

RESOURCE SHARING AMONG INDIAN INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY (IITs) LIBRARIES: PROBLEMS & PROSPECTS

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Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) have been set up by an Act of Parliament with a specific declaration that these are our „Institutes of National Importance". They are conceived to act as leaders in technology innovation, train the necessary manpower and promote generally the state of-art of technology in the country. Their role is to enhance the country's techno-economic strength and technological self-reliance. The basic objective of IITs is best described in the words of the late Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru „to provide scientists and technologists of the highest calibre who would engage in research and development, to help build the nation towards self-reliance in her technological needs". Accordingly, IITs have been contributing their share in upgrading the quality of engineering education in the country through QIP (Quality Improvement Programme) and FIP (Faculty Improvement Programme). These Institutes are also helping the selected engineering institutions in laboratory planning. IITs have well fulfilled major objectives such as development of first-rate B Tech. graduates, upgrading engineering education in the country, contributing to research programmes and undertaking a leadership role.

Libraries are integral parts of these temples of technology. Libraries are supporting them in achieving the major goals by providing information and documents promptly to students, faculty and scientists. With passage of time, the quantity and quality of users and their expectations have risen. Besides this major factor, there are various other factors which compelled these Institutes to share their available resources so as to enable them to meet rising users' expectations.

Some of these are as follows:

- 1. Shrinking budgets
- 2. Price-rises in technological journals
- 3. Publication explosion in science & technology
- 4. A need to avoid duplication of information sources
- 5. A need to increase the comprehensiveness of coverage
- 6. A requirement to meet present and future needs of users
- 7. Recent developments in the field of information technology

Before discussing the areas for Resource Sharing it is appropriate to see first the collection, number of periodicals received, number of departments/centres and number of students and teachers (Fig.1).

Name of Institute	Yr. of foundation	Collection No. of vols.	No. of periodicals	No. of students	No. of teachers	No. of Depts	No. of Centres
IIT Bombay	1958	248.659	1823	2321	342	12	6
IIT Delhi	1961	201.624	1300	2719	380	11	11
IIT Kanpur	1960	250.000	2215	1930	285	11	3
IIT Kharag-pur	1950	246.828	2100	2615	462	18	7
IIT Madras	1959	214.926	1371	2313	345	12	10

The factors listed as above, available infrastructure and goals of IITs altogether motivated the authorities for sharing their resources. Consequently, IIT Delhi took a lead in organising a Group Discussion of the Librarians of all IITs on 23rd March, 1986 to discuss and deliberate on RS so as to make use of each others resources. The recommendations will be discussed in the article.

Thus it can be said that RS is a need-based concept founded on sound principles of give and take. Libraries sharing their services and materials can meet the full needs of their users at the most reasonable cost possible.

Areas of resource sharing

- ☐ 1. Inter Library Loan
- ☐ 2. Union Catalogue
- ☐ 3. Acquisition of books and journals
- ☐ 4. Publications
- ☐ 5. Collection building
- ☐ 6. Cataloguing
- ☐ 7. Selective Dissemination of Information
- ☐ 8. Current awareness services

Role of Computerised Library Networks

No doubt, computerised library network has great potential to make the RS more effective and efficient through providing services to a large number of user populations, sitting at different places, with the help of interconnected communication channels. Developed countries are already testing the fruits of such networks. To keep pace with modern information technology, IITs have also started to think of computerisation of library operations. As a follow up of the recommendation of the Government of India, DSIR has set up a Standing Committee on Science & Technology Information System. It recommended the measures for greater sharing of information resources. It noted that duplication in the acquisition of expensive journals like Chemical abstracts and reports can be avoided by S&T Institutions if a proper mechanism of sharing of resources among them is established.