

# One Nation, One Subscription (ONOS) Library Legislation in India: Prospects and Challenges

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17946632>

### ABSTRACT:

According to the One Nation, One Subscription (ONOS) policy that is being implemented by the Government of India, all people of India should have easy access to digital academic content that is priced at a reasonable level, regardless of where they live or their socioeconomics standing. In this paper, we take a look at significant role that library and information science professionals had in the implementation of ONOS. The main objectives of this paper to study the prospects and challenges of One Nation, One Subscription (ONOS) library legislation in India. The present paper primarily based on secondary data sources. Secondary data have been collected from various sources like Various Reports, Research journal, Text books, Websites ect.

### KEYWORDS:

One Nation, One Subscription (ONOS), Library, Information Science, Model, Prospects, Challenges.

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### Introduction:

The One Nation, One Subscription (ONOS) model is a proposed nation level strategy. It is initiative proposes a national-level policy and legal frame work to provide free, equitable access to scholarly journals, databases and academic content across all public institutions in India. Its prospects include democratising knowledge access, bridging infrastructure gaps and streamlining subscriptions, but it faces challenges such as potential publisher control, high costs, digital divide due to connectivity gaps in some areas and the exclusion of private institutions in the initial phase. The successes of ONOS will depend on overcoming these challenges and ensuring equitable access and effective implementation

### Prospects of one nation, one subscription (onos) library legislation:

The following are the prospects of one nation, one subscription for library legislation which are discussed as below:

**A. Equitable Access to Knowledge:**

1. Removes subscription barriers for thousands of institutions across the country.
2. Enables universal access to academic content, particularly benefiting rural and underfunded institutions.

**B. Cost Efficiency & Central Bargaining Power:**

1. Centralized licensing reduces duplication and improves negotiating power with major publishers.
2. Leads to economies of scale and optimized national spending on subscriptions.

**C. Boost to Research and Innovation:**

1. Easier access to top-tier journals supports higher research output, quality publications, and global collaborations.
2. Encourages interdisciplinary and cross-institutional research.

**D. Supports National Education & Research Policies:**

1. Aligns with: National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, National Research Foundation (NRF), Digital India and Viksit Bharat 2047.
2. Helps build a robust knowledge society and innovation-driven economy

**E. Standardization and Legal Clarity:**

1. A legal framework ensures long-term sustainability, accountability, and clearly defined responsibilities across ministries and institutions.
2. Enables long term planning, rather than year to year budget negotiations.

**F. Inclusive Knowledge Ecosystem:**

1. Legislation can mandate the inclusion of regional language content, community libraries, and open access repositories.
2. Facilitates interdisciplinary collaboration and faster knowledge dissemination.

**Challenges of one nation, one subscription (onos) library legislation:**

The challenges of one nation, one subscription for library legislation are discussed as below:

**A. Constitutional and Federal Concerns:**

1. Libraries fall under the State List in the Constitution.
2. A central law may face resistance from states citing loss of autonomy and jurisdictional overreach.

**B. High Financial Commitment:**

1. National-level licenses involve large, recurring expenditures.
2. Centralized access to top tier journals and databases required large, recurring national budget.
3. Publishers may demand premium pricing due to broad access.

**C. Uneven Usage and Access Institutions:**

1. Many institutions lack the infrastructure, trained staff, or digital literacy to fully utilize ONOS resources.
2. Risks low return on investment in poorly equipped areas.

**D. Neglect of Local and Regional Publishers and Journals:**

1. A focus on international journals could marginalize Indian scholarly publishers, regional content and vernacular knowledge systems.
2. ONOS may deepen India's dependence on Western publishing giants, prioritizing profit over knowledge dissemination.

**E. Open Access v/s Subscription Debate:**

1. Critics argue that public funds should promote open access publishing, not paywalled content.
2. ONOS may delay India's transition to open science.

**F. Complex Licensing & Legal Issues:**

1. Negotiating copyright laws may not support blanket national licensing.
2. Long-term access, archiving and post-subscription access rights can be difficult under national legislation.

**G. Governance & Transparency Risks:**

1. Without proper checks, ONOS may lead to opaque vendor deals, centralized control and lack of stakeholder consultation.
2. Must include voices from states, librarians, research and academic communication.
3. Requires robust oversight to avoid opaque negotiations, vendor monopolies or inefficient fund use.

**Conclusion:**

The proposed ONOS library legislation offers a transformative vision for equitable access to knowledge in India. By providing a centralized, publicly funded access model for scholarly content, it holds the potential to bridge deep divides between elite and under-resourced institutions, support national research goals, and foster inclusive academic growth. However, for this model to succeed, it must overcome significant constitutional, financial, operational, and governance-related challenges. The tension between central policymaking and state autonomy, the risk of

underutilization, and the need to balance subscription-based access with open access and indigenous content development must be thoughtfully addressed. In essence, ONOS must not be viewed as a one-size-fits-all solution, but as part of a broader knowledge infrastructure strategy—one that is collaborative, transparent, inclusive, and future-ready. With the right policy design, stakeholder engagement, and sustained investment, ONOS can become a cornerstone of India's knowledge economy, ensuring that quality research and learning resources are no longer a privilege, but a right for every learner and researcher in the country.

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### Funding:

This study was not funded by any grant.

### Conflict of interest:

The Authors have no conflict of interest to declare that they are relevant to the content of this article.

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