

## Indian Library Networks: Myth or Reality

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### Abstract

Since from the inception of CALIBNET (Calcutta Library Network) in 1986, Many library networks are emerges in India ranging from UGC INFLIBNET to MALIBNET and so on. Among these networks few are enlarging their services and boundaries but some are still in the infantile stage due to various reasons. In this situation, this paper attempted to present the existing situations of library networking systems of the country. The paper is also made an attempt to review the difficulties in establishing a single public library network system and also a proposed public library network system for Tamil Nadu. As far as Indian Academic Library networks a detailed description has been made by the paper and along with this, existing situations about Indian special library networks are also presented in this paper. Problems of networks are also examined by the paper and many suggestions are made by this paper at the end for improving the networking conditions in India. Apart from this, some of the research based proposed library networks are also presented in this paper.

**Keywords:**Public library network system, Academic Library networks.

### Introduction

Libraries are the symbols of civilized Society. The Libraries contributions to the upliftment of society are felt by all walks of life. It is evident that the developed society has well developed Library system, but for the developing nations, many of the libraries are still in primitive stage. This is because of lack of resources and high illiteracy rate. This results in to the lack of efficient performance by many of the libraries of these nations. Moreover, the fluctuations in the cost of reading materials are also paved the ways for inadequate collection developments among these Libraries. Among the libraries of developing nations especially in India, as a developing nation which marching towards

to enter in to the realm of developed nations also, experienced with the concept of library Networks and resource sharing. But, during the closing years of the last century, India witnessed drasting changes in the field of Library networking and resource sharing. Thus, this paper focuses on the existing Library Networking and Resource sharing in India.

#### *Definition of Library Network*

The Library network can be defined as follows:

“A Library networks is broadly described as a group of libraries coming together with some agreement of understanding to help each other with a view to satisfying the information needs of their clientele”.[1]

UNISIST-II Working document defines information Network as “A set of inter-related information systems associated with communication facilities which are cooperating through more or less formal agreements in order to implement information handling operations to offer better services to the users.”[2]

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### *Need for the Study*

NISSAT (National Information System for Science and Technology) is the fore runner of the establishment of the first library network CALIBNET (Calcutta Library Network) in 1986. This is the pioneer works towards library networks. Since then many of the library networks are established ranging from local area networks to national and International. But few of the networks that are established with fine objectives are in Primary stage, few are enlarging their services and boundaries for instance DELNET (Developing Library Network) and INFLIBNET (Information Library Network). In this situation, it is required to present the real situation of the Library networking systems of the country. Apart from this, paper also focus on the lacuna and problem exist among the networking systems of this Country.

### *Purposes of Library Networking*

The library networking systems are established with the following purposes or objectives:

- To promote and facilitate sharing of the resources with in the group of Libraries in order to provide needed information in time to users at the lower cost
- To create bibliographic tools like union catalogue of books and periodicals.
- To Promote and develop the standards in Library activities and operations.
- Proper use of information technology (IT) in providing information services in all disciplines to achieve economy in the use of resources of both money, man and material.
- To develop a database of information resources available in India with the help of existing information networks to generate new services and improve up on the efficiency of the existing ones.
- To foster discussions in the Library and information communities on all aspects of resource sharing, including:

- (i) Cooperative cataloguing;
- (ii) Coordinated collection development;
- (iii) Interlibrary loan and document delivery; and
- (iv) Resource sharing databases.[3]

### *Components of an Ideal Information Networking of Sharing Information Resources*

Clear-cut statement of objectives of the networking are:

- Design, development and drafting of networking manual.
- Adoption of standardization methods for data base design and development.
- Presence of adequate trained personal.
- Sense of cooperation and coordination between the participating library and Information centers.(Ramesh Babu, 2000)

Unesco promotes three areas of action to encourage the development of electronic networks:

1. Preparing and implementing development policies, including the social and cultural aspects;
2. Supporting the development of information sources and services;
3. Training for the design, the implementation the operation and utilization of information and communication technologies.[4]

### *Historical Review of Indian Networks*

In 1958, Scientific Policy Resolution adopted and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru emphasized the fostering of scientific temper in people. In pursuance of this agenda several committees and commissions were appointed to look in to specific issues and come up with necessary recommendations, such as Sinha Committee's report (1959) Ranganathan Report UGC (1965), Peter Lazar Report and V A Kamath report (1972) to modernize the library systems of the country.

In 1984 the working group of the planning commission headed by Dr. N. Seshagiri recommended to the Government about the need for modernization of library services and information centres during the seventh five year plan of 1985–1990.

In 1986 NISSAT initiated the establishment of CALIBNET (Calcutta Library Network) in Kolkatta, DELNET (Delhi Library Network) in Delhi in 1988, PUNENET (Pune Library Network) in Pune 1992, ADINET (Ahmedabad Library Network) in Ahamadabad in 1993, BONET (Bombay Library Network) in Mumbai in 1994. INSDOC supported the formation of MALIBNET (Madras Library Network) in Chennai in 1993. In Bangalore BALNET (Bangalore Library Network) was registered as a society in 1997. UGC (University Grants Commission) established INFLIBNET (Information Library Network) in 1988. However, this scenario of networks does not provide a growth of ideal library networks in India.

It may be important to refer to the report of the working group of the Planning Commission on Libraries and information centers for the ninth five year plan 1997-2002 which was prepared under the chairmanship of Mr. B. P. Singh, Secretary, Department of Culture. It is an important report as it had come at stage or the Indian Libraries, how to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century due to unprecedented developments in information technology, Networking, Internet.

The report includes the major recommendations for the networking and modernization of libraries as listed below:

- Special attention should be given to all Libraries by linking through networks. As setting up of such networks, standardization of processing and related activities should be ensured.
- It is recommended that there should be a National Library system (NLS) comprising of National Library NL, Kolkatta for India, National depository Libraries in Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai, subject Libraries such as National science

Library, National Medical Library etc., and National documentation centers such as DESIDOC (Defence Scientific Information Documentation Center), NISCAIR (Indian National Scientific Documentation Center), NASSDOC (National Social Science Documentation Centre) etc.,

- Necessary assistance are to be given to the institution libraries for modernization and introduction to Information technology for the better performance. It is expected to create local area network in each university so as to access departments information resources.
- UGC should provide adequate financial assistance to the University and College Libraries for creation of international standards of database for retrospective and much used collections.
- The major special libraries and Indian depository library should merged to the database following uniform standards on software.
- The Information and Library network (INFLIBNET) programme of the UGC and information centers at Baroda, Bangalore and Mumbai should be made fully operational. The information center should be linked with the INFLIBNET and should function in a decentralized manner for the dissemination of information.
- National library database of complete catalogue in all languages should become available using standard international format. The national library should act as a centralized agency for such database.
- The participating Libraries of NLS should be networked with infrastructure and standardization of computer system must be ensured. The promotion and creation of bibliographic databases should be done in all Indian languages. The infrastructure requirements of National, Regional and Local networks were financially supported by National

**Table 1: An Overview of Indian Library Network**

S. No	Name of the Network	Acronym	Year of establishment	Sponsorship	Membership	Services
1	Ahmedabad Library Network	ADINET	1994	NISSAT, DSIR & INFLIBNET	Indian University and college Libraries and Information center in and around Ahmedabad	Library automation, Database current periodicals Inter library loan, Job opportunities for Librarians, training programme supply of articles received by in and around Ahmedabad etc
2	Bangalore Library Network	BALNET	1995	JRD, Tata Memorial Library	100 libraries in Karnataka State	Development of subject portals, peer to peer networked services, Inter operation service, Institutional repository service etc
3	Bombay Library Network	BONET	1994	NISSAT & NCST	Libraries in and around Bombay	On-line catalogue of books & periodicals, Inter library loan facility, Information retrieval services On-line document delivery services etc
4	Calcutta Library Network	CALIBNET	1986	NISSAT & DSIR GOI	Libraries in Kolkatta	Networking through its own application software MAITRAYEE, On-line CD ROM based global information search and retrieval services, Database services full-text document delivery services, Confile service, Caliblink(e-mail service)
5	Developing Library Network	DELNET	1988	NISSAT & NIC	2007 Libraries of which 217 in Delhi, 1769 outside Delhi, 21 overseas.	Union catalogue, online Inter library loan and document delivery services, DEL-LISISERV(current awareness service), DELSIS -networking software, DELSEARCH service, retro conversion, reference services, professional training etc
6	Information & Library Network	INFLIBNET	1991	UGC	267 institutions in 31 states of India	Union catalogue service, Development of Software SOUL, Library Automation of University Libraries by using SOUL, Database Development and management, Document supply services, e-mail BBS, SOUL training programme, Conducting annual convention CALIBER, Audio visual conferencing and delivery of e-resources to the members
7	Madras Library Network	MALIBNET	1993	INSDOC	93 Libraries in and around Chennai including Major educational & research Institutions	Access to list of current serials ie full Journal holdings of member libraries, Door delivery system for document copies, Access to International database through INSDOC, CAP service, Library automation Training courses consultation in Networking and Computerization etc, Internet service, MALIBNET card service.
8	Mysore Library Network	MYLIBNET	1994	NISSAT	116 Institutions	MYLIB Database, E-Journals, CFTRI Library Bulletin, Public services, Food patents etc
9	Pune Library Network	PUNENET	1992	NISSAT & DSIR, GOI	Libraries in Pune City	E-mail & Internet connectivity, CD-ROM database services, Online Search facility, CAS, Photocopying service, Access to Databases available on NICNET eg MEDLANDS, AIDS Database, US Patent database
10	VidyaNet	VIDYANET		TATA Institute of Fundamental Research Bombay	1 -Phase 10 institutions from all over the country	File transfer, access to remote applications, Libraries & databases, sharing of computer resources etc

information center (NIC) of the planning commission.

- Among the different city networks DELNET has emerged as an operational Library network in India with 103 Libraries as its members. It developed on-line union catalogue of books and

periodicals and also recommended to create national database in OCLC pattern covering all subjects. This also recommended to other city networks (*i.e.* CALIBNET, MALIBNET) to create databases in city and state level.

- INFLIBNET should co-ordinate with the

existing networks and institution libraries to avoid duplication of reading materials.

- All government Libraries including research and documentation centers , public Libraries etc, should be encouraged to join in a Library network and follow the prescribed standards for database creation and information retrieval etc.
- Library networks and institutions with IT facilities to be recognized and give assistance to provide proper training to the Library professionals.
- The institutions including Libraries and information centers from all over the country or interlinked for teleconferencing through internet.

These are the various recommendations have been made by the working group of the planning commission for the ninth five year plan. Now the Eleventh plan is in progress, few of the resolutions and recommendations have been completed, but many more are still pending.[5]

#### *Present Scenario*

Now a days, there are numerous Library networks have been established under different categories like general and specialized. General networks are NICNET (National Information center Network) sponsored by Planning commission Government of India with 4 national and 32 state and union territory nodes. The services rendered by this network are bulk file transfer bibliographic retrieval services. INDONET is also a general network sponsored by CMC Ltd in 1986 and by Informatics India Ltd in 1989. Database services like DIALOG, COMPUSERVE SHARP are services of INDONET.

The establishment and progress of some of the Indian Networks are presented in the table no 1.[6]

#### *Networking of Public Libraries*

In India, the growth and development of

public Library is uneven, because the priority is not given for that. Networks in Public libraries are myth, because networking in those Libraries are very difficult due to different kinds of users, inadequate funds, modern equipments, trained staffs and other facilities like Internet etc. Moreover, the Public Libraries are at all levels like state, city, district and rural areas, networking of all libraries are very critical.

Since, most of the public libraries are not having the computers; the Government should take steps to provide adequate funds to procure computers and necessary modern equipments required for the networking of Libraries. Training for the use of computers and library software with the modern technology must be given to the staff members and recruiting new staff with computer knowledge in addition to the essential qualification for the automation & networking.

The Public Library network should be designed in relation to National, Regional State level and finally with the Rural level.

The National Informatics Center (NICNET) has developed network for the Government Information system setup district computer centers in most of the districts in India. District computer centers of Public library system should be linked through NICNET using satellite facilities.

#### *Networking of Academic Libraries*

In India, Networking in School Libraries are not yet start, because in most of the schools, there is no separate library with adequate professional staff. In some Schools only story books and general books are stored in one room with one teacher. In some Schools only well equipped Library with qualified staff are available. Hence, Networking of School Libraries are very difficult. But it is possible by networking of school Libraries at regional level if the Management of the Schools are willing to share their resources and equip their Libraries with good collection and adequate professional staff.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) decided to establish INFLIBNET in 1988 a network of University and college Libraries in 1988 and began functioning in 1991. INFLIBNET provides financial assistance to a large number of University Libraries in India for automation. The main objectives of INFLIBNET are to give financial support to the Universities to facilitate the necessary infrastructure to access resources. Inlibnet has started to network 200 Universities, 7200 colleges and over 200 research organizations attached to scientific, agricultural, medical, social science and Defence organizations. At the beginning it aims to link the remote and needy universities with rich and rare collections. Now, other universities are also have linked with this network

Human Resource development to bridge the gap between skilled and unskilled persons -by conducting training program on SOUL software to the staff to conduct workshops, annual conference etc.

To create digital awareness every year conducts a National convention called CALIBER (Convention on Automation of Libraries in Education and Research) at different places across the Country.

INLIBNET Introduced a software named SOUL (Software for University Libraries) using MS-SQL server to automate the house keeping functions of the Libraries viz Acquisition, Cataloguing, Circulation, OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) and Administration. Serials Control etc.

To facilitate the free flow of Information to the end users, INFLIBNET provides Information services includes:

*Access to Union Databases* i.e. books, serials, theses and research projects developed at the centre have been mounted on different servers through website <http://www.inflibnet.ac.in>.

*CD-ROM based Service* provides bibliographic databases in CD-Rom in the areas of Social sciences and Humanities to the academic community at free of cost.

*OCLC Search Service* to provide access to bibliographic database at a reasonable cost by

specifying subject areas.

#### *Retrospective Conversion*

To avoid duplication in creation of database five major Libraries of the Country like Banaras Hindu University (Varanasi), University of Bombay (Mumbai), Indian Institute of Science (Bangalore), Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi) and University of Madras (Chennai) given a project to complete the work, as the same data will be used for retro-conversion of other Libraries.

It promotes resource sharing at low cost by providing full -text articles from the Journals available in the University Libraries through Document Delivery Service.

INFLIBNET & NISSAT collectively provides Experts Database in Science & Technology (EDST) Project. Under this project they provide brief professional information about the background, skills, awards honours and publications of experts of Scientists, Directors and other senior faculties working in different organizations of the Country.

UGC-INFONET 'due to technology driving force in the contemporary education, University Grants Commission (UGC) has launched an ambitious program to bring about a qualitative change in the academic infrastructure, especially for higher education. Under this initiative UGC is modernizing the University Campuses with State-of-the-art campus wide networks and setting up its own nationwide communication network named UGC -INFONET. The network is switched to BSNL backbone w.e.f April 2010 and renamed as *UGC-Infonet 2.0*. Inlibnet is responsible for the executing & monitoring the entire project.

The UGC-INFONET mainly provides Internet bandwidth, a pre-requisite for delivery of scholarly content subscribed through the UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium. The scheme has now been extended to 200 Universities and 6 Inter-University Centres of the UGC. INFLIBNET center desires that each University should establish a LAN in its campus linking all the departments including Library. In turn, the LAN will be connected to

the UGC-INFONET.

The INFLIBNET has also have certain future plans in the areas of Research & development *i.e.* upgrading local area Network(LAN)with PC backbone layer-2, layer-3 switches (Process initiated).

Collaboration with UGC-Network for setting and managing data center for various database if INFLIBNET, Indian Universities and Information centers offering consultancy service to the Universities/Colleges for computerizing the libraries including H/W, Local area Network (LAN).Knowledge sharing with different National & International Organisation.

Designing Network security and disaster recovery plan for data servers.

Promoting Linux operating system in Universities.

Testing of software by using advanced software available in the market

Even though INFLIBNET has take initiative to network the Libraries of major Universities and colleges , most of the college Libraries in the country are not known about this term Network due to inadequate of funds, modern equipments, technical manpower etc. At present, the Networking of all college libraries are myth, if Government take steps to networking the libraries of all colleges, one day it will become real.[7]

MALIBNET (Madras Library Network) at Chennai established in 1993. It is a registered society to bring about co operative working among libraries and information centers in and around Chennai, networking them to share their resources. Presently 93 Libraries in Chennai are contributing their service to the creation of databases in MALIBNET.

#### *Services of MALIBNET*

1. *Directory Database of serials from 1993 to 2010 in Chennai (DDSC):* This database covers all journals subscribed in 93 libraries in and around Chennai. The updated database is available for on line access with search options like Journal

wise, Library wise etc., and also available in hard copy.

2. Contents Database includes article index information of selected Journals in the member institutions of MALIBNET.
3. Online services include
  - Current serials search
  - Automative journals contents for selected journals
  - Journals available in Dr. Medical Medical University
  - Directory of Libraries in and around Chennai.
4. Document Procurement Service provides service to the users on payment basis. Rs 3/- page for members and Rs. 5/- page for non members.
5. MALIBNET cards are issued to the members to visit the Libraries of Anna Univerrrsity, IIT, IGCAR CLRI etc. for reference. This facility is very useful for the students and faculty members of MALIBNET. Presently 45 members of Institutions are using this facility.
6. Consultancy services are provided in the area of library automation, Library organization, retrospective conversion of library catalogue, bar coding system and any other related activities.

#### *Membership and Subscription*

Membership is open to Universities, colleges R&D Institutions industries and individuals. The subscription categories in to patron, Institutional membership, Industrial membership and Associate membership. Anna University, Chennai NISCAIR New Delhi and Anna University, Coimbatore are the patron members. There are 7 institutions including University of Madras, Chepauk are members of Institutional (Academic) and 35 institutions are under Associate membership.

#### *Future Plan of MALIBNET*

- Creation of union catalogue of books,

conference proceedings reports thesis etc. of Library members

- On demand workshops, training programmes etc
- Porting MALIBNET database on online service offering it through internet to members.[8]

### *Networking in Special Libraries*

Special Libraries cater to specific professional or academic groups whose information needs are defined by a particular subject or activity.

Special Libraries sometimes referred to as Information centers are located in a multitude of settings including International organisations, Government agencies, Professional Associations, Corporate Bodies, Medical/health Institutions Law firms Research centers and colleges campus.

Some of the special Library networks are SIRNET, VIDYANET etc. Scientific and Industrial Research Network (SIRNET) is proposed to interconnect all the CSIR laboratories and other R&D Institutions in India. The main objective of the SIRNET is to share the science & Technology Information available in National Laboratories and inculcate the habit of resource sharing among them. It also link the entire Scientific community of Nation with the National Library system and International links to achieve efficient Scientific Communication.

The services rendered by the Network SIRNET are Electronic mail, File transfer, Document transfer, access to databases available through online or direct dial up mode. The databases available are:

- National Union catalogue of Scientific serials in India
- Current contents of Indian Journals (ISCOMM)
- Polymer science database
- Material science bibliographic database

- Catalogue of Scientific and technical Conference proceedings

Delhi node of SIRNET acts as a Inter networking *i.e.* gateway to a larger network ERNET (Education and Research Network) set up by the DDE with the financial assistance from UNDP provides on E-mail facility to 20 non CSIR Institutions.

### *Research based Proposed Library Networks*

There are some library networks proposed by Research scholars for their study. They are as follows:

#### *1. PUBLIBNET (Public Library Network)*

In Tamil Nadu, for the first time, Ramesh Babu and Ashok kumar proposed a network named PUBLIBNET for the Tamil Nadu Public libraries. He has taken case study of users of urban and rural libraries. PUBLIBNET has been proposed in three phases. In the I phase library system of state central libraries located at different states of India. II phase can be extended to include the district central libraries in each state. Regional, branch and circle libraries are linked at the III stage.

#### *Objectives of Proposed PUBLIBNET*

- To promote sharing of resources available in public libraries through computer networks for maximum use of resources and better facilities.
- To avoid duplication of acquiring reading materials especially, for the subscribing the Journals.
- To encourage all the members of PUBLIBNET to share their resources.[9]

#### *2. NIFTNET: Networking of National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT)*

S. Gopalakrishnan in his study in Nov 2003 proposed a network for the fashion technology centers in India.



*Proposed Objectives of NIFTNET*

- To increase the maximum use of available resources from the libraries of fashion technology centers in India.
- To ensure optimum utilization of resources among the libraries of Fashion technology centers
- To encourage co operation between the member libraries.
- To standardize the services and activities of member libraries of the NIFT center
- To promote research and development.[10]

### 3. *SANSLIBNET: Networking of Sanskrit Vidya Peetha Libraries in India*

S. Gopal Reddy in his research study in 2004 has proposed a model for networking of Sanskrit institutions. In order to identify and plan for design of a prototype networks of the Vidya peetha. It is necessary to study and analyze the information needs and information search pattern of the clientele of the Vidya peetha. To enhance the performance efficiency of the Information system, He linked eight Kendriya sanskrit vidya peetha and two Rashtriya Sanskrit vidya peetha centers in India.

*Proposed Objectives of SANSLIBNET*

- To maximize the utilization of available library resources by sharing.
- To provide speedy access to information resources located at different places through communication channel for mutual benefit.
- To avoid unnecessary duplication for collection development.
- To develop common collective development policy
- To make SANSLIBNET online access.[11]

### 4. *AGRILIBNET: Agricultural Library Network*

G. Rathinasabapathy has proposed a model for networking of 8 state Agricultural University libraries in south India in his study in 2006.

*Proposed Objective of the Study*

- To develop a database of serial holdings of state Agricultural University Libraries in south India towards resource sharing.
- To collect major web resources useful for the research scholars, faculty members and scientists of Agricultural Institutions in south India.
- To design and develop a prototype web portal with Regional union catalogue of Agricultural sciences.[12]

### 5 *PUDULIBNET: Puducherry Library Network*

Networking of libraries in Puducherry : A prototype design by Nagalingam U in Ph.d thesis. He proposed a design for networking of 48 libraries comprising of Public, Academic and Special libraries in Puducherry named as PUDULIBNET.

*Proposed Objective of the Study*

- To better utilization of resources by networking of all libraries.
- To improve the co operation among the member libraries
- To avoid necessary duplication and develop a common collection development policy.[13]

### 6. *TACLIBNET: Tamil Nadu Autonomous College Libraries Network*

P. Nageswara Rao proposed a design for Networking of Autonomous college Libraries in Tamil Nadu a computer communication network of autonomous college libraries .It is co-operative network and will contribute a pooling sharing and optimum utilization of resources and services of autonomous college libraries in Tamil Nadu.

### *Proposed Objective of the Study*

- To improve the capacity of resource sharing and Information access to academic community in Tamil Nadu
- To develop a programme towards modernization of autonomous college libraries.
- To utilize the funds by minimum duplication to provide access to document collection
- To improve the Inter Library loan services among the autonomous college libraries through telecommunication link.

*TACLIBNET Model:* All the autonomous college libraries will function as node. These nodes are interlinked each other (among themselves) in a web fashion.[14]

### *7. RECNET : Networking of REC Libraries*

P. Mounissamy has presented a paper about Sharing of information resources among RECs through RECNET in NAELIN 2000 held at IIT Chennai. Regional Engineering colleges (REC) are prime institutions in India with well equipped infrastructure especially the Library. There are seventeen RECs are in India. Each REC are having established libraries with maximum collection of their own resources like books, Journals , CD Rom collection etc. Even though, the libraries are well equipped with collection of materials they are scattered. The user of one REC library do not know the exact availability of the materials as they required. To avoid this situation, RECNET is has been formed in 1996.

### *Proposed Objectives of RECNET*

- To provide RECs library resources to other institutions by sharing through networking.
- To extend the facilities to the institutional members through electronic form.
- To avoid the unnecessary duplication and develop common collection development policy.

- To make RECNET online database.[15]

### *8. ECLNET: Engineering Colleges Library Network*

S.C. Kumerasan, S. Swaminathan and B. Jeyapragash have presented a paper for their study on ECLNET-Engineering colleges Library network. A feasibility of sharing a network of all the Engineering colleges in and around Tiruchirapalli. First studied the existing Infra structure facilities available in the engineering colleges.

First they found out the percentage of the computerized engineering college libraries and the area of computerization like circulation, catalogue etc. The second step involves to find out willingness of the participating libraries in the network to share their resources. They also found out that their required materials from other libraries like books, journals etc, and what are the materials are ready to share with other libraries and period of time to lend them ie one week or two weeks.

From their analysis, they conclude, most of the Engineering college libraries have been started computerization and also willing to share their resources to render better services to the users. If the participating libraries are well equipped with modern technology with Web and internet facility, the networked resource sharing would be feasible in all Engineering colleges in and around Tiruchirapalli.[16]

### **Findings and Observations**

- From the study it is found out that the networking of public libraries are yet to start. The UGC Infonet and Inlibnet has taken more effort for the networking of universities, colleges etc.
- The networking of special Libraries are at better position. Among various networks, services of DELNET are more improved, when compared to other networks such as MALIBNET, PUNENET etc.

- The membership of DELNET are 2007 Libraries of which 217 are from Delhi Institutions and 1769 Libraries are from outside Delhi . More over, 21 Libraries from overseas countries are participated in this Network. The services of DELNET includes DEL LISTSERV (current awareness service) DELSIS networking software, DELSEARCH service, retro conversion, professional training etc.
- Next to DELNET, Inlibnet has 267 Institutions as member in 31 states. The automation of many University and college libraries are done with the software SOUL developed by Inlibnet. Apart from this, conducting annual convention of CALIBER, Audio visual conferencing, e-mail BBS document supply services are the other services of Inlibnet.
- Other networks like MYLIBNET, PUNENET, ADINET, BONET BALNET, CALIBNET are having membership of the Libraries with in the city and rendering the normal services like union catalogue, Inter library loan etc.
- MALIBNET also having limited members and also provides CAP service, library automation consultation service. Except DELNET and INFLIBNET the other networks are at the beginning stage.
- Many Academic libraries in India are not aware of the facilities rendered by Inlibnet.
- Lack of Infrastructure facilities and trained manpower
- Lack of effective networking and communication technology
- Lack of willingness of LIS professionals to share their Library resources
- Technological backwardness with a gap between India and developed countries
- Multi language collections in public libraries of different parts of the country prevents establishment of single Indian Public library system and lack of initiation by both the Central and State Governments.
- Many of the academic libraries especially the Government college libraries in many parts of the country are yet to be automated. which prevents the networking academic libraries for the entire country.
- Irrespective of all these handicuffs, it should be appreciated the growth and development of the Indian networks such as DELNET, INFLIBNET.

*Suggestions to Improve the Library Networking in India*

Based on the findings the following suggestions are made to improve the conditions of the library network systems in India.

- The Indian Library Networks: Myth or Reality*
- The overall presentations made in this paper reveal that there are keen interest in several developing local or regional Library networks with city based popular names like MALIBNET, CALIBNET and so on. But review made in this study about the performances of these networks reveals that most of them are in initial stages because of the following reasons.
- The higher authority those who should take necessary action for networking of Libraries are in dilemma as to whether resource sharing is possible through Library networking

- The UGC and the government should provide adequate funds for the libraries to equip with modern technology required for networking, like Internet facility etc,
- The Library professionals should take initiation to computerize their libraries and create database for the preparation of union catalogue.
- The LIS Professionals should come forward to share their resources to other Libraries through the networking of

Libraries.

- Initially, the local libraries (with in the Institution) should linked through networking, then only it extend to regional and national level.
- There is an urgent need to establish a Central agency or Institution that should control the establishment and development of the library networks in India. The agency also should come under the control of Ministry of HRD and separate financial allocation have to be made for the promotional activity of the Agency.[4]

### Conclusion

In the developing countries like India though the UGC has taken initiative to modernize the libraries by automation , many libraries have not yet computerized. Moreover, Inlibnet and Delnet are also conducting training programmes and convention like CALIBER . But some of the university libraries and college libraries have been computerized. Only if the libraries are computerized, then only the networking would be possible. In India the networking of libraries are at the budding stage. Networking is catching the objectives *i.e.* better utilization of funds through sharing of resources and communication between the Libraries by which benefits are being offered to member libraries. Now a days, the awareness have been created about library networks, and the growth of the networks are higher. To improve the status of the library Networks, the Government of India should provide adequate fund to improve the infrastructure facilities for the development of the networking facility. Moreover, the management of the Institution and staff of the academic libraries should come forward to share their resources to other Institutions and information centers by becoming member of these Networks. Presently, large number of Libraries and Research centers have become member of these networks to render better service to their users. Once, the library

Networking becomes an accepted part of every Library, the networking of Libraries in India becomes Real otherwise it remains a Myth.

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Questionnaire for the members of MALIBNET

*Part I : Profile for the Institution*

1. Nature of the college
2. University Affiliation
3. Year of Establishment
4. Year of membership in MALIBNET
5. College website URL
6. Nature of students Admitted (Please tick)
  - Men
  - Women
  - Co education
7. Types of Management (Please tick)
  - Government
  - Self financing
  - Government aided
8. Nature of courses offered( please tick)
  - Engineering and Technology
  - Arts, Science and Technology
  - Both

- Others
9. Courses Offered ( please tick)
    - UG and PG
    - UG,PG, M.Phil
    - UG,PG, M.phil and Ph.d

*Part II: About the Librarian*

Name of the Librarian (optional) Mr/Ms

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Gender of the Librarian

Male  Female

Age of the Librarian (please tick)

Below 35 years

Between 36 and 45yrs

Between 46 and 55yrs

Above 55yrs

Educational qualification (please tick)

Academic

UG  PG

M.phil  Ph.D

Professional

UG  PG

M.phil  Ph.D

Experience of the librarian (please tick)

Below 5yrs

Between 6 and 19 yrs

Between 10 and 15 yrs

Between 16 and 20 yrs

Above 20 yrs

*Part III: ICT Applications in your Library*

Automation of library operations/ services

1. Do you have Automated your Library

- Yes  No
2. Year of automation carried out \_\_\_\_\_
3. Explicit of Automation carried out
- Partially automated
- Fully automated
- In Progress
4. Do you automated in all services
- If yes, please tick the following services
- S. no. Area of Automation
1. Acquisition control
2. Catalogue (OPAC)
3. Circulation control
4. Serial control
5. Whether commercial/Inhouse software used
- Commercial software
- Inhouse software
- If commercial software used,  
Please state the name of the software  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Whether the Library has adopted  
Barcode system
- Yes  No
- If yes please state the appreciation of the  
barcode for
- Books
- Journals
- Thesis
- Project reports
- CD ROM products
- Audio/Video resources
- Library membership cards
- Any other please specify
- 

*Part IV: Networking of Library*

1. Awareness about Library Networks
- Yes  No

2. Whether the library is a member of the  
MALIBNET
- Yes  No
3. Year of membership \_\_\_\_\_
4. Your Library is a member of which  
category
- Patron
- Institutional Member
- Industrial Member
- Associate Member
5. Nature of students used the MALIBNET  
cards are
- UG  PG
- M.Phil  Ph.D
6. Which service of MALIBNET used by the  
users of your college
- Document procurement service
- MALIBNET card service
- Internet service
- Consultancy service
- Current serial search
7. From which year the directory of  
database of serials cover in your Library  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Whether it is updated
- Yes  No
9. Whether this database is using by your  
students through
- Online  Hardcopy
10. Whether the MALIBNET cards are  
properly used by the students of your  
Library
- Yes  No
11. Whether MALIBNET cards are used by  
the faculty of your institution
- Yes  No
12. Whether the member libraries are  
allowing your students for using their  
libraries

- Yes  No
13. In which area of consultancy service is used by your Library
- Library automation
- Retrospective conversion of catalogue
- Digital library
- Bar Coding system
- Any other relative activities
- \_\_\_\_\_

14. State the problems faced by this Network

15. Whether do your library, member in any other Networks in India

Yes  No

If yes, please specify the name of the Network \_\_\_\_\_

16. Please give suggestions to improve this Network