09 (IHRA, IIM, NILIS, PGIM, SVIAS, GWAI, PGIAR, PGIPB, ITUM and PIM) have professional librarians.

Table 6: Quality of services provided by library staff

Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Not Responded
IBMBB	IHRA	NILIS
IIM	PGIPBS	PGIAR
PGIM		
UCSC		
SVIAS		
GWAI		
ITUM		
PIM		

Even though IBMBB, UCSC, SVIAS and ITUM are not satisfied with the number of library staff, they are satisfied with the services provided. In addition to that IIM, PGIM, GWAI and PIM are also satisfied with the quality of the services provided by their library staff. Only IHRA and PGIPBS are not satisfied while NILIS and PGIAR have not responded.

Facilities

Under IFLA standard 6 of University Libraries, it describes the required space as “The buildings housing the university’s libraries should be of sufficient size and quality to house the collection and to provide sufficient space for their use by students, faculty, and staff.” (Lynch, p. 124) Further it says “The facilities should be attractive and designed to promote operational efficiencies and effectiveness of use. Specific factors include layout of the buildings, light, ventilation, temperature and humidity control, stacks, exhibit areas, number of reader stations.”(Lynch, p.124) “Suitable space for staff

must be available.”(Lynch, p.124) and “Within the context of the university’s educational purposes, the library should be well-equipped to encourage maximum use by the university’s students, faculty, and staff.” (Lynch, p.124)

Table 7: Available facilities

Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Not Responded
PGIM	IBMBB	NILIS
GWAI	IHRA	SVIAS
ITUM	IIM	
PIM	UCSC	
	PGIAR	
	PGIPBS	

As per the table, from the 12 institute libraries, only PGIM, GWAI, ITUM and PIM are satisfied with their facilities. Six institutes have complained about insufficient space and they are not satisfied with the reading environment too.

Budget and finance

As per IFLA standards, “The adequacy of the financial resources of the library is to be judged in relation to the basic purpose of the university, the scope of the university’s academic programme, and the number of its students. The library must be provided with sufficient funding to enable it to develop appropriate collections, recruit and retain suitable staff, provide appropriate services, accomplish necessary operations, and satisfy user needs.” (Lynch, p.124) Further it says “The library’s budget should be a distinct part of the university’s budget. The budget is a statement of estimated income and expenditures for a fixed period of time, usually the fiscal year of the institution.”(Lynch, p.124) and “The library’s budget should be developed and managed by the chief executive officer of the library.” (Lynch, p.124)

Four libraries, namely IBMBB, IIM, PGIPBS and ITUM have complained about limited funds. Odini (1991) avers that low budget makes it difficult for libraries to provide optimum resources for their users.

According to research conducted by Okzagu and Okeagu (2008), Nwalo(2008) and Edem (2010), due to the global information explosion, budget cuts, rising costs and complexities of information resources, and the need to provide the user community with optimal access to needed information make resource sharing initiatives indispensable.

According to Kaul (2001), the challenges of space, uniformity, professional development of employees, and dramatic reduction in library finances have intensified the current librarianship dilemma. However, the following methods can best solve the challenges of information explosion, ever-changing user needs, increasing amount required for subscription to same number of journals, diminishing library budget, and rupee depreciation and its influence on library acquisitions at a particular level: a) Resource sharing via computer and communication networks; b) Access to national and international databases via communication networks and c) Introduction to full text CD based systems.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Cooperation

Even though the first institutes were established in 1970s, still there is no cooperation among them. According to the Standard 10 of University Library Standards of IFLA, “Consistent with its statement of purpose, the University Library should engage with other libraries in cooperative activities relating to collection development, resource sharing, the development of union catalogues, the preservation and conservation of library materials.” (Lynch, p.125) Building up a mechanism for collaboration among institute libraries has become a main visible finding of this study.

Building up a Network among Institute Libraries

It is mandatory to build up a network among institute libraries. As a basic need of building up a network among the institute libraries, the researcher has compiled a directory that contains the information about the affiliated University, areas of specialization, main programs conducted, organization of the library, types of library users, available information sources, available services and contact details of all the institutes.

Building up a relationship with relevant university or universities

Through a collaboration with the relevant university library, an institute will be able to use the services of the university library such as lending and reference services as well as photocopy and binding services etc. In addition to that, the institute libraries can be benefitted by the resources such as books and other library materials, equipment and human resources that the university library has. Recently, the University of Colombo, which has 08 institutes has built up a mechanism for communication with its institutes through the library committee meeting. This may be an elementary platform for the institute libraries to build up a relationship with the university and this can be applied to other institutes too.

Resource Sharing

Usman (2006) stated that the formalized arrangement of resource sharing made by the International Federation of Library Association (2002) is a common feature of collaboration between two or more libraries, especially when geographical and political borders separate the participants. PGIM, IIM and GWAI are basically specialized for Medical Sciences. Therefore, they can share their databases and numerous other collections: e.g. IIM has a Medicinal Plant Collection that may be used by PGIM and GWAI too. Management is the broad subject area of IHRA and PIM. IHRA has collections on Labour Economics, Trade Unionism and Human Resource Management. PIM has a Socio Economic Data Collection. These two institutes can exchange their materials and databases. Personnel exchange, interlibrary lending, and collaborative financing of mutually beneficial projects such as access to electronic resources were recognized as potential areas of cooperation by the libraries. Inadequacy of current resources, inadequate security of materials, unfriendly attitudes of parent bodies, lack of policies, inflation, and uncertain budgetary allocations are among the issues studied by Edoka (2000), Nwazuo (2001) and Ejedafiru (2003).

As a result of shrinking library budgets, rising information resource prices and increasing clientele information needs, many libraries have been forced to engage in resource sharing. As a result, resource sharing is an effective strategy for the library to meet its never-ending information requirements.

There are various sorts of resource sharing. The libraries, whether deliberately or unconsciously, participate in one or more of them. Many hurdles impede resource sharing, as do many other great programs, but there are solutions to overcome them. Libraries will be able to overcome obstacles and continue to serve their customers if they recognize the benefit of resource sharing to their patrons. Some of the ways for overcoming obstacles include proper preparation, having enough money, and having a resource sharing policy in place. Resource sharing appears to be the quickest and most cost-effective way for a library to demonstrate its environmental relevance in this technological age.

The success of any resource sharing activities in Sri Lanka can be achieved by considering the following suggestions:

- There is a need for a national authority to design resource sharing efforts and ensure that they are carried out properly. According to a study by Ikem and Nwalo (2002), university libraries in Nigeria were willing to create a consortium to address the issues of providing effective access to information resources to their growing user community. University Grants Commission (UGC), University Library Consortium in Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka National Library and Documentation Services Board, Sri Lanka Library Association and other professional groups should all be members of such an organization. The entities will play a vital role in designing an approved nationwide resource sharing program and activities.
- Improving information and communication technology is crucial. This is because when new ICTs are deployed, resource sharing activities become more vital, especially when the digitization process has become the hallmark of a useful library. Librarians in Sri Lanka must also be willing to change their attitudes and embrace the available ICTs.
- Professional organizations and others should make an effort to educate professionals of the above institutes by organizing conferences and utilizing other platforms to promote awareness about the importance of library resource sharing.

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