

Network Opinion Survey of North West Indian University Libraries

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1. Rationale

India is spending more than Rupees five thousand million a year on procuring new library resources and of that around Rupees two thousand million is spent on the acquisition of overseas journals. The annual increase in prices of these resources means that even financially sound organizations experience difficulties in meeting their cost. Also, the increase in information generation at an estimated rate of 13% per annum has made the task of collection, organization and retrieval of information very difficult¹. The Books in Print provides access to over 5 million U.S. books, audio books and video titles². According to Ulrich International Periodical Directory more than 260000 print and electronic periodicals of all types and published each year³.

Due to information explosion and shrinking library budgets and increasing demand for rapid access to information and documents, every library with limited financial resources finds it very difficult to acquire relevant and comprehensive information in the fields of their interest. The prices of foreign publications have gone very high and beyond the bounds of library budgets. Now the question arises how to satisfy the user community of the library engaged in research, teaching and scholarly work through the supply of adequate reading materials. The solution lies in resource sharing of the existing resources and facilities of a system of libraries. Escalating costs of information products and services have made it mandatory for libraries to automate their services and share their resources through networking.

The rationale for a network is as follows:

- 1 No university library, not even the largest one, can afford to purchase more than a small fraction of the total number of relevant books and periodicals.
- 2 Due to financial constraints, it is difficult for an individual library to build an adequate collection to provide satisfactory reader services based upon its own resources.
- 3 The rising cost of library materials has gone beyond the capacity of an individual library to acquire even the essential documents required for catering the minimum necessary library services to its user community.
- 4 The information explosion causes a vast gap, growing rapidly between what a librarian conceives for the basic library collection and what he can actually acquire with the available limited funds.
- 5 There is steady rise in subscription rate based upon discriminating pricing policies of the publishers.
- 6 Fluctuation in foreign exchange conversion rates.

7. Good Offices Committee's (GOC) rates of the foreign exchange conversion for book trade are higher than the Reserve Bank of India conversion rates.

8. Duplication of resources in the same region exists.

These problems are putting many impediments in providing required service to the users. It is, therefore, important to find out some ways to control the information situation. As none of the libraries are self-sufficient in their resources, they have to depend heavily upon others in sharing the resources. Also emphasis has shifted from comprehensive acquisition of documents in libraries to providing access to comprehensive information to the users of libraries. These factors are forcing to the library professionals for establishing a library network.

2.Objectives of the Study

1. To know the interest of university libraries for resource sharing and networking.

2. To know the desirable activities that can included in a university network.

3. To know the cooperative problems of the university libraries.

4. To know the libraries ready to extend financial support for a network.

3. Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to only 12 university libraries. These are: 1. Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar (GNDU); 2. Punjabi University, Patiala (PbiU.); 3. Panjab University, Chandigarh (PU); 4. Himachal Pardesh University, Shimla (HPU); 5. University of Jammu (JU); 6. University of Kashmir, Sri Nagar (KU); 7. Jawaharlal University, New Delhi (JU); 8. University of Delhi, Delhi(DU); 9. Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra (KUK); 10. Maharishi Dayanand University, Rohtak (MDU); 11. University of Rajasthan, Jaipur (RU) and 12. Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati University, Ajmer (MDSU). Deemed and Specialized (Technical, Medical and Agriculture) university libraries are not included in this study and this study is also limited in the sense that the respondents have given their views in the situation prevailing at the time of survey.

4. Research Methodology

Relevant data was generated through circulating questionnaires, conducting interviews and via analysis of the literature. To achieve objectives of the study, survey was conducted for the 12 sample university libraries and there was almost complete response received from these all universities.

5.Data Analysis and Presentation

This study deals with the network opinion survey conducted to obtain information on desirable activities that can be included in a university library network, the librarian / library in charges' interest in joining a network, the problems of resource sharing and the financial support.

5.1Interest for Resource Sharing and Networking

Regarding the question of resource sharing and networking of North West Indian university libraries, the response of the respondents was

almost complete and all university libraries were interested in resource sharing and networking of North West Indian university libraries. They were also interested in joining such network.

5.2 Area of Resource Sharing and Networking

This question attempted to discover the potential functions of a network for North West Indian university libraries. Table 1 summaries the degree of desirability for each of the 33 cooperative activities which the network is likely to handle. These activities were grouped into eight main functions: acquisition, cooperative cataloguing /processing, interlibrary loan, reference services, delivery services, storage/preservation, electronic communication and education/research. All libraries responded to this question. The average degree of the desirability for each activity within each main function, it was found that for the acquisition function all activities were desirable.

**Table 1: Network Opinion Surveyed
(As reported by the Heads of the Libraries)**

Area of Resource Sharing/Networking	Number of Libraries			Mean Rating	SD
	Highly Desirable	Desirable	Not Desirable		
1. Books	2	4	6	1.67	2.00
2. Journals	3	6	3	2.00	1.73
3. Ref. Sources	4	4	4	2.00	0.00
4. Non Print & Rare Material	2	5	5	1.75	1.73
5. Specific Area	1	8	3	1.83	3.61
6. Central order office	0	7	5	1.58	3.61
7. Union Exchange list	0	8	4	1.67	4.00
8. Clearing house	0	8	4	1.67	4.00
Co-operative Cataloguing/Processing					
9. ISBD for Network Cataloguing	3	7	2	2.08	2.65
10. Centralized Cataloguing Unit	5	5	2	2.25	1.73
11. Union Shelf List	5	6	1	2.33	2.65
12. Union List of Serials	7	4	1	2.50	3.00
13. Union List of Monographic Mat	6	4	2	2.33	2.00
Inter Library Loan					
14. Reciprocal Borrowing Privileges	9	3	0	2.75	4.58
15. Rare Materials	10	0	2	2.67	5.29
16. Non Print Materials	8	2	2	2.50	3.46
17. Photo Copying	10	2	0	2.83	5.29
Reference Services					
18. Reference services	8	3	1	2.58	3.61
19. Referral Service	6	5	1	2.42	2.65

20. Abstracting & Indexing	9	2	1	2.67	4.36
21. Subject Bibliography	8	3	1	2.58	3.61
Delivery Services					
22. Special Truck/ Mobile van	7	2	3	2.33	2.65
23. Machine Readable Database	10	2	0	2.83	5.29
Storage/ Preservation					
24. Monographic Materials	2	5	5	1.75	1.73
25. Journals	2	5	5	1.75	1.73
Electronic Communication					
26. E-Mail	11	1	0	2.92	6.08
27. Bulletin Boards	8	4	0	2.67	4.00
28. Fax Transmissions	8	3	1	2.58	3.61
29. Telex Transmissions	0	0	12	1.00	6.93
30. Teleconferencing	8	4	0	2.67	4.00
31. Video Conferencing	8	4	0	2.67	4.00
Education / Research					
32. Personnel Training	7	4	1	2.50	3.00
33. Joint Research Projects	6	6	0	2.50	3.46

The acquisition of journals and reference sources ranked highest (2.00). The next activity ranked as desirable is the cooperative acquisition programme for specific area item (1.83). However, the standard deviation of the latter three activities (1.67) shows a slight disagreement among the respondents. A central order office received the lowest interest (1.58) and the standard deviation (3.61) showed the disagreement among the respondents.

For the cooperative cataloguing/processing function, all activities are highly desirable. The union list of serials is ranked highest (2.50). The other activities ranked as follows: union shelf list and union list of monographic materials (2.33); centralized cataloguing unit (2.25) and SBD for network cataloguing (2.08).

For the interlibrary loan function, among the four activities listed, all are highly desirable. The photocopying service is ranked highest (2.83). The other activities' ranks are as follows: reciprocal borrowing privileges (2.75), rare materials (2.67) and non print material (2.50). The standard deviation (5.29) of the latter shows considerable disagreement among the respondents.

In the reference services function, the mean shows that all four activities are highly desirable. They are ranked as follows: abstracting and indexing (2.67), reference service and subject bibliography (2.58) and referral service (2.42). The standard deviations for the two activities indicate that there is not much difference in the degree of the desirability among the responding libraries.

For the delivery services function, both activities, access to a machine-readable database for reference/cataloguing process (2.83) and a special truck delivery system (2.33) are desirable. The standard deviation showed the disagreement among the respondents.

In the storage/preservation function, the means of two activities indicate that these activities are desirable. The rank of storage centre for journals and monographic materials is same (1.75).

For the electronic communication function, five activities are highly desirable and one activity is not desirable. An e-mail activity's rank is highest (2.92). The next three ranked as highly desirable are a bulletin boards, teleconferencing and video-conferencing (2.67). A Fax transmission activity rank is 2.58 while telex transformation activity is not desirable and their rank is 1.00.

For the education/training function, both activities personnel training and joint research projects are in favor among the respondents. Both activities are highly desirable and the means of the two activities are 2.50. Further, the data reveals in figure 1, out of thirty three activities, twenty two activities are ranked as highly desirable, an e-mail received highest interest. The next twenty one in rank are: photocopying services, machine readable database, reciprocal borrowing privileges, interlibrary loan for rare materials, abstracting and indexing services, bulletin boards, teleconferencing, video conferencing, reference services, subject bibliographies, fax transmission, union list of serials, interlibrary loan for non-print materials, personnel training, joint research projects, referral service, delivery services through special truck/mobile van, union shelf list, union list of monographic materials, centralized cataloguing unit and ISBD for network cataloguing. In another group of activities which are desirable, acquisition of journals and reference sources ranked first, acquisition of specific area ranked second, acquisition of non print and print materials, storage/preservation of monographic materials and journals ranked third, acquisition of books, union exchanging list, clearing house ranked fourth and central office order ranked fifth. One activity which is not desirable: telex transmission.

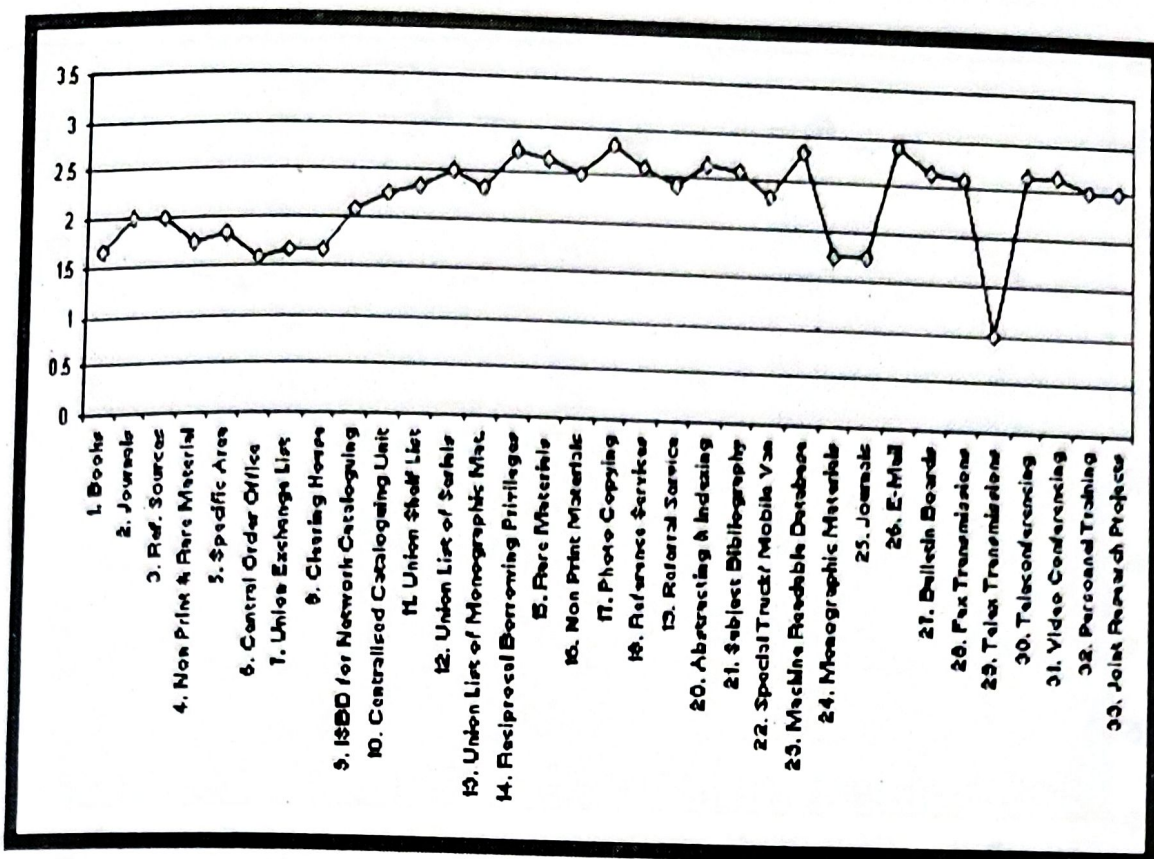


Figure 1: Respondents' Mean Rating of Network Activities

It is evident that cooperation is especially needed in the area of journals. These activities: a union list of serials, abstracting and indexing services and cooperation acquisition of journals are desirable activities. This is associated with the nature of journal collections. The rising cost of the subscribing to these journals makes it impossible for the North West Indian university libraries to cope with these problems individually.

5.3 Cooperative Problems

The respondents were asked to rate the degree of importance (very high, high, moderate, low and very low) for overcoming each of six cooperative problems. All universities responded to the question. The mean for the responses to each problem were computed (Table 2). As can be seen in figure 2, all problems are being highly important to overcome. They are rated as follow: lack of institutional leadership and inadequate finances (4.08), lack of cooperation spirit (3.92), communication barrier (3.33), lack of planning (3.17) and inadequate resources (3.00).

Two libraries added four other problems of cooperation and rated them very high. They are: lack of eagerness, fear of losing power, laziness and the fact that administrators do not recognize the importance of libraries in education.

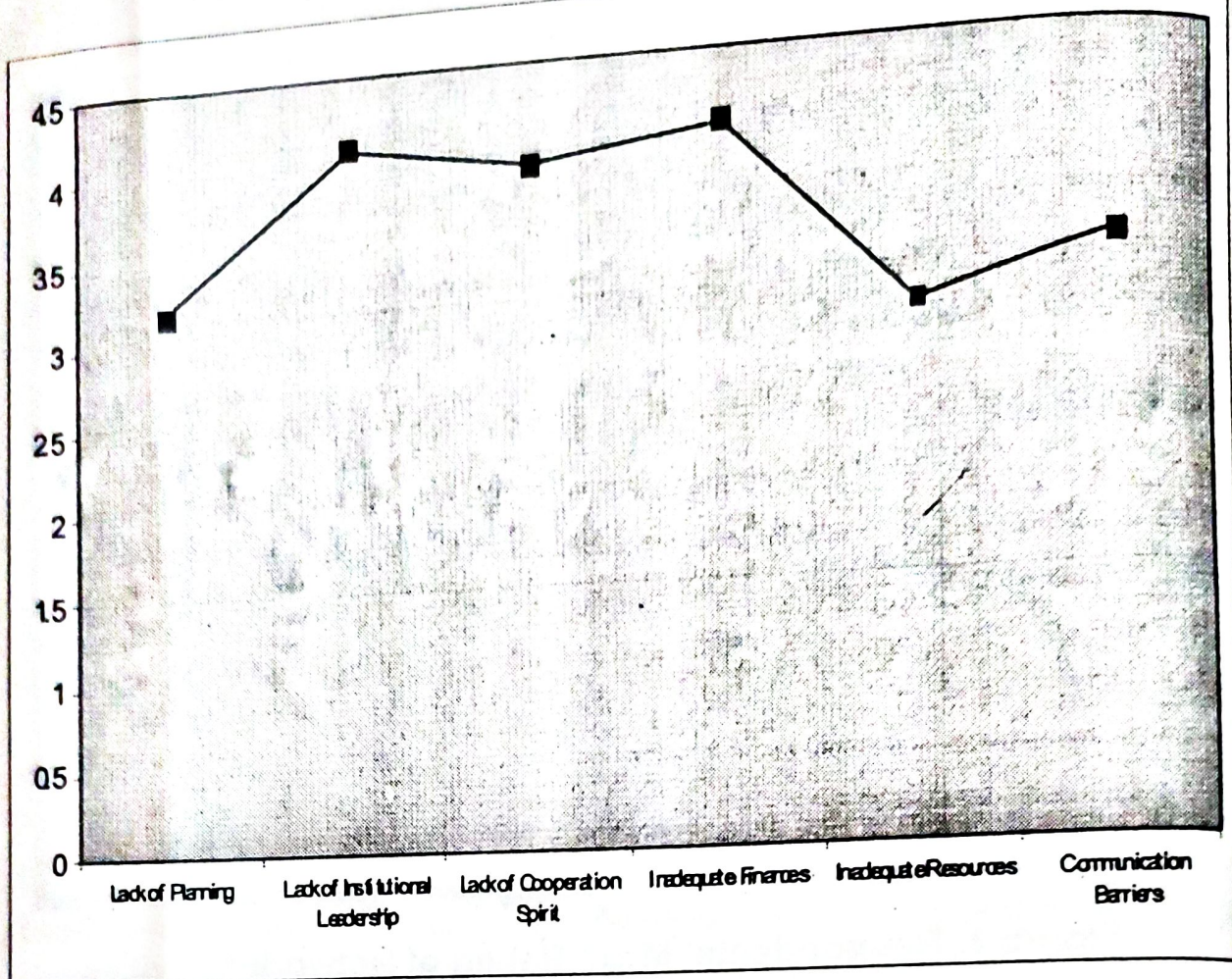


Figure 2: Respondents' Mean Rating of Factors Impeding Cooperation

Table 2: Impending Factors to Resource Sharing

Factor	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low	Mean	Rating	SD
Lack of Planning		1	4	3	4	0	3.17	1.82
Lack of Institutional Leadership		5	4	2	1	0	4.08	2.07
Lack of Cooperation Spirit		1	10	0	1	0	3.92	4.28
Inadequate Finances		2	9	1	0	0	4.08	3.78
Inadequate Resources		0	6	2	2	2	3.00	2.19
Communication Barriers		6	1	0	2	2	3.33	2.28

5.4 Preparation and Financial Support to Library Network

Table 3 shows that the distribution of responses to the question of sources of financial support for a university library network. The respondents were asked whether their institutions would be prepared to recommend the financial support for participation in a network. All university libraries responded to the question. Ten (83.3%) of them said "Yes", whereas two (16.7%) said "No".

Table 3: Preparation and Financial Support to a Network

Category	Preparation	Percentage	Financial Support	Percentage
Yes	11	91.7	10	83.3
No	1	8.3	2	16.7
Total	12	100	12	100

Table also shows that the distributions of responses to the question regarding libraries are preparation to join network. All libraries responded to the question and only 11 university libraries are prepared for a join the network.

5. Conclusion

The survey shows that all the university libraries are interested in resource sharing and networking of North West Indian university libraries. The potential areas of interest for 33 cooperative activities were grouped into eight main functions: acquisitions, cataloguing/processing, interlibrary loan, reference service, delivery services, storage/preservation, electronic communication and education/research. In examining the mean which indicates the average degree of the desirability for each activity within each main function, it was found that for the acquisition function, all activities were desirable. For the cataloguing/processing all activities were highly desirable but the high rank (2.50) is for union list of serials. For the interlibrary loan function, four activities ranked highly desirable, but photocopying service ranked as highly desirable (2.83). In the reference service function, the means show that all the four activities are highly

desirable, but the abstracting and indexing service is ranked as highly desirable (2.67). For the delivery services, both activities are desirable. A machine readable database (2.83) was considered more favorable than a special truck or mobile van delivery system (2.33). For the storage/preservation function, both activities are desirable. In the electronic communication functions, five activities (E-mail, Bulletin Boards, Fax Transmissions, Teleconferencing, and Video Conferencing) are highly desirable but one activity telex transmission (1.00) is not desirable. For the education/training function, both activities personnel training and joint research projects are highly desirable (2.50).

The degree of importance for overcoming each of six cooperative problems, they are rated as follows: lack of institutional leadership and inadequate finance (4.08), lack of spirit of cooperation (3.92), communication barrier (3.33), lack of planning (3.17) and inadequate resources (3.00).

Out of 12 university libraries, 11 libraries are prepared to join network and 10 libraries are ready to extend financial support for a network.

References

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