



Inflibnet its Impact on Higher Education

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE



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ABSTRACT

The present era is an era of information explosion. A tremendous amount of information is being produced every minute of every day. The University Libraries are facing financial crisis, hence must realize the importance of resource sharing. At present, through not much resource sharing is done except the interlibrary loan, at proposal of Library networking of University, colleges and R&D Institutions in India. The Network is known as Information and Library network (INFLIBNET). The INFLIBNET is moving towards the accelerate higher Education through its activities, services and functions, which are discussed in this paper.

KEY WORDS

Inflibnet, Education, Services.

INTRODUCTION

The social development of nations is highly dependent on type and quality of education. The UGC taking into consideration the twin phenomenon on information explosion and price rise which has created a solution of inadequate resources even in front line and established University libraries decide to take a quantum jump in to a new era by setting up an "Inter-agency working group for development of an Information and Library Network" popularly known as INFLIBNET, which are recommended that to keep pace with the costly information resources in the library of Higher Education sector whether they are University Libraries or R&D institute libraries should be organized and linked via modern communication technology networks and through these network offer catalogue services, collection development and other communication based services.

Inflibnet

Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) is a major program of the University Grand Commission (UGC) initiated in 1991 with its headquartering at Gujarat University campus, Ahmedabad. The program is directed to modernization of Library and Information centers and established a mechanism for information transfer and access to support scholarship, learning and academic pursuit. It also aimed at establishing a national network for Library and Information center of University institutions in India. It is basically a cooperative endeavor in resource development, sharing and its utilization at national level. Over the years, the program has progressed steadily and since May 1996 it is an independent autonomous Inter University center under the UGC to coordinate and implement the nation wide high speed network for connecting all the University Libraries in the Country.

Genesis of Inflibnet

The first formal meeting for what later on came to be known as INFLIBNET took place on April 22, 1988 under the chairmanship of Prof. Yashpal, Chairman of UGC and report came out in December 1988. This was very fast work by any yardstick and the initiators and number deserve praise for their single-mindedness and sincerity for purpose. A working group of nineteen members are setup to go into whole question of networking and finally its starts to work.

What is Inflibnet?

The description on INFLIBNET as a cooperative network of University and R & D complexes, sharing their resources and facilities of each other and offering union catalogue, databases, document supply and communication services.

Why Inflibnet

The UGC spend about more than 150 crores/year for libraries in higher education for acquisition of books & journals but no researcher at one single institution is able to have access to all the materials that he/she requires because no library is self-sufficient. If on other hand access to other collection is made possible then in place of publications of costly resources and unique collections may be ensured. The network since it would be based on the modern communication system, would also be facilitate academic conservation between any two areas.

Objective of Inflibnet

The primary objectives of INFLIBNET as envisaged in Memorandum of Association are:

- To evolve a national network interconnecting various libraries and information centers in Universities, Deemed Universities, Collages and UGC information center, institutions of National Importance and R&D Institutions.
- To provide the reliable access to document collection of libraries by creating on-line union catalogue of monographs, serials, and non book materials in various libraries in India.
- To provide better access to worldwide bibliographic information sources with citation and abstract such as periodical article, conference papers, Technical reports, standers and specifications, patents, monographs etc. through indigenously created databases and by establishing gateways for on-line accessing of international databases held by international information networks and centers.
- To provide document delivery services by establishing resource centers around libraries having rich collection of documents.
- To optimize information resources utilization through shared cataloguing, inter library loan services, catalogue production, collection development and avoiding the duplication in acquisition to the extent possible.

- To implement computerization of operations and services in the libraries and information centers of the country, following a uniform standard.
- To facilitate academic communication among engineers, scientist, researcher, social scientist faculties & students through electronic mail, Internet, bulletin board, file transfer, computer/audio/video conferencing etc.
- To trained 7 develop human resources in the field of computerized library operations and networking to successfully participate in the establishment and regular operation of INFLIBNET.

Activities of Inflibnet

1. **Library Automation:** The automation of University library is a major activity of INFLIBNET. It is also a prerequisite for networking of libraries and resource sharing under the INFLIBNET programme. Realizing the importance of this basic necessity, INFLIBNET center through UGC has been providing grant to the university identified under the programme. Every year, 15-20 Libraries identified and initial grant to some of 6.5 lakh is provided. This enables the libraries to purchase computer, modem, telephone, printer, Air conditioner, software etc. These selected libraries are also provided with repairing grant for the first five years after the installation of system. This help them to take care of expenditures relating to salary of information Scientist (A position created specially to assist Librarian in implementation of programme). Data entry, computer maintenance, consumable items, telephone charges etc. Till now more than 200 universities have given grant for automation purpose.
2. **Software Development:** To facilitate automation function of the participating libraries, library management software was developed. Software for University library (SOUL), work in client server mode in windows environment using MS-SQL server as back end tool.
3. **Human Resource Development:** The major objective of this group is to conduct various training courses from time to time depending on the requirements. INFLIBNET has been conducting the training courses of short and long duration and meetings etc, through this group. National Convention CALIBER and PLANNER are regular feature of INFLIBNET under this group. Several other types of training courses and workshops are conducted in collaboration with various national agencies like NASSDOC (ICSSR), All India Radio, ICAR, KVS etc. The group will also assist in preparing libraries for automation, identifying universities for funding, follow-up assistance etc.

Regional Training Programme: IRTPLA is one of the popular programmes started by the group in recent times and a short duration course, conducted at different universities to implement automation at college libraries. The response to this course is very high and it is able to attract many states and conducted more than 50 courses across the country covering most of the states. Many more such courses are being planned this

4. **Development of Union Databases:** The center is currently engaged in creating following databases which can be accessed on- line using Internet through INFLIBNET web page i.e. www.inflibnet.ac.in. The databases are:
 - (a) **Book Databases:** The database represents the holding of participant libraries under the programme cornering both old as well as current books and about 10 lakh unique records are available and more than fifteen lakh records received from universities are being process.
 - (b) **Thesis:** This union database covers the bibliographic Metadata of Doctoral Theses submitted to more than 234 Universities/Institutes in India. It has over 1, 81,491 unique records from all subject areas. This data is contributed by participating Universities and we have collected more data from various reliable sources, university announcements etc
 - (c) **Current Serials Database:** Union database of current serials is one of the major databases developed by INFLIBNET covering 10,750 unique titles subscribed by more than 185 universities/

institute libraries. This database provides the listing of titles with brief bibliographic information along with the library name. Titles classified under the serial are covered in this database. To search this database, you may use the access points given here to retrieve the information. Database was last updated on January, 2005.

(d) **Expert Database of S&T:** EDST is the premier database of profiles of scientists / researchers and faculty members working at leading R & D and other institutions involved in teaching and research in India. It provides important information about expert's educational qualifications, area of expertise, contact address, skills and accomplishments.

The database is being developed under the project funded by NISSAT, Ministry of Science and Technology, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, New Delhi. The database offers expertise of more than 24,000 faculties from the nation's leading institutions. Attempt has been made to provide access to relevant and accurate information collected from various sources. Web enabled interface has been incorporated to facilitate the search and update the names listed in the database. All these databases are updated on regular basis.

5. **Document Delivery System:** INFLIBNET has setup six document delivery centers for providing full text of serials articles available from the collection of their university libraries. Besides the existing resources, the university an attempt is being made to work on arrangement with national documentation centers, sectoral documentation centers and other resourceful libraries. The UGC has released the fund to these universities to equip them to provide this service. The centers are: Banaras Hindu University, Indian Institute of Science, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Panjab University, Tata Institute of social science and University of Hyderabad.
6. **UGC–Infonet Project:** The UGC has lunched an ambitious programme to bring out the quality changes in the academic infrastructure, especially for higher education. Under this programme this is proposed to use information and communication technology (ICT) and internet to transform learning environment from a mono dimensional one to multi dimensional one UGC- Infonet will be boon to the higher education.
7. **E-subscription Fror University System Under UGC-Infonet:** The UGC has lunched a programme to provide electronic access over the Internet to scholarly literature in all areas of learning to the university sector in India. The programme is fully funded by UGC and administered & monitor by INFLIBNET. All the Indian Universities can get the membership of this programme and it will gradually extend to collages. In this E- subscription programme 5500 journals are covered of different subjects.

CONCLUSION

INFLIBNET is very ambitious and well throughout project designed to sharing the resources among the higher education institutions. The growth of INFLIBNET is the growth of higher education in our country. In the emerging Indian education Society INFLIBNET not just a mission but it is a mission to improve in higher education and research all over the country. Although, the INFLIBNET is still in developing stage but it contribute a lot in the development in higher education of our country by helping the people to keep themselves update through resource sharing of the databases and E-journals consortium. It is also expected in near future to have more impact on higher education in improving the quality when it will reach to its glory.

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