
HOW THE ONLINE RESOURCES HAVE AFFECTED THE COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT, POLICY AND ROLE OF LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS IN SELECTION OF DOCUMENTS : A CASE STUDY OF IIT LIBRARIES

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ABSTRACT

Reports on the impact that have been witnessed by the library professionals of IIT libraries during the last ten years on library collection development, policy, and changing role of professionals in selection of documents. The study found that collection development policy and selection criteria have changed due to online resources and the involvement of non-professional has increased. Libraries are moving towards cooperative selection and sharing resources through cooperative collection development and consortia agreements and this has faded the autonomy of local library. The library professionals predicted that in future, the role of commercial vendors will increase and they will play an important role in collection development.

KEYWORDS: Collection Development Policy, Collection Development, e-Resources

Introduction

Over the last two decades, the electronic collections of IIT libraries have been growing steadily. There are three types of material to be considered as well when we look at the

migration from print to electronic format: reference works, journals, and books. The migration has been nearly complete for the first two and has just been the beginning for the third. Bibliographic databases were the first to replace their printed version, followed by journals which now a days often appear in two formats- both in print and electronic form. Compared to the printed books, the proportion of e-books is still rather small but growing continuously. The INDEST consortia came into existence in the beginning of 21st century and it makes available number of online journals and databases to the IIT libraries. At present all the IIT libraries are getting access to more than 10,000 full text electronic journals and 6 bibliographic databases through INDEST consortia, which are more than five time journals in comparison to print journals accessible previously. Apart from this, a number of databases, standards, online multimedia courses, e-journals and e-books have been subscribed by the IITs library as per their own requirement to support their teaching and research.

With a significant increase in electronic information sources and its use by the IIT libraries, one logical question arise, how has this continuing increase affected the collection development policy and practices of these libraries and changing the role of library professionals in selection of documents? As expenses and workload for new online information and services are rising, libraries need to justify the investment into change and to prove the efficiency and positive impact of the new resources. This is the fact that the subscription of new online resources in many cases only be managed with special funding and that the funding institutions want evidence of positive effect. Another reason for assessing the effect of online resources is to determine the basis of resource allocation. If the added online resources are widely accepted and yield positive results, the library will have to shift more financial resources and staff into that sector and plan to add other resources of similar kind.

No attempt have yet been made to carry out an evaluative study of the effect of online resources on collection development policy and practices, and changing role of library professionals in selection of documents. The purpose of this research paper is gain an

understanding of what is actually happening to the collection development librarians in the IIT libraries. By doing so, the paper aims to give collection development librarians, a better understanding of their role in the online environment and the changes resulting from the online resources.

Review of the Literature

Many articles have examined the impact of digital information on collection management in individual libraries and how collection management practices and roles are changing as a result of digital information (Marcum, 2003 & Webb, 2001). However, very few studies have been conducted for a group of institutions in India. Some of the studies, which are directly or to some extent related to the present study conducted so far have been reviewed. The researcher noted that limited amount of research literature pertaining to IIT libraries have been found; however, ample material focused to other academic libraries and related to the topic was accumulated. Moreover, since IIT, libraries are similar in configuration and services provided by other academic libraries, this literature deemed relevant.

Despite one librarian's statement that "electronic information isn't even designed for libraries or librarian's, but the end user," (Chuck, 1995) its impact on libraries is becoming more intense. Wallis (2002) found that electronic resources are affecting collection management policies and they are drawing attention to two areas that have been neglected for too long in libraries, namely how do libraries change to meet the new searching habits of user of the Internet and how do collection managers reacts to the changing information needs of users. Studies have found that the implementation of online databases affects internal library use, particularly when databases can be accessed through the Internet.

Hurd and Weller (1997) noted a shift to online databases (MEDLINE and Current Contents) by chemists when the databases became available through the network at no charge to users. Another recent study examining the impact of remote access to full text journals showed similar trends (Siebenberg, Galbraith & Brady, 2004). Martell (2007) also found that the usage of electronic resources is high and increasing, and patrons are requesting access to even more. Chandra Prabha (2007) found 35% increase in e-only journal subscription and

34% decrease in print only subscription in ARL university libraries between 2000 to 2006.

A survey-based study was carried out on the use of collections and services at IIT Delhi library (Kumar, 2010). The study was found that apart from the general books and reference books, bound volume of periodicals, a large number of users use online resources. Ghosh and Panda (2010) research paper provides a vivid picture about the status of serials collections in the libraries attached to the premier institutions of India (IITs). Kaur (2011) examined the impact of electronic journals on the services provided by the university libraries of India. The study revealed that majority of libraries saved time on checking print issues, claiming non-arrivals, cataloguing, and maintenance of print arrivals. The libraries under study revealed decrease in photocopying service, but increase in reference and interlibrary loan service.

User's perception of e resources as a replacement for print in meeting their information needs to a very high extent: e-resources have become a suitable alternative for printed materials. Faizul Nisha , (2011) made a study to know the application and use of library Intranet services at the IIT Delhi found that users are availing Intranet facility from their departmental labs, Central library, and computers Centre not only for research purposes but also for preparing teaching assignment and to update their own knowledge. Users mostly use databases of research articles, followed by the databases of PhD theses and databases of serials. Singh (1999) conducted a comparative study of reader services provided by IIT libraries. He found that reader services namely circulation, inter-library loan, reference, current awareness service, photocopy, translation, document reservation and bibliographical services exist in all the IIT libraries. The CD-ROM search was most popular service. Three of the total 05 libraries under study had started the process of transforming themselves into digital libraries.

Objective and Method of the Study

The IIT libraries established before 2008 have been selected for the study. The reason behind this was that these libraries have good collection of print resources from its beginning and from the beginning of 21st century all are using online resources. The library administrators have worked in both the environment and witnessed the impact very closely. As far as the

selection of Main Library, IIT (BHU) is concerned; it has been selected due to its collection and golden past. The newly established IIT have been excluded because they have just started and their libraries are still in the early phase of development..

The study has been carried out with the objective to find out how the online resources have changed the collection development policy and its management. The study started with the hypothesis that online resources has changed the collection development policy of libraries and motivated for cooperative collection development through consortia agreements.

Research Design

This research study utilized a two-phase sequential transformative mixed methods approach starting with a survey, followed by in depth search of websites, office records, annual reports and personal talks with the library staff and observations during personal visits. Questionnaire was chosen as data collection instrument. Two kinds of scales have been used in designing the questions. They are: non-metric scales including nominal (criteria of selection of document, people who maintain online resources and Yes/No questions) and ordinal scales (indicating level of agreement, prediction for the future etc. to measure the attitudes of the respondents). The researcher decided to conduct a printed questionnaire survey rather than an email or web based online questionnaire survey since the questionnaire was institution based and the information and opinion asked were concerned with different sections of the library. Apart from this, the researchers also discussed with the library staff and by visiting the libraries under study and personally observed the changes.

Result of the Survey

To know the impact of online resources on collection development policy, practices and management, total 15 questions were framed. Out of 15 questions, 13 were dedicated to know the budget, collection, selection criteria, role of library administrators in selection of online resources, and archival issues. Question no. 14 was based on the series of statements to know the impact on library collection development policy, practices, and management and the last question was framed to know the probable future effect on collection development policy and practices.

Effect on Availability of Online Resources

As figure 1 illustrates, all the libraries responded that the online journals are accessible to their users since 5-10 years. Whereas, 71% library responded that since 5 years they are providing access to online books. In response to the access to Web OPAC, 71% libraries responded that they are providing Web OPAC since 11 to 20 years to their library users. Online databases have been added in most of the libraries in the beginning of 21st century. IIT (BHU) has less number of online resources in comparison to other IIT libraries. During discussion with the library administrators, it was revealed that most of the libraries have started access to electronic databases and journals since the last decade of 20th century but it got momentum after the emergence of INDEST consortia.

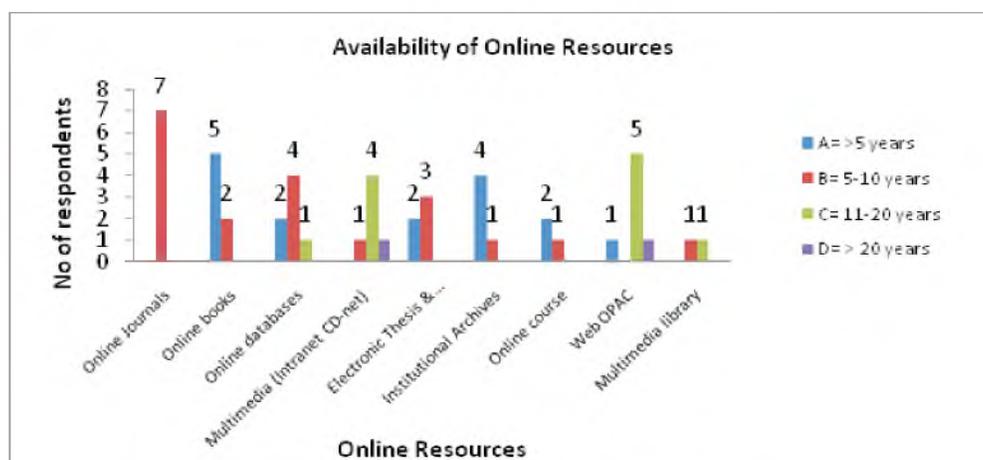


Figure 1: Availability of Online Resources (N=7)

Effect on Method of Recommendation

The library professional were having big role in selection of documents in print environment. Figure 2 illustrates the role and priority of selection of print resources, which shows that the faculty, research scholar, and Head of the departments are on the top priority. This shows that library and library staff do not play much role in the selection of print resources.

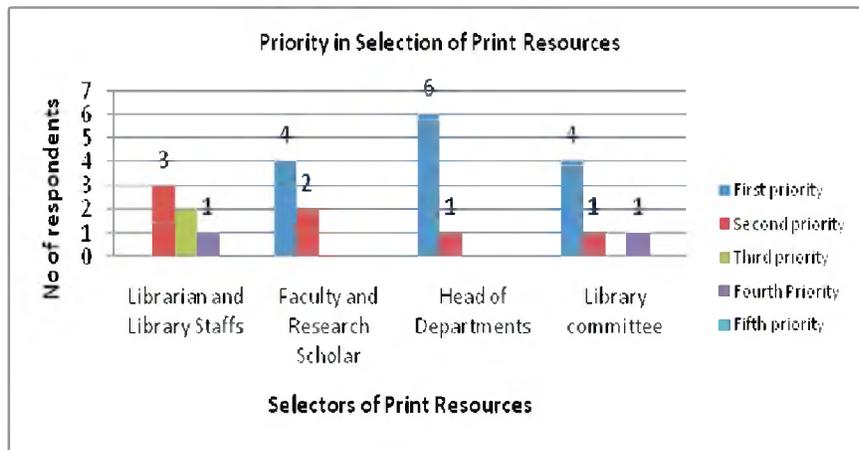


Figure 2: Priority in Selection of Print Resources (N=7)

As figure 3 illustrate, Head of Departments and the library committee are still given more weightage in selection of online resources. The main change, which has been reported, is that the involvement of Directors has increased and approximately 86% libraries responded that they give first preference to Directors opinion in selection of online resources. In print environment, the involvement of Director was less. After the access to online resources through the consortia, the role of collection development staff and librarian has decreased. Now the committee at consortia level decides the online resources to be included or excluded. However, they take into consideration the opinions of the representatives of the consortia member.

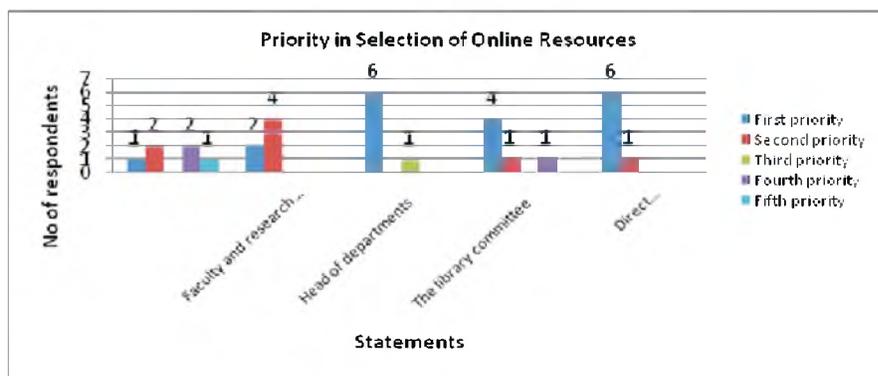


Figure 3: Priority in Selection of Online Resources (N=7)

Effect on Criteria Used for Selection of Documents (Print and Online)

In order to assess the impact of online resources in the selection of print and online resources two types of criteria for evaluation (traditional and emerging criteria) were identified. The respondents were asked to select the criteria of evaluation from the given list (12 from traditional criteria and 11 from emerging criteria) for the selection of print and online documents.

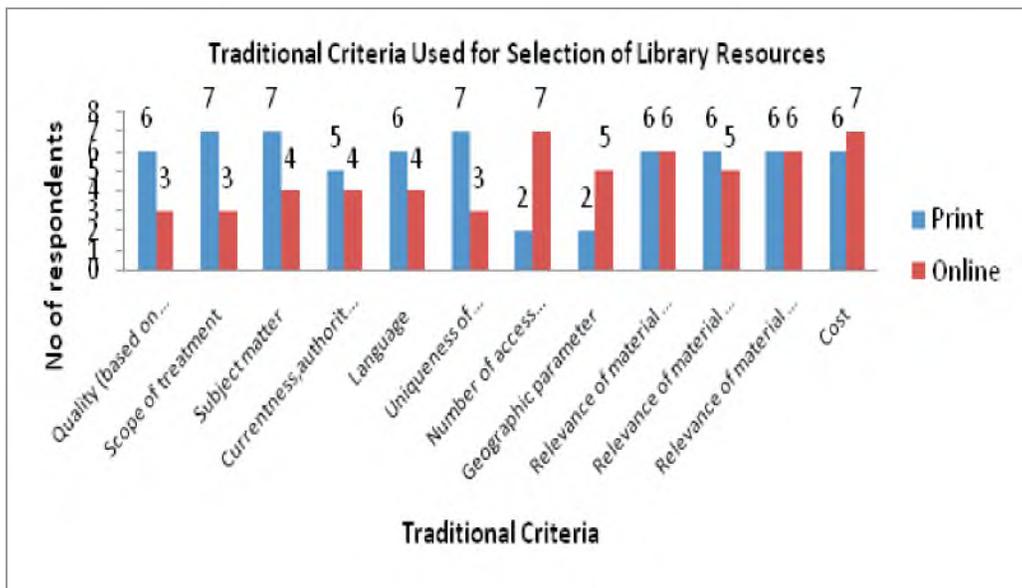


Figure 4: Traditional Criteria Used for Selection of Library Resources (N=7)

As figure 4 shows, most of the traditional criteria of evaluation have been adopted by the IIT libraries for the selection of print resources as well as online resources. The cost, relevance of material for curriculum, faculty research and reference have been used by most of the libraries for selection of both print and online resources. It shows that the basic criteria of evaluation are still relevant both for print and online.

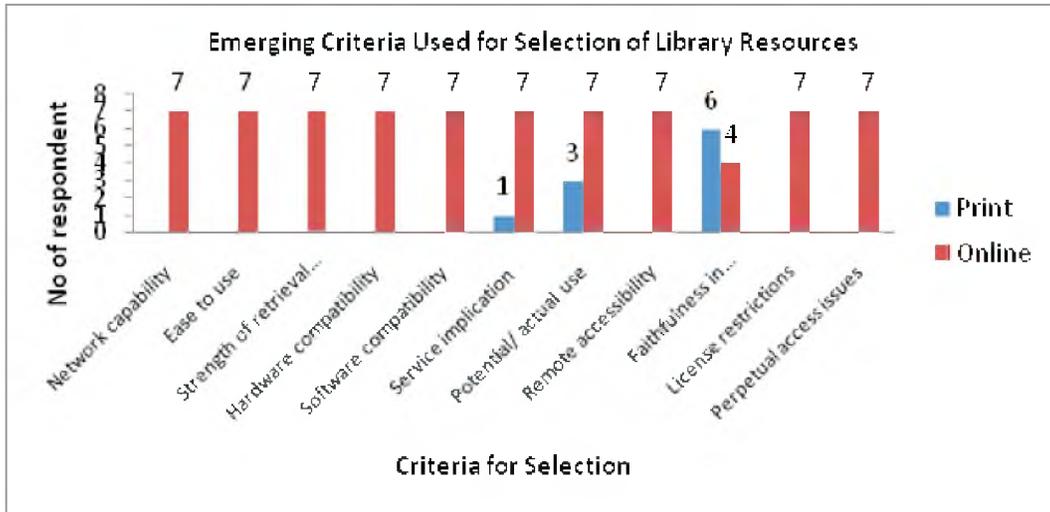


Figure 5: Emerging Criteria Used for Selection of Library Resources (N=7)

Figure 5 shows the number of emerging criteria of evaluation used by the library administrators for the selection of print and online resources. It is clear from the figure that most of the emerging criteria of evaluation have been adopted for the selection of online resources only. Only few, faithfulness in reproduction of print original, potential/actual use, and service implication have been used for both the resources. By comparing the figure 4 & 5, it is clear that most of the libraries have adopted the new criteria of evaluation for the selection of online resources. However, still some traditional criteria of evaluation are being used for the selection of online resources by the libraries. One important point that came to surface during discussion with the library administrators was that sometimes the above mentioned criteria does not matter if the recommendation comes through the Director or higher authorities.

Effect on Collection Development Policy and License Agreements

In response to the question regarding the written collection development policy and modification in this policy during the last 10 years, 57% libraries responded that they have written collection development policy and modified this policy during last 10 years after

inclusion of online resources. Three libraries (43%) responded that they do not have such type of written policy for collection development. All the libraries responded that the institute administration have provided additional budget apart from regular library budget to subscribe and maintain online resources.

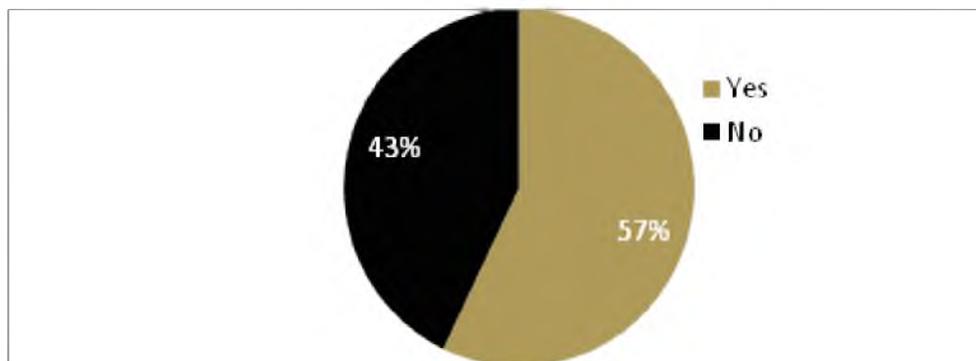


Figure 6: Libraries Having Written Collection Development Policy (N=7)

Negotiation of license agreements for online resources is a complex matter. Most of the libraries responded that the librarian in consultation with library committee do this work. In the case of resources subscribed or accessed through any consortia, the consortium takes care of these things. Most of the libraries have standardized procedure for negotiating license agreements. Only two libraries responded that every e-journal, e-books, and databases are negotiated separately. No library has special legal consultants for negotiating online resources. All rely on the librarian.

Effect on Maintenance of Electronic Journals

Most of the online resources accessible in IIT libraries are IP based and linked to library website. Maintenance of online resources particularly of online journals is a continuous process due to the change in journals holdings, frequency, access points, links, and content. A question related to the person responsible for maintenance and updating of online resources was asked from the libraries under study. The result of the questionnaire has been presented in the form of a diagram.

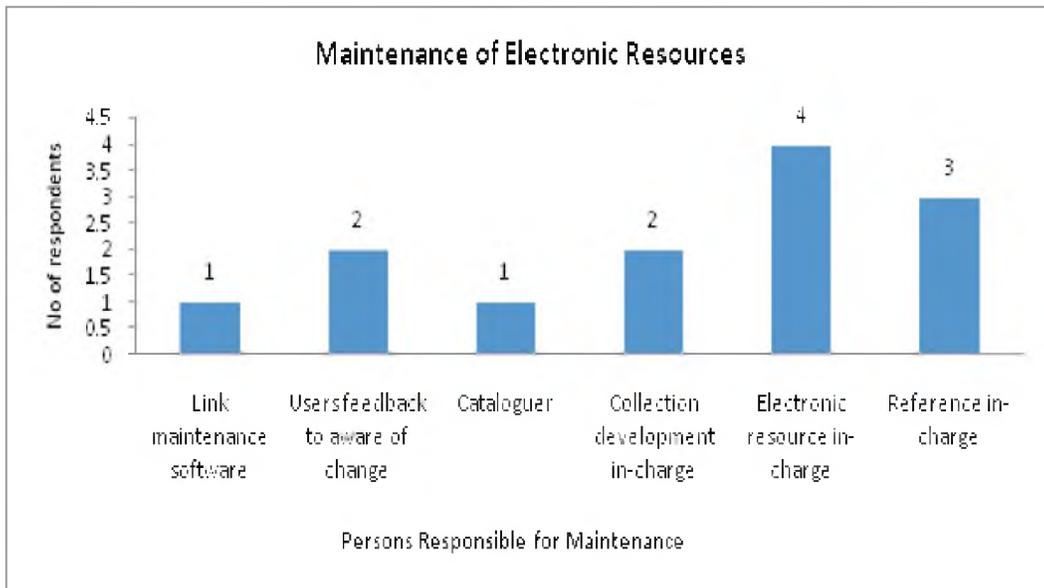


Figure 7: Maintenance of Online Resources (N= 7)

Libraries under study mostly rely on electronic resource in-charge, reference in-charge, and collection development in-charge for the maintenance of online resources as shown in figure 7. Only one library, responded that they rely primarily on link maintenance software. Some libraries have appointed IT experts who also look after these problems and maintain these resources in consultation with electronic resource in-charges.

Effect on Archival Issues

Archiving and preserving digital objects is fundamentally different from archiving and preserving print objects. As online resources are increasingly sold in the form of license that give access to online content, libraries have no control of their archives. Therefore, the research and associated academic institutions must effectively demand archival deposit by publishers as a condition of licensing electronic resources.



Figure 8 : Archive of Online Resources (N=7)

Most of the libraries at present are not involved in the archive of online resources. The figure number 8 shows that the publisher and the vendors are the main players in archiving of online resources subscribed by the IIT libraries. However, for the print, libraries are still playing main role in archiving and preservation.

Effect of Online Resources on Collection, Collection Development Policy and Practices

The collection development in-charges were asked to have their view on nine statements related to collection development policy, practice, management. The statements are given below in three categories, and each category has three statements.

Collection Development Policy

- A. In the past five years, our collection development policy has changed to reflect the effects of online resources and technology on our library.
- B. The online resources have changed the collection development policy of library and raise new issues, which call for the director's involvement largely.
- C. The library has shifted the acquisition budget to cover the online resources cost and emphasis is shifting from ownership to access.

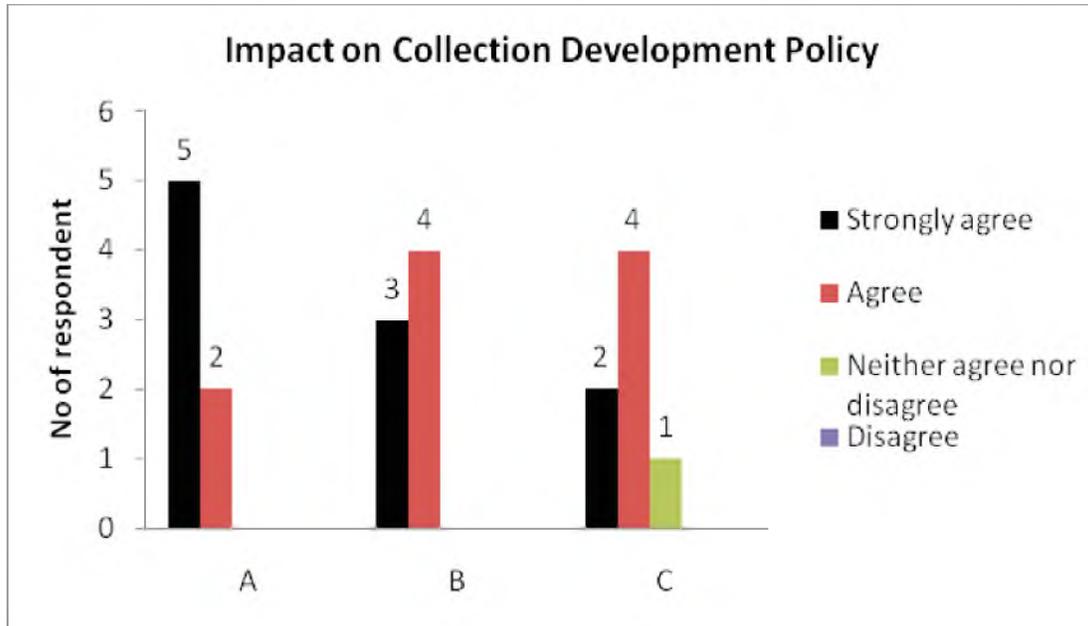


Figure 9: Impact on Collection Development Policy (N=7)

As the figure 9 illustrates, for the statements, A & B, all the libraries either strongly agreed or agreed and for the statement C regarding the shifting of budget towards online resources 86 % strongly agreed or agreed and 14% neither agreed nor disagreed. The researcher observed personally that the online resources have really changed the collection development policy and have forced libraries to shift their emphasis from ownership to access.

It also came to surface during discussion with library administrators that now in many cases the online vendors directly contact the directors for subscription of their products and this has increased the director's involvement largely. Due to the heavy cost of subscription of online resources, license and legal issues, the library administrators also wants the involvement of higher administrative officials and directors.

Collection Development Practices

- A. The online resources are changing the role of the selectors and involving technical, subject and copyright experts in taking decisions regarding the compatibility with

existing IT infrastructure and license agreements.

B. Libraries are moving towards cooperative selection and sharing of resources through cooperative collection development and consortia agreements.

C. The use of online resources (databases) has increased the demand for material from our collection and increased our need for journal holdings.

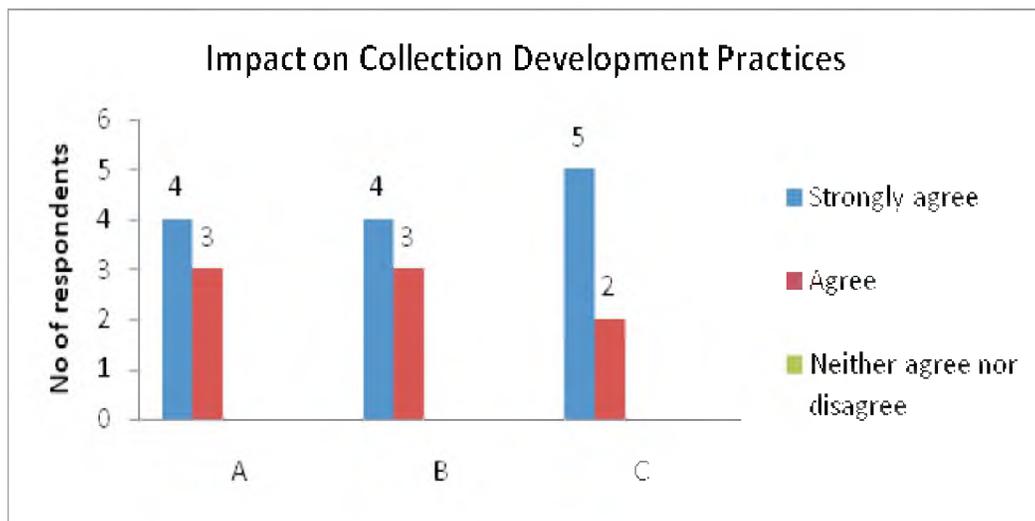


Figure 10: Impact on Collection Development Practices (N=7)

Figure 10 shows the impact reported by the respondents in the collection development practices after the increase in online resource access. As the quadrant A and B shows clearly, 57% respondents strongly agreed with the statement that the role of technical and copyright experts has increased in the collection development and library is moving towards cooperative selection and sharing of resources through consortia agreements. The remaining 47% also reported that they agreed with the statement. The online resources (databases) has provided an opportunity to the users to know the journals related to their field and this has increased the call for material from collection and increased the need for journal holdings. Most of the respondents (71%) strongly agreed and the remaining (29%) agreed with the above statement.

Collection Management

- A. The ICT and online resources have provided an opportunity to develop our own collection. Multimedia sources, open source journals, institutional repositories are new type of online resources included in library collection.
- B. We now cooperate with fellow network members in acquisition decisions and check the online holdings of other IITs library before we decide to buy/subscribe an expansive title print/online.
- C. The purchase of resources through consortia agreements has faded the autonomy of Local library.

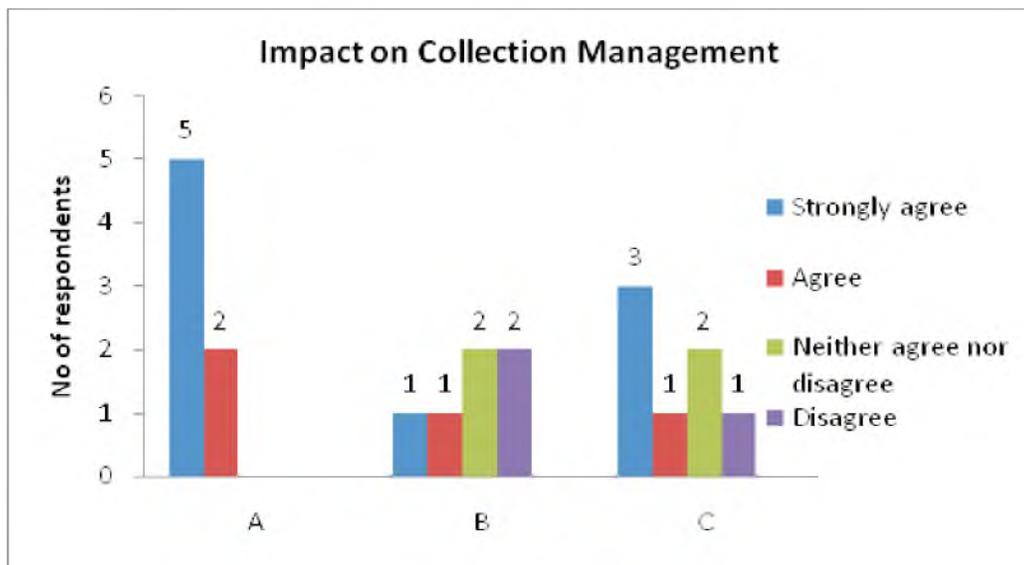


Figure 11: Impact on Collection Management (N=7)

To the left side of Figure 11 (above), we can see that majority of respondents were having view that the ICT and online resources have provided an opportunity to libraries for developing their own collection. The most striking aspect for second statement (B) is that 67% respondent were not having the view that now they cooperate with fellow network members in acquisition decisions and check the online holdings of other IITs library before

deciding to buy/subscribe an expensive title print/online. Fifty-seven percent respondents strongly agreed/agreed with the statement that purchase of resources through consortia agreements has faded the autonomy of local library.

During the personal visit and conversation with the library staff, the researcher came to know that most of the libraries have developed their own institutional archives and added more multimedia resources to their library collection developed by the students and faculties. However, libraries were worried about the autonomy of library after the subscription of resources through consortia.

Probable Future Effect

In this portion of the survey instrument, participants were asked to rank 7 statements of possible change as to whether each change was very likely, likely, not likely, or very unlikely to occur. An uncertain option was also given. The statements that probed the effects of online resources on collections and collection development policies, these 7 statements were derived from the issues and concerns expressed in the literature. Respondent were then asked to indicate when they felt that the change would be a general fact. Finally, respondents were questioned as to their perception of what effects such a change would have on their collections and collection development policies.

Statements

- A. The physical appearance of libraries will be evolving from rows to shelves of books to a computer terminal with only “old books” in printed form.
- B. Dissertations, articles, books, working papers, technical reports, and other such content will flood into the campus libraries for curation, description, and distribution.
- C. Collections will undergo dramatic transformations. They will be largely patron-selected, featuring multi-media resources and databases, many provided collaboratively through extensive consortia arrangements with other libraries and information providers.

- D. The budget will be shifted from purchase to access and interlibrary loans. The distinction between acquisitions and interlibrary loan will likely dissolve.
- E. Collection development will become a network activity rather than an individual library activity.
- F. National license of online resources will be a reality and these resources will be accessible to the academics all over the country like other Internet resources.
- G. Commercial information firms will make inroads into the academic libraries traditional market and will provide resources directly to patrons at nominal cost.

Figure 12 below displays the responses in ranked order from statements judged from very likely to Uncertain. To the left side of figure (below), we can see that for the statements A, B and C, majority of respondents were having the view that likely this change will occur.

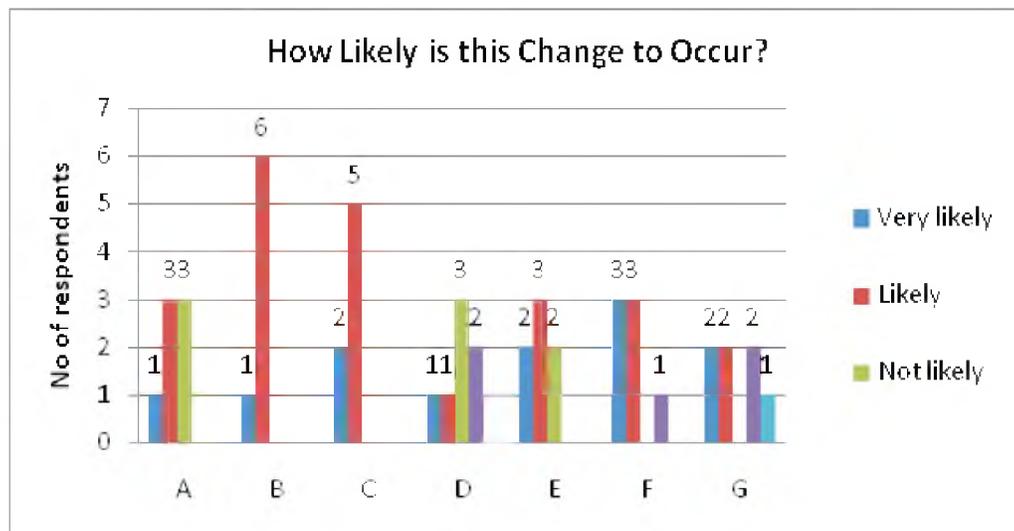


Figure 12: How Likely is this Change to Occur? (N=7)

However, for statement A, 43% were having the view that this change will not occur likely. Most of the library responded not likely to very unlikely on the statements D and E.

Figure 13 shows the probable time when the above statement will be a general fact. More than half of the respondents (57%) reported that the statement A would be general fact after 2020+.

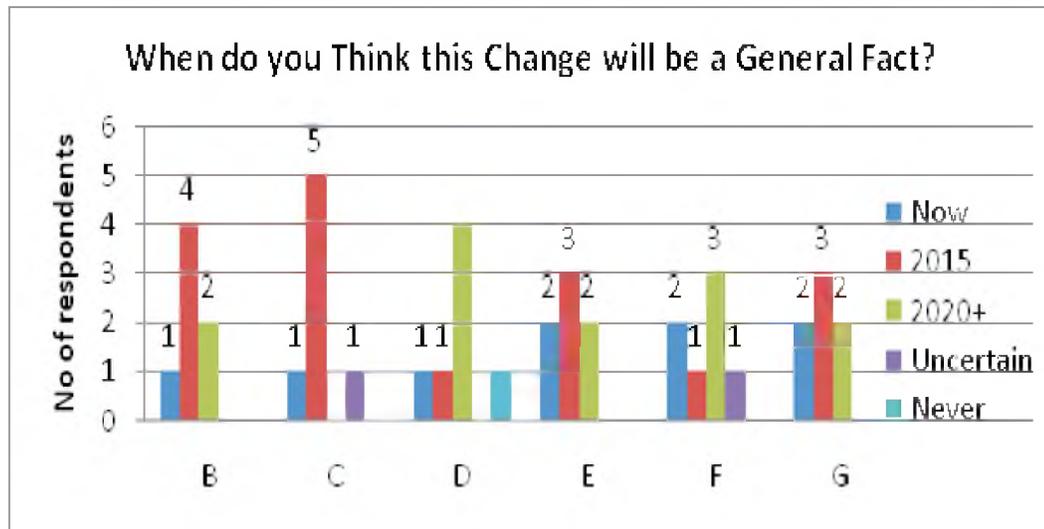


Figure 13: Probable Time when this Change will be a General Fact

As the statement B and C shows, more than half of the respondents (57% for B and 71% for C) reported that up to 2015 this would be a general fact. As statement D shows, 57% respondent reported that the budget would be shift from purchase to access and interlibrary loans. In response to the statement that collection development will become a network activity rather than an individual library activity, 71% respondent reported that this would be general fact after 2015.

As the figure 14 illustrates, for the statement A, B & C most of the respondents were having the view that if it happens, its impact on collection and collection development would be moderate. For the statement D, 43% responded little, 14% no impact, and 14% responded change would not occur. However, 29% were having the view that its impact would be great. As the last statement E (figure 14) shows, if the statement becomes true its impact would be great.

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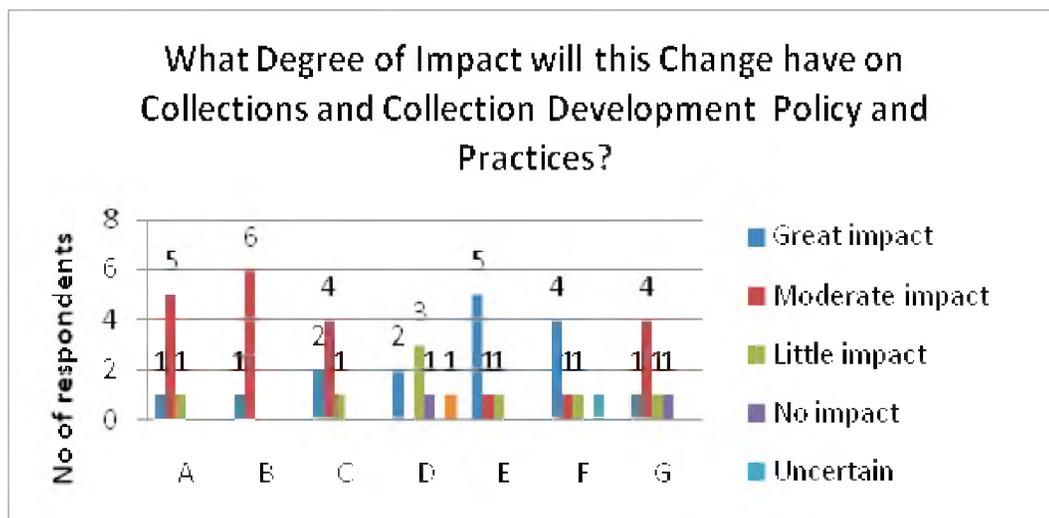


Figure 14: Degree of Impact on Collections and Collection Development

Discussion

On the basis of picture drawn through the literature review regarding the change in collection development practices and extent of involvement of other stakeholders in collection development, it has been identified in the study that the role of the selectors are changing and involvement of technical, subject and copyright experts in taking decisions regarding the compatibility with existing IT infrastructure and license agreements has increased. As far as the role of library professionals in selection of documents is concerned, libraries noticed decrease in online environment and reported that the role of legal experts and the higher authorities like the Directors have increased. It has also been identified in the study that libraries have developed a number of new criteria of evaluation during the years to handle online resources.

The study has shown that in online environment, archiving of back issues are the most important issues, but libraries are playing no role in this matter and still the publishers are the

main players. Most of the libraries have standardized procedure for negotiating license agreements. No library has special legal consultants for negotiating online resources. All rely on the librarian.

Similar to the Frazier (2001) study the results of this investigation shows that IIT libraries are moving towards cooperative selection through INDEST consortia and at present more than 75% online resources accessible to libraries have been selected at consortia level. It has also been identified from the results of the study that although libraries are moving towards cooperative selection through consortia, majority of respondents do not cooperate with fellow network members in acquisition decisions and check the online holdings of other IIT libraries before deciding to buy/subscribe an expensive title print/online. However, libraries were worried that subscription through the consortia has faded the autonomy of local library.

As noted in the literature review, there is a wide body of literature, which already exists which demonstrates the impact of online resources on different aspects of library collection developments. Several studies have found that as the uses of print books has declined; e-book usage has increased, particularly in fields such as Computer Science, business, and engineering (Cox, 2008). Likewise, in the case of reference works, there seems to be broad consensus that the electronic format is preferable, given the ease of updating encyclopedias and dictionaries and searching across them. However, reading the whole book or extensive sections, print books are preferable (E brary, 2007). The results of this study also indicates that the library collection of the future will be much more dependent on the development of publishing industry. The library professionals were having the view that the role of online vendors and consortia will increase in near future and the concept of national license for electronic resources would be a reality in coming years.

The study had several limitations. This study was primarily limited by its small sample size. The sample size could have been expanded by including Institution of National Importance. The research was mainly based on the questionnaire and interview with the library staff.

A greater depth of information may have been obtained by conducting research to know more about the resources (electronic as well as print which are not subscribed through

INDEST) and indentify the platform from where selection and purchase/subscription may be done in the same way as INDEST. Another possible improvement to the study could have been interviewing the in-charges of collection development. This method could have added important qualitative data and greater insight into the participant's thoughts and opinions.

In view of the tremendous growth of online resources , the results of this research study is expected to be useful for planning the collection development policy in the libraries of IIT under study in near future. The study will also provide help in design and development of libraries for the newly established IITs, IIMs, and Central universities. This understanding will permit collection development librarians to have a more accurate self-awareness, thereby leading to more effective and efficient role in collection development at their workplace.

Conclusion

From the opinion gathered through questionnaire and personal visits to the libraries, we can conclude that online resources have increased the role of collection development librarians and forced them to change their collection development policy. This has increased the involvement of non -professionals (Directors, legal experts, commercial vendors). However, this has provided an opportunity to the library professionals to increase their skills in handling these resources.

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