

LIBRARIES AS INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH HUBS FOR PHARMACY COLLEGES IN THE DIGITAL AGE: THE ROLE OF DELNET IN RESOURCE SHARING AND KNOWLEDGE DISCOVERY

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Abstract :

The rapid growth of digital technology has transformed academic libraries from traditional storehouses of books into dynamic centre for teaching, learning and research. Pharmacy education is inherently interdisciplinary and requires information from pharmaceutical sciences, chemistry, biology, medicine, biotechnology, microbiology, public health and other related disciplines. Therefore, pharmacy college libraries need to provide access to diverse and current information resources beyond their physical collections. In this context, library networks and electronic resources play an important role in supporting research and knowledge sharing. The Developing Library Network (DELNET) is one of the important library networks in India that facilitates resource sharing, bibliographic information access, inter-library loan, document delivery and access to electronic resources. DELNET provides union catalogues, databases of periodical articles, theses and dissertations, e-books, e-journals and other research resources. This paper discusses the changing role of pharmacy college libraries as interdisciplinary research hubs and examines the contribution of DELNET to resource sharing and knowledge discovery. The paper also highlights the challenges and opportunities associated with the effective use of DELNET in pharmacy education and research. It concludes that the integration of DELNET with digital library services, institutional repositories, open-access resources and professional librarian support can strengthen the research capacity of pharmacy colleges and promote interdisciplinary scholarly communication.

Keywords : Pharmacy College Libraries, Interdisciplinary Research, DELNET, Resource Sharing, Knowledge Discovery, Digital Libraries, E-Resources, Research Support.

Introduction :

Libraries have always played an important role in education and research. However, the nature of library services has changed significantly with the development of information and communication technologies. The traditional library, which primarily focused on printed



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books, journals and other physical documents, has gradually developed into a digital and networked information centre.

Today, academic libraries provide access to e-books, e-journals, databases, institutional repositories, digital archives and online scholarly resources. Researchers can access information from different institutions and countries without necessarily visiting a physical library. This transformation is particularly important for pharmacy colleges because pharmacy is a multidisciplinary field.

Pharmacy research is closely connected with chemistry, biology, biotechnology, pharmacology, medicine, microbiology, public health, data science and other disciplines. A researcher working on drug discovery may require information from chemistry and biotechnology, while research in clinical pharmacy may require information from medicine, nursing and public health. Consequently, a pharmacy college library must provide information beyond the traditional boundaries of pharmaceutical sciences.

In such an environment, **resource sharing and library networking** have become essential. No single pharmacy college library can afford to acquire every book, journal, thesis, database and research document required by its users. Library networks enable institutions to share resources and provide researchers with access to a much larger information environment.

The **Developing Library Network (DELNET)** is particularly relevant in this context. DELNET promotes resource sharing among libraries and provides access to union catalogues, databases and electronic resources. Its services include inter-library loan, document delivery and reference support. According to its official information, DELNET has more than 10,000 member libraries.

Therefore, DELNET can play an important role in transforming pharmacy college libraries from conventional information centres into **interdisciplinary research hubs**.

Objectives of the Study :

The main objectives of this paper are:

1. To examine the changing role of pharmacy college libraries in the digital age.
2. To understand the importance of interdisciplinary information resources in pharmacy research.
3. To examine the role of DELNET in library resource sharing.
4. To identify the relevance of DELNET resources for pharmacy students, faculty and researchers.
5. To examine the contribution of DELNET to knowledge discovery and research support.
6. To identify major challenges and suggest measures for effective utilization of



DELNET in pharmacy college libraries.

Research Methodology :

The study is descriptive and exploratory in nature and is based mainly on secondary sources. Information was collected from the official DELNET website, DELNET databases and service information, along with relevant literature relating to academic libraries, digital resources, resource sharing and interdisciplinary research. The study focuses particularly on the application of DELNET resources and services to the information and research requirements of pharmacy colleges.

Pharmacy College Libraries in the Digital Age :

The pharmacy college library has traditionally been responsible for providing textbooks, reference books and pharmaceutical journals. However, the requirements of contemporary pharmacy education have expanded considerably.

Modern pharmacy education includes areas such as drug discovery, pharmaceutical analysis, clinical pharmacy, pharmacovigilance, biotechnology, nanotechnology, pharmacogenomics and healthcare. Research in these areas requires access to information from several disciplines.

For example, research on a new drug may involve chemistry for drug synthesis, biology for understanding biological mechanisms, pharmacology for evaluating drug effects, toxicology for safety assessment and medicine for clinical applications. Similarly, research on pharmaceutical care may involve pharmacy, medicine, nursing, public health and social sciences.

Therefore, the library should not be viewed only as a pharmacy information centre. It should function as an interdisciplinary research hub capable of connecting researchers with information from multiple disciplines.

Digital resources have made this possible. Through online databases, e-books, e-journals, digital repositories and library networks, researchers can access a wider range of information than was possible through traditional collections.

DELNET and Resource Sharing :

The Developing Library Network (DELNET) was established with the objective of promoting resource sharing and networking among libraries. It provides services that allow participating libraries and their users to discover and obtain resources beyond their own institutional collections. DELNET currently reports more than 10,000 member libraries.

The importance of DELNET for pharmacy college libraries can be understood through its major resources and services. Its Union Catalogue of Books helps users identify



books available in member libraries, while its periodical-related databases help researchers locate journals and articles. DELNET also provides databases of theses and dissertations, e-books, e-journals and other electronic resources. This creates a significant advantage for pharmacy colleges. Instead of depending only on the books and journals physically available in their own library, researchers can discover resources available through the wider DELNET network.

Resource sharing can therefore increase the effective collection size of a pharmacy college library without requiring the institution to purchase every available resource.

DELNET and Knowledge Discovery :

Knowledge discovery is an important component of modern research. Researchers must be able to identify relevant information quickly, evaluate it and connect it with their research questions.

DELNET can assist researchers at different stages of the research process. A pharmacy researcher beginning a research project can search books and periodicals for background information, identify relevant journal articles, examine theses and dissertations to understand previous research and locate additional resources available in participating libraries.

The Database of Periodical Articles is particularly useful for literature searching, while the Theses and Dissertations database can help researchers identify previous studies and possible research gaps.

For example, a researcher working on “Nanotechnology in Targeted Drug Delivery” may require literature from pharmacy, biotechnology, chemistry, materials science and medicine. A networked information environment can help the researcher move beyond the boundaries of the local pharmacy collection.

Thus, DELNET can contribute to knowledge discovery by connecting researchers with multidisciplinary information resources.

DELNET and Inter-Library Loan :

One of the major advantages of library networking is inter-library loan and document delivery.

A pharmacy college may not possess a particular book or journal article required by a researcher. Through DELNET, the library can identify whether the required resource is available through another participating library and submit an appropriate request. DELNET provides inter-library loan and document-delivery services as part of its resource-sharing programme. This service is particularly useful for postgraduate students, faculty members and PhD researchers who frequently require specialized literature.



The importance of this service can be summarized as:

Local Collection → DELNET Network → Resource Discovery → Resource Sharing → Research Support

In this way, library networking helps overcome the limitations of individual institutional collections.

Role of the Librarian as Research Facilitator :

The development of digital libraries and networked resources has changed the role of the librarian. The librarian is no longer only responsible for issuing and returning books. In a modern pharmacy college, the librarian can function as a research facilitator, information specialist and knowledge navigator.

The librarian can help researchers formulate search strategies, identify suitable electronic resources, search DELNET databases, locate theses and dissertations, obtain documents through resource-sharing services and manage references. Library orientation programmes should therefore include practical training in DELNET and other electronic resources. Special training can be provided to postgraduate students, faculty members and research scholars. The effectiveness of DELNET ultimately depends not only on the availability of resources but also on the ability of users and librarians to use those resources effectively.

Benefits and Challenges :

The use of DELNET in pharmacy college libraries provides several benefits. It expands access to information, supports interdisciplinary research, reduces dependence on local collections and facilitates resource sharing. It can also assist researchers in literature reviews and identification of research gaps.

However, some challenges remain. Many students and researchers may not be fully aware of DELNET services. Limited training, inadequate internet connectivity and lack of regular user orientation can reduce utilization. Copyright and licensing restrictions may also affect the availability of some electronic resources. Furthermore, finding a resource in a union catalogue does not necessarily mean that the original document can always be borrowed, particularly when the material is rare or subject to special access conditions.

These challenges can be addressed through regular user education, librarian training, institutional support and greater awareness of resource-sharing services.

Suggestions :

Pharmacy college libraries should develop a systematic approach to maximize the benefits of DELNET. DELNET orientation should be included in student induction and



library-user education programmes. Research scholars and faculty members should receive practical training in advanced searching and resource discovery.

Libraries should also promote inter-library loan and document delivery services and provide information about DELNET through their library websites, notices and research-support programmes.

The library should integrate DELNET with other digital services such as institutional repositories, open-access resources and electronic databases. Librarians should regularly evaluate the use of DELNET and identify the information needs of pharmacy researchers.

Most importantly, the pharmacy college library should develop a **research-centred service philosophy**, in which the librarian actively supports researchers throughout the research process.

Findings :

The study indicates that pharmacy college libraries are increasingly required to provide multidisciplinary information rather than only pharmaceutical literature. Digital resources and library networks can significantly expand the information environment available to researchers.

The study also finds that DELNET provides valuable support through its union catalogues, periodical databases, theses and dissertations, e-books, e-journals and resource-sharing services.

DELNET's inter-library loan and document-delivery services are particularly useful when required resources are not available in the local library.

The effective use of these services depends heavily on user awareness and librarian support.

Conclusion :

The digital age has fundamentally changed the role of academic libraries. Pharmacy college libraries can no longer function effectively as repositories of textbooks and printed journals alone. The interdisciplinary nature of modern pharmacy education and research requires access to information from pharmaceutical sciences, medicine, chemistry, biotechnology, biology, public health and other related disciplines.

In this changing environment, the library should function as an **interdisciplinary research hub**. DELNET can make an important contribution to this transformation by connecting pharmacy college libraries with a wider network of information resources.

Its union catalogues, databases of periodical articles, theses and dissertations, e-books,



e-journals and other resources provide researchers with opportunities to discover information beyond their local collections. Its inter-library loan and document-delivery services further strengthen resource sharing and help researchers obtain materials that may not be available in their own institutions.

The real strength of DELNET lies in **networking, sharing and connecting knowledge**. For pharmacy colleges, this can support literature reviews, research projects, interdisciplinary studies and scholarly communication.

Therefore, pharmacy college libraries should move from a **collection-centred model to a research-centred and networked model**. The combination of DELNET, electronic resources, institutional repositories, open-access resources and professional librarian expertise can create a strong research-support ecosystem.

In conclusion, **DELNET can act as a catalyst in transforming pharmacy college libraries into interdisciplinary research hubs**, enabling researchers to move from information access to knowledge discovery and ultimately to knowledge creation. 😊📚🔍

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