

E-SHODHSINDHU: AN OVERVIEW OF DIGITAL LIBRARY INITIATIVE IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

Dr. Manisha Sagar Dandgawhal*

Librarian

Malini Kishor Sanghvi College of Commerce & Economics, Mumbai- 49

Abstract

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has got main changes in the academic libraries collecting, organizing and provide information. Previous, college and university libraries mainly depended on printed books, journals, newspapers, reference books and other physical documents. With the development of the Internet, electronic journals, e-books, databases and digital repositories have develop significant parts of academic library services.

In India, N-LIST (National Library and Information Services Infrastructure for Scholarly Content), Shodhganga and e-ShodhSindhu -these initiatives have been introduced to improve access to scholarly information in higher education. N-LIST provides access to electronic resources generally for eligible colleges. Shodhganga is a national repository of Indian electronic theses and dissertations. The e-ShodhSindhu consortium provides access to scholarly electronic resources for eligible higher education institutions.

The present paper gives an overview of these three initiatives with special reference to their origin, purpose, resources, services, usefulness and role in higher education. The paper also discusses their importance for students, teachers and research scholars, the role of librarians in promoting these resources, problems in their actual use. The study is based on descriptive methods and uses information available from INFLIBNET.

The paper concludes that N-LIST, Shodhganga and e-ShodhSindhu have made a valuable contribution in digital library services and helped institutions provide extensive access to scholarly information, support research and reduce dependence on individual library subscriptions.

Keywords: *N-LIST, Shodhganga, e-ShodhSindhu, Library Consortium, Digital Library, E-Resources, E-Journals, E-Books, Electronic Theses and Dissertations. e-ShodhSindhu, Library Consortium, Electronic Resources, E-Journals, E-Books, Digital Library, N-LIST, Higher Education, INFLIBNET.*

Introduction:

Traditionally, academic library collections consisted mainly of printed books, journals, newspapers, reference books, theses and other physical documents. Students and teachers had to visit the library to use these resources and especially played an important role in assisting education and research.

The rapid development of computers, the Internet and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) great impact on academic users so now they expect information to be available very quickly in e-journals, e-books, online databases and digital repositories. Therefore currently these e-resources become important components of academic libraries. These electronic resources are generally expensive. A main challenge for academic libraries that Individual colleges and universities may not have sufficient funds to subscribe to all the journals and databases needed by their users.

The library consortium played an important role in that cooperative arrangement. This arrangement involves several institutions work together to obtain access to information resources. It can provide users with access to a much wider range of scholarly information.

In India, the Information and Library Network Centre (INFLIBNET) has played a vital role in the development of electronic information services and library consortia. **e-ShodhSindhu: Consortium for Higher Education Electronic Resources** is its important initiatives. e-ShodhSindhu was established in December 2015 by merging the **UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium, N-LIST and INDEST-AICTE Consortium**. This merger brought major electronic-resource consortium activities under one national framework. It supports access to scholarly information for teaching, learning and research.

Objectives of the Study:

The main objectives of this paper are:

To understand & study

- The concept of a library consortium.
- Development and purpose of e-ShodhSindhu.
- The types of electronic resources available through the consortium.
- The importance of e-ShodhSindhu for higher education.
- Its usefulness to students, teachers and researchers.
- The role of N-LIST as the college component.
- The role of librarians in promoting electronic resources.
- To identify major problems in the effective utilisation of e-resources.

Research Methodology:

The present paper is **descriptive in nature**. . The study is based on secondary information mainly consist of reports and websites of INFLIBNET Centre and related organisations.

About e-ShodhSindhu:

Initially different organisations had developed separate initiatives for providing electronic resources before the establishment of e-ShodhSindhu. As these programmes had similar purpose. These consortium provides access as follows:

Sr.no.	Organization/ Consortium	Provide Access to
1	UGC- INFONET	Electronic resources to universities and other institutions.
2	INDEST-AICTE	Electronic resources mainly for engineering and technical institutions.
3	N-LIST	Electronic resources to colleges.

In December 2015, these three consortia were merged to form **e-ShodhSindhu: Consortium and** created a stronger national platform for electronic resource **for Higher Education Electronic Resources**.

N-LIST providing to access electronic resources to the **college and becoce a separate component of e-ShodhSindhu**.

Meaning of e-ShodhSindhu:

e-ShodhSindhu can be described as a national consortium for providing access to scholarly electronic resources to eligible higher education institutions.

The consortium provides access to different types of resources including:

- Full-text electronic journals.
- Bibliographic databases.
- Citation databases.
- Factual databases.
- E-books.
- Other scholarly electronic resources.

The consortium covers different academic resources for different disciplines and supports teaching, learning, and research. The main advantage of the consortium approach is that institutions do not have to independently negotiate with every publisher and obtain access to an extensive range of resources.

Purpose of e-ShodhSindhu:

The major aim of e-ShodhSindhu can be explained as follows.

1. Providing access to scholarly information-

The main aim is to provide access to quality electronic resources for academic and research purposes.

2. Reducing the cost of electronic resources-

This helps institutions obtain resources at consortium reasonable rates. The consortium negotiates with publishers on behalf of participating institutions.

3. Supporting teaching and learning –

Students can use them for projects, assignments, and examinations. Teachers be able to use e-journals, e-books and databases for lecture preparation and additional reading.

4. Supporting research –

Researchers require access to current literature and its provides access to scholarly resources useful for research.

5. Promoting resource sharing –

The consortium helps in sharing scholarly information through a national context.

Major Electronic Resources:

e-ShodhSindhu provides access to different categories of scholarly resources.

- **E-Journals**
- **Bibliographic Databases**
- **Citation Databases**
- **E-Books**

These resources available to an institution depend on its category, subscription and applicable consortium arrangements.

N-LIST as the College Component:

N-LIST has a special position within e-ShodhSindhu.

The **National Library and Information Services Infrastructure for Scholarly Content (N-LIST)** was originally developed as the college component of the UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium. It was later merged into e-ShodhSindhu.

N-LIST is an important practical part of the e-ShodhSindhu. N-LIST provides access to electronic resources to eligible colleges through authentication mechanisms such as proxy-based and federated access.

Access to Electronic Resources:

Access to electronic resources requires specific license agreements according to this publisher's proper authentication and provides access. For universities and technical institutions, access can be provided through institutional IP addresses. However, many colleges do not have fixed IP addresses. To address this problem, INFLIBNET developed authentication mechanisms for N-LIST users. And use of **EZproxy** for authenticating registered individual users and the development of **INFED/Shibboleth-based access** for smooth access to subscribed electronic resources. Due to this authenticating access management is important because it allows authorised users to access electronic resources according to the conditions of their institution and the consortium.

Importance of e-ShodhSindhu for Higher Education:

The importance of e-ShodhSindhu can be understood from its contribution to the three major functions of higher education:

1. **Teaching-** Teachers can use scholarly journals, databases and e-books to prepare lectures and update their subject knowledge.
2. **Learning-** Students can obtain additional reading material for assignments, projects, presentations and examinations.
3. **Research -** Research scholars and faculty members can access scholarly literature required for literature reviews and academic writing.

Thus, e-ShodhSindhu supports the complete academic environment.

Benefits to College Libraries:

The consortium provides several benefits to college libraries.

1. **Budget friendly** - Individual subscription to several electronic resources can be expensive. Consortium access helps institutions make better use of their library budgets.
2. **Broader access-** Users can access a wider range of scholarly resources than may be available in the physical library.
3. **Current information** - Electronic journals provide access to current scholarly literature.
4. **Research support** - The availability of scholarly databases helps faculty and research scholars.
5. **Digital library development** - Electronic resource services encourage colleges to move towards modern digital library services.

Role of e-ShodhSindhu in Research:

Research depends comprehensively on access to current and reliable information. A researcher needs to understand earlier research before beginning a new study. Electronic databases and journals provide access to research published by scholars in India and other countries. The availability of electronic resources can save researchers extensive time in locating relevant information.

Role of Librarians:

The librarian plays an important role in making e-ShodhSindhu resources useful to the academic community. Simply providing access is not enough. Users need to know what resources are available and how to use them.

The librarian should:

1. Create awareness among users.
2. Organise user-orientation programmes
3. Demonstrate database searching.
4. Train users in keyword searching.

5. Explain Boolean operators.
6. Provide information about e-journals and e-books.
7. Promote Shodhganga and other related digital services.
8. Collect user feedback.
9. Explain copyright and fair-use conditions.

Regular awareness programmes can significantly improve the use of electronic resources.

Information Literacy and e-ShodhSindhu:

Information literacy is an important requirement for effective use of electronic resources.

Students may be familiar with Google and other general search engines but may not know how to search academic databases effectively.

A librarian can teach students:

- How to select appropriate keywords.
- How to use Boolean operators.
- How to refine search results.
- How to identify scholarly articles.
- How to evaluate information sources.
- How to cite information.
- How to avoid plagiarism.

Thus, e-ShodhSindhu also provides an opportunity for academic libraries to strengthen information-literacy programmes.

Conclusion:

e-ShodhSindhu is an important initiative in the development of digital scholarly information services in Indian higher education. Its establishment in 2015 through the merger of UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium, N-LIST and INDEST-AICTE Consortium brought major electronic-resource activities under a common national framework.

The consortium provides access to scholarly electronic resources and supports the information needs of students, teachers and researchers. N-LIST, as the college component, is particularly important for extending electronic resources to eligible colleges.

The major advantage of e-ShodhSindhu is its consortium approach. Individual institutions may not have adequate funds to subscribe to a wide number of expensive scholarly resources. Collective negotiation provides an opportunity to obtain extensive access while making well use of available resources.

Nevertheless, the availability of electronic resources does not automatically approve their use. Awareness, information literacy, training, technical support and continuous promotion are necessary. Librarians therefore have a key role in making these resources useful to the academic community.

In conclusion, e-ShodhSindhu has contributed significantly support the digital information environment of Indian higher education. Effective utilisation of its resources can improve teaching, learning and research and can help academic libraries move from traditional collection- centred services towards more user-oriented digital information services.

References:

1. *NFLIBNET Centre. (2019). Annual report 2018–19. Information and Library Network Centre, Gandhinagar.*
2. *INFLIBNET Centre. (n.d.). e-ShodhSindhu: Consortium for Higher Education Electronic Resources. Information and Library Network Centre, Gandhinagar.*
3. *INFLIBNET Centre. (n.d.). N-LIST: National Library and Information Services Infrastructure for Scholarly Content. Information and Library Network Centre, Gandhinagar.*
4. *Association of College and Research Libraries. (2000). Information literacy competency standards for higher education. American Library Association.*