

National Law University Library Consortium: Better Late than Never

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to present a model national law library consortium for national law university libraries in India. This study sought the opinion of librarians of 17 national law universities and 8 law publishers. A total of 15 law libraries and 4 law publishers responded. The findings show that except one library, all national law university libraries and law publishers are in favour of a national law university library consortium. Most suggested compulsory participation by all National Law University (NLU) libraries, centralized funding and Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) management model for the proposed National law library consortium.

Keywords: Law Librarianship, Law Library Consortia, Library Consortia, Library Partnership

1. Introduction

Libraries are changing; there has been a paradigm shift in libraries. There is increasing emphasis on digital collection and online access. Balancing between print and electronic resources is a major concern for libraries. Shrinking budgets, increasing cost of library resources, growing user expectations, and lack of standard pricing for online resources are some of the major problems for libraries. No library can be self-sufficient. In this situation library cooperation, partnership, consortium is the only solutions. Library consortia have expanded their activities beyond mere cooperation and resources sharing, which are in place since decades. Consortium activity is by no means limited to group acquisition only. Starting from co-operation, resources sharing, group acquisition, professional development to advocacy, there is a long list of consortia activities. ICTs and publication of a large number of digital resources and many other factors have triggered the concept of library consortia. Acquisition of digital content as a group instead of individual libraries acquiring is the main focus.

In India 18 national law universities have been established in the last 15-20 years. The contents, services, and users of all these libraries are similar. These libraries are in informal contact with each other. The objective

of this paper is to suggest a way forward by forming a national law library consortium.

2. Law Library Consortia

Consortia objectives, functions and services are similar for any library consortia, irrespective of types of libraries. The differences come at the stage of consortia management, structure and purchase models. Different libraries have different requirements and their objective in joining a consortium may be different from that of other libraries. At the national level there is no law library consortium in existence in India, but at the international level, there are two working law library consortia, NELLCO and MALLCO.

3. Literature Review

Horton and Pronevitz (2015)¹⁶ present 16 case studies and suggest that library consortia must focus on the needs of their own local audience. So, the current status of the collection, services and financial resources will be important data for framing the new consortia model. There are situations, however, in which working on a large scale can offer greater benefits. Jalloh (2000)⁶ points out that professional commitment is the key to establishing

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successful library networks / consortia. The study shows that motivated professional team and library committee were the main force behind the Swaziland network. Posigha, Godfrey and Seimode (2015)¹⁴ found that the lack of ICT infrastructure, inadequate funding, lack of skilled manpower and inadequate library automation were given as reasons by two librarians who were not part of a consortium. Oberlander (2015) presents open SUNY textbook program case study¹⁹. The objective of this project was to fulfill the users demand for more journals and e-resources, streamline e-content licensing and create more transparency in pricing and terms of access in e-resources acquisition.

4. The Problem

There are 18 national law universities in India recognised by the UGC and Bar Council of India. These are newly established universities and offer five-year integrated LLB course as their main academic programme in addition to master's (LLM) and PhD programmes. On an average each of the libraries spends Rs 60-70 lakhs on library resources annually. Out of the total budget more than 60% is being spent on electronic resources. With this in mind this study was planned to prepare a national law university library consortium model.

5. Methodology

A survey of the national law universities and libraries was carried out to collect basic information. Librarians of the 17 libraries were also asked to suggest the organisation, management, funding and membership model for the proposed national law university library consortium. A questionnaire was prepared and sent via email. Law publishers were also included in this questionnaire survey as without publishers' support, cooperation and involvement it would be very difficult to acquire best resources in competitive market rates. Most consortia acquisitions are in digital form and in the age of technology there are many technical issues associated with online access like remote authentication, number of downloads, embargo period, text format (PDF, Word, Text), clarity, speed, and copyright related issues. To clarify all these legal and technical matters, proper dialog, deliberation between publishers, aggregators and librarians is needed. Out of 8 publishers to whom questionnaire were sent 4 publishers responded.

Data Analysis: The responses of law university librarians and publishers are tabulated in the following tables (Tables 3 and 4).

Table 1. National law universities in India

Law Schools	Est. Year	# Faculty	# Students
1 National Law School of India University, Bangalore (NLSIU)	1987	29	800
2 National Academy of Legal Study and Research University of Law, Hyderabad (NALSAR)	1998	41	560
3 The National Law Institute University, Bhopal (NLIU)	1997	21	647
4 National Law University, Jodhpur (NLUJ)	2001	48	675
5 The West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata (WBNUJS)	2000	30	700
6 The National University of Advanced Legal Studies, Kochi (NUALS)	2002	16	510
7 Gujarat National Law University, Gandhinagar (GNLU)	2003	41	860
8 National University of Study and Research in Law, Ranchi (NUSRL)	2003	37	--
9 Dr. Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University, Lucknow (RMLNLU)	2006	55	1000
10 Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Punjab (RGNUL)	2006	32	730
11 Chanakya National Law University, Patna (CNLU)	2006	26	700
12 Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University, Visakhapatnam (DSNLU)	2008	10	546
13 National Law University, Delhi	2008	35	450
14 National Law University Odisha, Cuttack (NLUO)	2009	33	1235
15 National University of Study and Research in Law, Ranchi (NUSRL)	2010	32	600
16 National Law University and Judicial Academy, Assam (NLUJAA)	2011	30	300
17 Tamil Nadu National Law School, Tiruchirappalli (TNNLS)	2012	14	----
18 Maharashtra National Law University, Mumbai (MNLU)	2014	----	---

Table 2. Library profile of Indian national law universities

Sr. No.	Law Schools/ Universities	Books collection (Print)	Law Reports	Print Journals	Back Volumes of Journals	Online Databases	No. of Staff
1	NLSIU, Bangalore	39000	45	104 (90+14)	19000	9	15
2	NALSAR, Hyderabad	29546	6481	72 (65+7)	2129 UN repository collection	8	10
3	NLIU, Bhopal	20000	---	100	---	5	6
4	NLIU, Jodhpur	11000	5000	95 (85+10)	7000	8	12
5	NUJS, Kolkatta	24000	6000	97 (81+16)	-----	8	13
6	NUALS, Kochi	12700	2	----	20	3	07
7	GNDLU, Gandhinagar	25000	7000	105 (35+70)	3000	12	08
8	HNDLU, Raipur	22778	----	----	----	6	----
9	RMLNDLU, Lucknow	22000	75	116 (40+76)	6000	9	13
10	RGNLU, Patiala	31000	----	126 (92+34)	----	14	9
11	CNDLU, Patna	6650	6850	23	650	6	9
12	DSNDLU, Visakhapatnam	9682	5	45 (43+2)	3240	4	5
13	NLU, Delhi	32000	2500	146 (78+68)	10500	13	15
14	NLUO, Cuttack	1300	6000	50 (37+13)	-----	8	10
15	NUSRL Ranchi	20000	2500	25 (15+10)	-----	6	10
16	NLU, Assam	11000	40	35 (28+7)	10	7	6
17	TNNLS, Tiruchirappalli	----	----	---	---	---	--
18	MNDLU, Mumbai	----	----	---	---	---	--

Table 3. National law university librarians' respondent

(Rating 1 for highest priority to 10 least priority)

NLU Name	Compulsory participation model (For all NLU)	Open ended model (Open for libraries)	Close group model (Limited to NLU)	Management Model (CLAT Model)	Service oriented model (For specific service only)	Centralized funded model	Membership Fees Model	Cost sharing model
NLAIU, Bangalore	1	3	1	1	5	1	4	2
NALSA, Hyderabad	1	1	1	1	10	1	10	1
NLIU, Bhopal	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--
NLIU, Jodhpur	2	3	1	2	5	1	5	2
NUJS, Kolkatta	2	1	5	2	3	1	2	4
NUAS, Kochi	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	4
GNDLU, Gandhi-nagar	1	2	2	1	5	1	5	4
NUSRL, Ranchi	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
RMLNDLU, Lucknow	2	4	1	3	5	4	1	3
RGNLU, Patiala	1	2	---	4	3	1	4	2
CNDLU, Patna	1	---	---	1	---	2	3	1
DSNDLU, Vishkhapattanam	1	1	8	1	4	1	3	3
NLU, Delhi	1	2	4	3	3	1	3	5
NLUO, Cuttack	1	1	---	----	2	1	1	1
NUSRL, Ranchi	----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
NLU, Assam	1	1	9	3	9	1	2	10
TNNLS, Tiruchirappalli	---	---	---	----	---	---	--	--

Table 4. Publishers' responses

Publishers Name	Take part in consortia?	Consortia content offered	Consortia model	General views of the publishers
Balani Infotech	Yes with INDEST, INFLIBNET, ICMR, NKRC, DELCON, CERA, and NLIST	e-Journals and e-Books	----	In many foreign countries, consortia are well organised and timely decisions are taken. In India, consortia decisions are delayed which also results in delay in payments to suppliers. Law library consortia can work better if made an Open Consortia. This means that consortia would fix price for particular e-resource, give minimum guarantee of purchases and then make it open to any law library to purchase it from their own funds at the price fixed by consortia.
Cambridge Uni. Press	Yes at INFLIBNET, ERMED	e-journals and e-Books	Open for all law libraries and centralized funding like INFLIBNET	Through consortia, libraries get various resources from many publishers at an affordable price which otherwise would be difficult for an institutions to buy. Consortia at international levels are very big in size & comparatively more established. Funding at international level is too high whereas at national level, funding becomes an issue.
Oxford Uni. Press	Yes with INFLIBNET, CSIR, DBT, ERMED	e-Journals and e-Books	---	Due to budget constraints, consortium is the only sustainable model where by access to maximum contents can be provided at minimum cost. There is a need for law library consortium in India. Some efforts were made by NALSAR University (Hyderabad) in past but nothing materialized.
LexisNexis	No	Legal Database	---	Law library consortium will be good

5.1 Key Findings

Out of 17 national law university libraries, 15 have responded. The first question was, "do you agree that, there is a need for law library consortium"? Except *National Law University* (NLU), Bhopal all libraries answered in the affirmative clearly suggesting the need for a library consortium.

5.2 Compulsory Participation Model: NLU Model

77% libraries (10 out of 13 libraries) chose compulsory participation for all NLU as a first priority for the proposed law library consortium. There are 3 libraries (23% libraries) who have suggested this model on second priority. That means majority of libraries prefer compulsory participation model.

5.3 Open for all Model (Open for any Law Library)

42% libraries (5 out of 12 libraries) selected 'open for all' model as a first priority. 33% libraries have selected this model as second priority, two libraries selected it as third priority and one has given fourth priority. The preference for this model is varied as compared to the first model,

but out of them majority (42%) have chosen open for all model on first priority. The open for all means the proposed law library consortium should be not limited to national law university libraries only but should be open to any type of law library, like courts, judiciary or any law college, university.

5.4 Close Group Model (Limited to NLU Libraries Only)

50% libraries (5 out of 10 libraries) preferred close group model as a first priority. Close group means this consortium should be limited to NLU libraries only, not for others. There is one library who has given second priority, one has given forth, one has given fifth, one has given eighth and one has given ninth priority for this model.

5.5 Management Model (CLAT Model)

35% libraries (5 out of 15 libraries) have preferred *Common Law Admission Test* (CLAT) model, three have preferred it as a second rank and another three have given third rank. Managing the consortium by the NLU group is preferred. CLAT model is a successful model already followed by these NLU for admission purpose, the same would be best for consortium also

5.6 Service Oriented Model (Membership for Specific Service)

A question was asked about offer of membership based on specific service. This model of consortium was not a widely preferred model.

5.7 Centralised Funding Model

How to generate the fund to develop and maintain the law library consortium? Majority of the libraries 85% (11 out of 13 libraries) prefer a centrally funded model.

5.8 Membership Fees Model

This model suggests funding through membership fees. This model was not seen as a good funding model by many.

5.9 Cost Sharing Model

Even with regard to this the view was not unanimous. The opinion was it may be in order to run the consortium and maintain it on cost sharing basis at a later date; but not at the beginning.

5.10 Proposed Model

As an outcome of this study, a model law library consortium for Indian national law university libraries is proposed.

6. National Law University Library Consortium (NLU-LC)

6.1 Vision

To develop the best resource sharing partnership among NLU libraries.

6.2 Mission Statements

NLU-LC mission is to provide excellent library services to end users by way of enhancing access to e-resources. NLU-LC should provide opportunity for group acquisitions, resources sharing, professional development and selection of best technology products, which enables NLU libraries to cope with shrinking budgets, and other challenges to meet their user's needs.

7. Objectives

- To enhance resource sharing activities among NLU libraries and provide wider access to electronic resources;
- To achieve cost saving through collaborative acquisition; and
- To share best practices and experience among NLU libraries.

8. Consortia Activities

- Cooperative acquisition (e-Resources);
- Shared digital repository (Common NLU IR);
- Cooperative collection development activities (Policy, execution and evaluation);
- Resource sharing activities;
- NLU libraries' Union Catalogue;
- Cooperative library staff training activities;
- Professional development activities;
- Shared virtual reference services; and
- Shared integrated library system.

9. NLU-LC Model

Consortium of national law university libraries is the suggested model for Indian national law university libraries, because the collections, services and users are similar among these law university libraries. Currently there are eighteen national law universities in India and they are connected with each other as a part of their teaching, research and extension activities. These law universities are already working together as there is a common admission process (CLAT). Only the idea of law library consortium needs to be spread to start formal collaboration. Therefore, CLAT model is the appropriate model for this NLU-LC consortium also.

9.1 Membership

NLU-LC consortium membership should initially be limited to NLU libraries only and it should be mandatory for all NLUs to be part of the NLU consortium.

9.2 Funds

Centralised funding is the preferred model to create this law library consortium. All NLUs together should

contribute and create the corpus funds to initiate the law library consortium and maintain the same for next five years, after that the consortium can look for other funding options.

10. Conclusion

This paper presents the basic framework for proposed national law university library consortium. The law librarians, law publishers' view on the formation of national law library consortium is that it would benefit the academicians and librarians.

“The way to get good ideas is to get lots of ideas, and throw the bad ones away.” – Linus Carl Pauling.

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