

# THE COMPREHENSIVE LANDSCAPE OF ICSSR'S E-RESOURCES CONSORTIUM AND ITS ENDEAVOURS

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**Abstract:** The rapid advancement of digital technologies has revolutionized access to information and knowledge dissemination across academic and research domains. In this context, the establishment of E-Resources Consortia by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) emerges as a crucial initiative aimed at enhancing scholarly pursuits. This research paper delves into the multifaceted landscape of e-resources and their imperative role in contemporary academia. It explores the necessity for digital resources in the scholarly community, elucidating the challenges posed by traditional information dissemination methods. The paper scrutinizes the inception and evolution of E-Resources Consortia under the auspices of ICSSR, evaluating its strategic initiatives that encompass a diverse range of electronic databases, journals, and digital repositories. It unravels the collaborative efforts undertaken by ICSSR in forming alliances with its research institutions, and libraries to streamline access to a plethora of scholarly materials. By fostering collective purchasing power and negotiated licensing agreements, these consortia drive cost-efficiency and affordability, ultimately benefiting researchers, educators, and students alike.

**Keywords:** ICSSR; NASSDOC; E-resources; Consortia; Online Database

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## 1.0 Introduction

In response to the exponential proliferation of multidimensional information and extensive developmental strides, libraries have been compelled to embrace novel technologies for collection expansion while curbing expenditures through consortia based subscriptions. The 21<sup>st</sup> century has witnessed a burgeoning inclination towards consortia frameworks for procurement, aimed at cost reduction and financial efficiency, aligned with user requirements to ensure heightened user satisfaction. While the primary motive behind establishing library consortium remains the sharing of tangible resources like books and periodicals among member libraries, this cooperative modality has undergone a transformative shift, transitioning from a print-based milieu to a digital domain due to the infusion of cutting-edge technologies. The advent of the internet, particularly the World Wide Web, as a novel medium for information dissemination has catalysed the proliferation of web-based full-text resources.

Libraries and information centers in India are presently subscribing to a spectrum of electronic journals, e-resources, consortia-driven publications, and online databases to cater to user demands and reconcile budgets that perpetually exhibit diminishing trends. In response to constrained or stagnant budget allocations, the innovative concept of 'shared subscription' or 'consortia-based subscription' has emerged. Employing a consortia-based model for electronic resource subscriptions emerges as a viable strategy to enhance access to these resources across various institutions, effectively mitigating the cost factor. This strategy is well poised to address the challenges posed by shrinking budgets, escalating user demands, and the rising costs associated with scholarly journals. Libraries worldwide are increasingly forming consortia across different tiers and scales, harnessing the potential of the global network to facilitate expedient and cost-effective dissemination of electronic information resources to the knowledge-seeking populace.

The inherent strength derived from the sheer numbers of participating institutions within library consortia presents a lucrative avenue for electronic publishers, thereby incentivizing them to offer competitive prices and favourable contractual terms. The collective influence wielded by consortium members empowers libraries to avail wider access to electronic resources at economically viable rates and with mutually acceptable, advantageous conditions.

Furthermore, the evolving technological landscape has reshaped the expectations of researchers, fostering a proclivity for on-demand services. In this context, web-based electronic resources emerge as a fitting response to the evolving needs and anticipations of the research community, ensuring seamless and immediate access to scholarly information. (Arora)<sup>1</sup>

## **2.0 Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)**

The encouragement and facilitation of social science research, characterized by its inherent intellectual freedom and diverse user needs, stand as paramount objectives for ICSSR and its affiliated libraries within India. Beyond mere encouragement, India has elevated the ICSSR's stature through robust state support.

Post India's independence in 1947, a comprehensive initiative was undertaken to shape social science into a holistic knowledge system as part of the nation-building endeavour. The distinctiveness of India's challenges necessitated a departure from Western-originated methodologies, often ill-suited for Indian complexities. This underscored the imperative of formulating a contextually relevant research methodology tailored to comprehend the intricate nuances of Indian social realities. The integration of indigenous intellectual traditions with the forces of modernization presented both opportunities and challenges, a complex interplay that the State recognized and embraced, assuming a pivotal role in this formidable undertaking.

To realize these ambitions, the Ministry of Education, Government of India, took a momentous step by establishing the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) as an autonomous entity on December 12<sup>th</sup> 1968 in Delhi. This institutional framework sought to provide a nurturing environment for the growth and dissemination of social science research, inculcating a spirit of inquiry, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, and fostering indigenous methodologies. Through its formation, ICSSR signified the nation's commitment to nurturing a distinctive narrative within the realm of social science research, acknowledging the significance of tailoring research approaches to effectively address the nation's multifaceted challenges. (<http://icssr.org/>)<sup>2</sup>

ICSSR's mission is to foster and back social science research in India and globally. It undertakes diverse activities to create, share, and apply social science knowledge. Its Memorandum of Association outlines supporting research projects through grants and fellowships, including international collaborations, thereby encouraging research by individuals, institutions, and university educators. In line with ICSSR's decentralization and expansion of social science research across India, 6 Regional Centres established and providing matching grant for 24 Institutes to promote research.

## **3.0 National Social Science Documentation Centre (NASSDOC)**

The ICSSR (Indian Council of Social Science Research) has taken a proactive stance in disseminating knowledge and information within the realm of social sciences. One significant endeavour is the establishment of the National Social Science Documentation Centre (NASSDOC) in 1969, situated in Delhi. NASSDOC's primary objective is to offer comprehensive library and information support services to a diverse spectrum of individuals and organizations engaged in social science research. This includes researchers in academic institutions, autonomous research bodies, government departments involved in policy formulation and planning, as well as those in business and industry sectors.

A pivotal role played by NASSDOC involves providing guidance and assistance to libraries affiliated with ICSSR Regional Centres and ICSSR-supported Research Institutes. Functioning as a substantial repository of bibliographic databases within the social sciences, NASSDOC boasts an extensive compilation of foundational reference materials, doctoral theses in the social sciences, reports of research projects funded by ICSSR, conference and seminar compilations, and an array of both foreign and Indian scholarly journals.

NASSDOC has embraced digital transformation, housing a diverse assortment of online library databases across various branches of the social sciences. NASSDOC's array of library and information services encompasses a Bibliography on Demand Service, facilitating specific resource requests, Current Awareness Service, Document Delivery Service, Abstracting and Indexing of Indian Social Science Periodical Literature, Professional Skill Development and Networking, Socio-economic Datasets Dissemination through ICSSR Data Service, and a Continuing Education Programme. Collectively, these initiatives reflect ICSSR's commitment to fostering a robust ecosystem for social science research and knowledge dissemination. (Jain)<sup>3</sup>

The ICSSR has implemented a progressive initiative aimed at leveraging modern technology to facilitate broader and more convenient access to bibliographic and full-text databases. This involves transitioning towards consortium-

based subscriptions to electronic resources within research institutes and regional centers, thereby enhancing accessibility and usability.

#### **4.0 Electronic Information Resources**

Electronic information resources encompass a diverse array of digitally stored information, accessible through electronic devices and computer systems. This category includes a wide spectrum of publishing methods such as OPACs, CD-ROMs, online databases, e-journals, e-books, internet resources, email publishing, and web publishing.

These electronic resources encompass various forms of data, including text, numerical, graphical, time-based, and references to full-text databases, electronic journals, image collections, and multimedia archives. These data can be accessed via different storage mediums such as CD/DVD, the Internet, and high-speed multimedia personal computers.

The University of Glasgow defines E-Resources as any resources available through the Internet, while the Library of Congress Collection Policy Guidelines describe electronic resources as works encoded and accessible via computers, encompassing data accessible through remote and direct access.

#### **4.1 Types of e-resources**

E-Resources are broadly categorized into two main types: Online E-Resources and Offline E-Resources. Several prevalent forms of e-resources include Indexing and Abstracting databases, E-newsletters/magazines, Full-text databases, E-journals, E-books, E-monographs, Electronic Thesis and Dissertations, Numeric and Statistical databases, as well as Reference databases such as directories, dictionaries, and encyclopedias.

#### **4.2 Characteristics of E-Resources**

- E-Resources exclusively exist in electronic formats and are accessible through libraries at any location, including homes, schools, and even while traveling.
- The advantage of quick service is evident as articles and issues are released online prior to the availability of the printed versions.
- E-Resources offer more than just information retrieval; they provide dynamic features such as reader interaction, comments, feedback, and swift content updates.
- Effortless and advanced search functionalities enable rapid retrieval and can accommodate numerous users simultaneously from countless locations.

#### **4.3 Need of E-Resources**

The primary objective of utilizing electronic resources is to enhance the efficiency of libraries by delivering effective information services to end users, helping them achieve their objectives. The shift from traditional formats to digital forms has been driven by the transformation of research articles, books, and journals, necessitating the adoption of the latest technologies. E-resources have played a pivotal role in rapidly creating and disseminating knowledge, expanding from a limited number of computerized databases to the vast expanse of information available on the Internet.

The decision to invest in electronic resources is widely accepted due to their user-friendly nature, readability, affordability, and accessibility. In today's context, electronic resources have become indispensable, offering cutting-edge advancements and transcending geographical barriers by enabling access from anywhere. These resources hold significant value in guiding research and development activities, contributing to their overall effectiveness.

The potential of electronic resources is vast, promising a bright future that continues to attract users. They bring together the advantages of multimedia, digital encoding, and Internet accessibility. This versatility allows users to carry these resources everywhere and access them on various computing devices, including handheld devices. (Haridasan)<sup>4</sup>

While E-resources offer numerous benefits compared to printed materials in libraries, they also come with certain drawbacks. These include: costs associated with infrastructure and installation; limited access to specialized equipment; compatibility issues between different publishers; challenges with hardware and software alignment for both publishers and users; the inherent difficulty of engaging with extensive on-screen data; heightened copyright concerns; insufficient manpower for efficient management; and frequent exclusion from indexing and abstracting services.

## 5.0 Consortium

The prevailing catchphrase in today's digital landscape is "Consortium," which aims to facilitate resource sharing through collaborative efforts among member libraries. In the digital realm, the focus has shifted from possessing information to accessing information. The concept of "Collection building" has transformed into "Connection building" with the aid of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

The term "consortium" finds its origins in Latin, denoting an association or partnership. In the library context, it largely retains the same meaning; an e-journal consortium entails the joint acquisition of access rights to electronic databases and journals. Consortia are established with the objective of accomplishing what individual group members cannot achieve on their own. The term "library consortium" encompasses cooperation, coordination, and collaboration among libraries, all with the intention of sharing information resources.

According to "Harrod's Librarians' Glossary," cooperation is defined as an alliance of libraries and similar institutions formed to provide mutual assistance and enhance functions, where resource sharing or cost-sharing proves advantageous and efficient.

The "Oxford English Dictionary" defines a consortium as a community of two or more information agencies that have formally agreed to synchronize, cooperate, or consolidate certain functions in order to achieve mutual objectives.

## 5.1 Collaborative Libraries and Consortia

The concept of 'Consortia' has emerged from the ideals of cooperation and coordination. The term 'consortia' refers to an arrangement or a group established to undertake an enterprise that surpasses the resources of any single member. Library Consortia denote a collective of libraries collaborating towards a shared objective. It signifies a joint and collaborative endeavour to fulfil the diverse requirements of users. This can be defined as a formal cooperative arrangement wherein individuals agree to exchange information or resources.

Library Consortia primarily focus on the sharing of resources in digital or electronic formats. Collaborative efforts among libraries are now widely acknowledged and considered essential. Such cooperation has taken various forms across different countries over the years. Some cooperation has been and still remains informal, while other forms involve intricate processes to share collections or services. Historically, library cooperation primarily entailed sharing collections, extending to the sharing of services and processes, like jointly cataloguing materials or providing staff and user training. These cooperative endeavours often had an economic incentive, a trend that persists even today.

Recent developments in library funding and the increasing significance of electronic materials have prompted a shift in the perception of how libraries collaborate, resulting in the rise of formal cooperative entities, namely Library Consortia. These formal organizations, often referred to as Library Networks, operate for the collective benefit of all participating libraries. (Chari)<sup>5</sup>

## 5.2 Benefits of Consortia

- Access to e-resources and the subscription amounts are shared among the libraries participating in the consortium.
- A significant reduction in price can be attained through the consortium approach.
- Libraries within the consortium will collaboratively acquire access rights to databases and E-Journals.
- Consortia can play a crucial role in obtaining licenses and facilitating the sharing of electronic resources. They serve as platforms to promote activities and programs related to the sharing of electronic resources.

## 5.3 Types of Consortia

Different types of consortia are prevalent both in India and abroad. These consortia primarily emerge based on evolved models that depend on participants' affiliations and funding sources. The following categories encompass these consortia:

- a) **Open Consortium:** This is very flexible and any member library can join and leave at any stage when they wish. Ex. INDEST Consortium.
- b) **Closed Consortium:** This is a defined group of libraries either by affiliation or collaboration among the member institutes like CSIR, DAE, IIM Consortium and the administrative guidelines & operation of the consortia are simple.

- c) **Centrally-funded Consortium:** In this model, consortium will entirely depend on the parent body. A few examples are INFONET by UGC, ICMR, and CSIR by DSIR.
- d) **Shared Budget Consortium:** In this model, the participating libraries take the lead and form the consortium. IIM and FORSA are the examples of this model.
- e) **Publishers' Initiative:** The Emerald Full-Text Library published by the Emerald Publishing Group is one example and the consortium members will get deep discount price for their libraries.
- f) **National Consortium:** The end of this model is national level licensing of products, like INDEST, UGC-Infonet.
- g) **International Consortium:** In this consortium, libraries having a place with various nations take an interest. This might be framed either by singular libraries, for example, OCLC, or by bringing diverse national consortia under one umbrella. Such alliance of consortia is known as Meta consortia, for example, International coalition of library consortia, which includes about 150 library consortia from around the globe. (Chari)<sup>6</sup>

## 6.0 Global Consortium Initiatives

The history of library consortia is not particularly noteworthy, but the process of consortia collaboration essentially began in the 1930s to facilitate the regulation of 'interlibrary loans' and 'resource sharing'. During the 1980s, there was a significant increase in the number of consortia, accompanied by various developments such as the advancement of bibliographic utilities and library automation, which enhanced the coordination of library activities within consortia.

In the 1990s, a new wave of library consortia emerged, leveraging advancements in Information Technology. A notable milestone in this regard was the global expansion of OCLC in the USA. It is important to note that by the late 1970s, OCLC had become a major player among the "mega consortia" in the US, alongside the Research Libraries Group (RLG) and the then Washington Library Network (WLN).

Over time, the formation of newer consortiums gained momentum. Examples include Colorado's CARL, Cape's CALICO, Georgia's GALILEO, Illinois's IDAL, Maryland's SEAFARERS, Missouri's MIRACL, New Zealand's CONZUL, CAUL, MetroNet, North America's CRL, the embryonic NCLive in North Carolina, Ohio's OhioLINK, Pennsylvania's PALCI, Portland's PORTALS, Texas's TexShare, Virginia's VIVA, Washington's WRLC, CIC in South Asia, CURL in the UK, CALIM in Manchester, Concord in Britain, METROWeb in New York, SERN in Wales, and SUN Connect, among others, all of which became active on the international stage. (Pal)<sup>7</sup>

## 7.0 Indian Consortium Initiatives

The Ministry of Education, Govt. of India various similar projects on a national basis, such as the Indian National Digital Library in Engineering Sciences and Technology consortium (INDEST-AICTE), the UGC-Infonet Digital Library Consortium, the National Library and Information Services Infrastructure for Scholarly Content (N-LIST), and the e-ShodhSindhu Consortium for Higher Education Electronic Resources.

### 7.1 INDEST-AICTE

The Ministry of Education established the Indian National Digital Library in Engineering Sciences and Technology consortium with the aim of offering electronic resource subscriptions for technical education within India. The INDEST consortium began its operations in 2003, headquartered at IIT Delhi. In 2005, it was rebranded as INDEST-AICTE, with the AICTE assuming a crucial role in its management. This consortium provides access to full-text electronic resources and bibliographic databases for premier engineering and technological institutions across India, including IITs, IISc Bangalore, NITs/RECs, ISM, IITs, IIMs, NITTTRs, and other core members of the consortium. With an open-ended approach, the consortium expanded its membership to encompass numerous educational institutions and universities, currently totalling 1235 members. The consortium offers subscriptions to a comprehensive collection of over 15,000 electronic journals. Notable electronic resources available include Elsevier's Science Direct, Proquest Science, ABI INFORM, ACM Digital Library, ASTM Standards, IEE Electronic Library Online, Web of Science, SciFinder, MathSciNet, Scopus Database, and SpringerLink. (<http://paniit.iitd.ac.in/indest/>)<sup>8</sup>

### 7.2 UGC-Infonet Digital Library Consortium

The UGC-Infonet Digital Library Consortium represents a joint effort by the University Grants Commission and the Ministry of Education, Government of India. This initiative was inaugurated in December 2003 by the esteemed (late) Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam.

Within this consortium, over 7500 core and peer-reviewed scholarly electronic journals, along with 10 bibliographic databases, sourced from 26 global publishers, are made accessible. Currently, a total of 209 universities, including 14 National Law Schools and central universities falling under the UGC's umbrella, have been granted entry to these valuable e-resources. The scope of access is gradually expanding to encompass affiliated colleges as well.

The subscribed resources offered by the consortium encompass a wide array of subject domains, spanning arts, humanities, social sciences, physical and chemical sciences, life sciences, computer sciences, mathematics, statistics, and more. Financial support for this program is provided by the UGC for the universities under its jurisdiction, and oversight is managed by the INFLIBNET Centre.

The UGC-Infonet Digital Library Consortium provides access to electronic resources from notable institutions such as the American Institute of Physics, American Physical Society (APS), Annual Review, Cambridge University Press, Emerald Publishing (LIS journals), Institute of Physics, JSTOR, Mathscinet, Nature Journal, Oxford University Press, Portland Press, Royal Society of Chemistry, SciFinder Scholar (Chemical Abstracts Service), Springer, Taylor and Francis. (<https://www.inflibnet.ac.in/econ/>)<sup>9</sup>

### 7.3 N-LIST

The project titled "National Library and Information Services Infrastructure for Scholarly Content (N-LIST)" is a collaborative effort involving the UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium, INFLIBNET Centre, and the INDEST-AICTE Consortium at IIT Delhi. The N-LIST project facilitates the provision of electronic resources to colleges, researchers, and faculty members, offering access through the INFLIBNET Centre to various beneficiary institutions.

Authorized users from colleges can securely access e-resources and directly download required articles from the publisher's website. This access is granted once their authorization is verified through servers stationed at the INFLIBNET Centre. Since 2014, the NLIST Programme has been incorporated into the UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium as a component specifically tailored for colleges. Eligible colleges across India, excluding those focused on Agriculture, Engineering, Management, Medical, Pharmacy, Dentistry, and Nursing, have the opportunity to avail e-resource access through the NLIST Programme.

At present, a total of 3134 Government and Government-aided colleges are benefiting from this initiative. These institutions can access e-resources using their unique Log-in IDs and passwords, which are provided through the N-LIST website. (<http://nlist.inflibnet.ac.in/>)<sup>10</sup>

### 7.4 E-ShodhSindhu

Upon the recommendation of an Expert Committee, the Ministry of Education has established e-ShodhSindhu, a Consortium for Higher Education Electronic Resources. This consortium is the result of the merger of three previous initiatives: UGC-INFONET, NLIST, and the INDEST-AICTE Consortium.

The primary purpose of e-ShodhSindhu is to offer both current and archival access to over 15,000 core and peer-reviewed journals, along with a variety of bibliographic, citation, and factual databases across various disciplines. These resources are sourced from numerous publishers and aggregators. The beneficiaries of this initiative include member institutions such as centrally-funded technical institutions, universities, and colleges.

The core objective of e-ShodhSindhu is to grant academic institutions access to high-quality electronic resources, encompassing full-text materials as well as bibliographic and factual databases. All of this comes at significantly reduced subscription rates. (<https://www.inflibnet.ac.in/ess/>)<sup>11</sup>

### 7.5 Other Consortia Initiatives

Efforts have been undertaken at various levels to establish consortium-based subscriptions to electronic resources within the research, academic, and technical libraries of India. Some notable initiatives include the following:

- J-GATE
- Custom Content for Consortia (JCCC) offered by Informatics India
- Consortium for E-Resources in Agriculture (CeRA)
- Department of Bio-Technology e-Library Consortium (DeLCON)
- SNDT University Consortia
- Forum for Resource Sharing in Astronomy and Astrophysics (FORSA) Libraries Consortia
- IIM Libraries Consortia

- TIFR Libraries Consortium
- ISI-Library Consortia Deals
- STI Network for resource sharing among S&T libraries
- CSIR E-Journal Consortium
- Health Science Library and Information Network (HELINET) Consortium
- VIC (Virtual Information Center) Consortium of ICICI-Knowledge Park
- ISRO Libraries Consortia
- Information Centre for Aerospace Science and Technology (ICAST) Consortia, and more.

These initiatives reflect a collective endeavour to enhance resource accessibility and sharing across the academic and scientific community in India. (Chari)<sup>12</sup>

### **8.0 E-Resources Consortia of ICSSR and its Initiatives**

ICSSR, along with its Regional Centers and Research Institutions, maintains individual Library & Documentation Centers as well as Information Centers, catering to the information requirements of their personnel and the research community. These entities allocate a substantial portion of their budget towards the acquisition and subscription of books, journals, and other materials for their respective libraries. On occasions, it has come to light that these libraries independently procure identical or similar information resources. Consequently, there arises a necessity for a collaborative approach to the procurement and distribution of information resources among these entities. This would optimize the utilization of their library budgets and information assets.

#### **8.1 Benefits of ICSSR E-Resources Consortia**

Subscribing to electronic resources through the ICSSR consortium would immensely advantage member institutions, resulting in a significant augmentation of accessible electronic resources for each entity. Additionally, the consortium is anticipated to catalyse a fresh era of inter-institutional collaboration, fostering a noteworthy surge in the exchange of library resources among the participating establishments. The subsequent enumeration outlines several key advantages associated with the library consortium:

- i. Consortium-based subscriptions to electronic resources offer access to a broader range of digital materials at significantly reduced costs.
- ii. Through the collaboration of participating institutions, the consortium can secure substantial discounts on subscription rates, accompanied by advantageous terms of agreement.
- iii. The enhanced accessibility to international databases and full-text resources is anticipated to elevate the research productivity of all member institutions.
- iv. The consortium presents an ongoing opportunity for additional institutions to join, gaining not only access to highly discounted subscription rates but also favourable licensing terms.
- v. As the subscribed resources are available online in electronic format, beneficiary institutions will experience reduced pressure on physical storage space for print-based library materials. Additionally, concerns related to wear and tear, location, shelving, binding, and organization inherent to print media are irrelevant when dealing with electronic resources.

#### **8.2 Nodal Office of ICSSR E-resources Consortia**

The National Social Science Documentation Centre (NASSDOC) serves as the central hub for the Consortium and is located in Delhi. The nodal office will oversee all administrative, financial, and managerial aspects of the Consortium. The key responsibilities of the nodal office encompass the following activities:

- i. To function as the central agency for enhancing cooperation among participating institutions.
- ii. To manage and oversee all activities related to the acquisition of e-resources on behalf of the consortia.
- iii. To establish communication with publishers, facilitating training and technical support for member institutions involved.
- iv. To collaborate with the Ministry and participating institutions to facilitate the subscription process for e-resources.
- v. To arrange and manage steering committee meetings, fostering discussions on policy matters.
- vi. To develop and maintain a dedicated consortia website, providing valuable resources for its members.
- vii. To extend the reach of the consortia to other institutions engaged in social science research, attracting and enrolling new members.
- viii. To orchestrate various awareness programs within participating institutions.

**8.3 ICSSR E-resources Consortia and its Members**

The ICSSR consortium was initiated in October 2007, comprising five research institutions under ICSSR, with NASSDOC as its hub. The other institutions, namely CESS (Hyderabad), CPR (Delhi), GIDS (Lucknow), and OKDISCD (Guwahati), subscribed to JSTOR. By the end of 2010, the number of participating institutions subscribing to JSTOR had gradually increased to 20.

In early 2013, the demand for participation in the consortium grew, leading to the inclusion of seven more institutions, including two regional ICSSR centers. Additionally, the ICSSR consortium expanded its resources by incorporating EconLit with full text, Indiastat, and ProwessIQ online databases.

Functioning as an open-ended consortium, ICSSR maintains a forward-looking policy aimed at supporting other social science research institutes in India. This support is extended through e-resource subscriptions offered within its consortia. Notably, in 2016, an additional five non-ICSSR funding institutes also joined the ICSSR e-resources consortium.

**Table1: Consortium E-resources and Member Institutions**

EconLit	IndiaStat	ProwessIQ	JSTOR
1) CDS, Trivandrum	1) GIDS, Lucknow	1) ISID, Delhi	1) CDS, Trivandrum
2) NASSDOC, Delhi	2) CESS, Hyderabad	2) NASSDOC, Delhi	2) ISEC, Bangalore
3) ISID, Delhi	3) CDS, Trivandrum	3) IPE, Hyderabad	3) CPR, Delhi
4) IPE, Hyderabad	4) ISEC, Bangalore	4) CSSS, Hyderabad	4) IPE, Hyderabad
5) IEG, Delhi	5) IPE, Hyderabad	5) ISEC, Bangalore	5) CESS, Hyderabad
6) GIDS, Lucknow	6) NASSDOC, Delhi	6) IEG, Delhi	6) NASSDOC, Delhi
7) CPR, Delhi	7) IEG, Delhi	7) NCDS, Bhubaneswar	7) OKDISCD, Guwahati
8) CRRID, Chandigarh	8) ANSIS, Patna		8) ISID, Delhi
9) ISEC, Bangalore	9) MIDS, Chennai		9) IDSJ, Jaipur
10) IDSJ, Jaipur	10) GIDR, Ahmedabad		10) CSDS, Delhi
11) MIDS, Chennai			
12) CMDR, Dharwad			

**8.4 Access to E-resources Consortium of ICSSR**

Access to all these e-resources for the consortia member institutions have been provided through the an Online Digital Resources Access Portal which is a gateway for all the available e-resources of NASSDOC including e-journals, e-books, NASSDOC library catalogue and Union Catalogue of ICSSR institutions on 24X7 basis from anywhere to the bonafied registered members along with the consortium participant institutions. This service was introduced in 2019 and now over 700 individual members using this facility from all over India.



**8.5 Online Databases of ICSSR Consortia**

JSTOR is an electronic archival with full text journals in social sciences and humanities. JSTOR is actively preserving over three thousand academic journals, books and primary sources, and current issues of journals in both digital and print formats, and continues to expand access to scholarly works and other materials needed for research and teaching globally. (<https://www.jstor.org/>)<sup>13</sup>

EconLit database contains full text for nearly 600 journals and it is a reliable source of citations and abstracts to economic research dating back to 1886. EconLit uses the JEL classification system and controlled vocabulary of keywords to index six types of records: journal articles, books, collective volume articles, dissertations, working papers, and full-text book reviews from the Journal of Economic Literature. These sources bring the total records available in the database to more than 1.2 million. (<https://www.ebsco.com/>)<sup>14</sup>

IndiaStat (Datenet India) is a comprehensive compilation of secondary level socio-economic statistical information about India and its states on various socio-economic parameters. IndiaStat.com is a cluster of 56 associate websites wherein 19 websites are sector-specific, 6 are regional websites and 31 websites are state-specific. Subscription to Indiastat.com gives an automatic access of its 56 associate sites. (<https://www.indiastat.com/>)<sup>15</sup>

Prowess IQ (Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy) is a database of large and medium Indian firms. It contains detailed information of over 20,000 firms. These comprise - All companies traded on India's major stock exchanges and several others including the central public sector enterprises. Prowess provides detailed information on each company. (<https://prowessiq.cmie.com/>)<sup>16</sup>

J-Gate serves as an electronic portal to the vast realm of global e-journal literature. It stands out as an exceedingly efficient and comprehensive platform for retrieving research data, offering entry to a staggering collection of over 55 million journal articles. Among these, 10 million articles are available in full text. This expansive repository encompasses contributions from more than 49,000 journals, spanning diverse subject domains across all academic disciplines. These domains include but are not limited to Agriculture & Biological Sciences, Arts & Humanities, Basic Sciences, Biomedical Sciences, Engineering & Technology, and Social & Management Sciences. The J-Gate access was given to only NASSDOC. (<https://jgateplus.com/home/>)<sup>17</sup>

**Table2: Usage Data of ICSSR E-resources Consortium for 2022**

<i>Name of the Database</i>	<i>No. of Users</i>	<i>Usage</i>	<i>No. of Articles produced</i>
EconLit	9030	33866	1891
JSTOR	4432	168803	
IndiaStat	4680	25076	
Prowess IQ	5910	25264	

**8.6 ICSSR Consortia Scope**

INDEST exclusively subscribes to electronic resources related to the fields of science and technology. While UGC-Infonet incorporates a selection of social sciences journals, its primary focus remains on scientific subjects. Conversely, the ICSSR consortium solely subscribes to e-resources endorsed by its constituent research institutes, specifically in the realm of social sciences. None of the institutes have chosen any journals from those subscribed to by INDEST or UGC-Infonet, with the exception of JSTOR, which is already accessible to consortium mode research institutes via internal funding.

The e-resources accessible through the ICSSR consortium will be utilized by its funded institutes and regional centres. Its operational scope will distinctly differ from that of UGC-Infonet. The ICSSR consortium serves as an open-ended platform centered on social sciences. Although its initial focus was on ICSSR research institutes, the consortium has since extended its membership invitation to other social science research institutions. These institutions can join and access e-resources through the ICSSR consortium via formal agreements with ICSSR. Prominent social science research institutes that may participate include: the Indian Institute of Public

Administration in New Delhi, the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade in New Delhi, the Indian Social Institute in Bangalore, the Institute of Applied Manpower Research in Delhi, the National Council of Applied Economic Research in New Delhi, the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy in New Delhi, the Xavier Institute of Social Service in Ranchi, the V. V. Giri National Labour Institute in Noida, the Indian Council of World Affairs in New Delhi, the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis in New Delhi, the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship in Guwahati, the Indian School of Political Economy in Pune, and the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research in Mumbai.

## 9. Conclusion

This study has brought to attention the numerous benefits that arise from participating in E-Resources Consortia. The research delved into how these consortia promote the democratization of knowledge and ensure fair distribution, overcoming geographical barriers. The study emphasized the improved research productivity and access to information that these consortia enable, fostering interdisciplinary studies and strengthening academic outcomes. Additionally, it illuminated how libraries are evolving into dynamic information hubs, adapting to the digital age while ensuring smooth access to electronic resources. To conclude, this research highlights the crucial role played by the ICSSR E-Resources Consortia in reshaping scholarly communication and driving academic excellence in the field of social sciences.

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