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## ACQUISITION

### Factors in Formulating An Acquisition Policy In A Research Library

*Acquisition of documents activity includes selection and procurement. Selection depends on certain characteristics of documents matching with particular interest of users. For an uninterrupted timely supply of documents, a reliable system is to be evolved. This becomes essential in a research library where advance, precise and relevant documents are needed. Formulation of selection and procurement policies based on main factors that contribute in right decision are discussed here.*

R. C. Gupta

A modern service library aims at providing only the relevant, useful and current reading material. To select right reading is a difficult task both for readers and the acquisition authority in the library. There are some guiding or we call them normative principles enunciated by Dr. S.R, Ranganathan more than 50 years ago in the form of five laws of library science<sup>3</sup>. These laws govern every activity of library work and present right solution at the time of any confusion, or dispute. Collection is to grow according to the fifth law but it has to face and overcome the barriers coming in the way of its growth.

Multiplicity of tastes and large number

of varieties pose the problem of choice when resources are limited. Here comes the process of selection of matching the taste, resource and quality of the item. Reading material includes books (conventional, nonconventional) journals (light magazines and learned periodicals) Microforms (microfilms, microfiche, micro cards etc.) maps. Atlases, codes of practices, thesis, special publications and so on. Readers for whom the library is basically meant are of variant types—common readers, specialists, researchers, industrialists, managers, engineers, technicians, children; neoliterate adults handicapped and so on. These readers may have different levels of education and understanding.

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### Constraints in Selection

Besides the multiplicity of tastes, level of literacy, language among users, variant forms of reading material and its tremendous growth in many folds with a fast rate of obsolescence, there are many other barriers in getting a right book for an individual or for a group or for a library.

1. Lack of adequate funds,
2. Lack of adequate space,
3. Lack of adequate facilities,
4. Lack of adequate staff,
5. Lack of right source of information to ascertain availability.

### Activities in acquisition

Acquisition is one of the most important activity that requires the right decision at the right time. The success of a library service depends on the collection of a library by which the users are to be served.

The process of acquiring includes :

1. Inviting and accepting user's choiced documents as per their tastes or jobs.
2. Screening the indents, grouping in a convenient manner any subject-wise; departmentwise, indenter (individual/team) or project wise, etc. for the purpose of proper budgeting.
3. Checking for duplication and verification of bibliographical details provided by the indenter for each document, making it complete and error free.

4. Getting through selection procedure and making a final list of selected documents.

5. Grouping the documents according to their types-viz Books (commercial/society publications etc.) Journals, Microforms, Maps, Computer manuals etc.

6. Preparing of order cards separate for each document and arranging them in a convenient order.

7. Deciding the course of ordering. quotation method, standing vendors, direct publishers etc., any of them or a combination may be approved in advance.

8. Placing orders and scheduling delivery time.

9. Getting the material checked and verified with what actually indented.

10. Follow up undelivered material.

11. Taking up verified and correct material on Accession Register and arranging payments.

### Factors for document selection

User, document, resource trio plays deciding role in selection.

#### Users

A reader for whom the library service is meant, plays the deciding role in selection of documents in a service library. Ranganathan in his five laws focussed the reader a person to whom we must pay highest regards, help and honour his/her interests pertaining to library service.

### Assessment of user's interests

The interests of users fall in three distinct regions.

1. *Umbral* : The specific subject contents in which a user is presently involved and interested to read and utilise a piece of information. Direct involvement requires immediate attention and supply of pertinent information and is used regularly. The umbral region of a particular users interest may not necessarily be the umbral region of other users.
2. *Penumbra* : Those subjects which are helpful in making more extensive/intensive study of the specific topic falling in umbral region. Penumbra also embraces those subjects which were or may be of interest to a user or a team of users and is demanded occasionally.
3. *Alien* : Subjects which are not directly related to specific topic of study of a user but may be needed for reference or as a medium of recreation, diversion of taste, information etc.

### Documents

As stated above, documents can also be grouped in these three regions according to the choice of the users. Besides matching the group, a few characteristics may also be considered while selecting.

1. *Scope and coverage of subject* : Expert advice must be sought to judge the intensity and extensity of the subject dealt. Complexity of expression and reliability of the authority

communicating views decide the quality of a document.

2. *Impact* : What impact a document will enforce after use on its user/users. Will it help achieving the objectives detailed by the organisation to which library is attached.
3. *Author, Publisher's Reputation* : Reputed publishers themselves evaluate the contents and encourage authors for precision and relevancy of specific topics.
4. *Obsolescence* : Documents lose their utility soon after their publication. Life span may vary. Few go within 1 years others are used upto 10-15 years. Hardly 1% documents are used for long.
5. *Frequency of use* : Some documents are in demand constantly by many users at a time but not for long where as others have low frequency for a long time. Both types of documents have their respective value and are selected accordingly.
6. *Physical characteristics* : Durability of paper, printing, binding, shape, size, colour, (getup) form (hard copy/micro) language, availability of a document have to be looked in selection of documents.
7. *Resources available* : Second & third law of library science can only be operative when adequate resources are made available. The selection is to meet the limitations of resources.

### Activity based Document Selection

Activities of an organisation to which

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the library has to satisfy the information needs must be identified. Priorities if any, established by the organisation, parent body or in the context of national priorities must be followed so that the required references may be made available as and when asked for. Activities in side the library like documentation work and services, reference services and information services also need relevant documents for reference and guidance for staff and users as well.

### Formulations of a pacticable policy :

Dr. G. Bhattacharya states the process of collection development in the manner it suits to the regions of interest of users.<sup>1</sup>

1. Procure as exhaustively as possible, only selectively re-representative documents in the area of umbral region of interest.
2. Enter into an agreement of coordination in acquisition with sister institutions sharing similar interests.
3. Depend as much as possible on inter-library cooperation to meet the information needs in penumbral region of interest.
4. Depend entirely on inter library cooperation to meet the information needs in the alien region of interest.
5. For the purpose of acquisition, whenever feasible, adopt the mode.
  - (i) Gratis or compliment,
  - (ii) Exchange,
  - (iii) Purchase.
6. Whenever a part document serves the purpose and is available at reasonable costs, prefer it over the full document.
7. Whenever the microform can serve the purpose conveniently and is available at reasonably low cost, prefer it over hand copy (macroform). It has its own benefits like space saving, life, use by more users simultaneously etc.
8. Follow the principle "the best for the largest at the least cost" whenever warranted.
9. A collection in which the majority of the documents are actively used is a clear evidence of its development. Hence only those documents are acquired which may have their frequent use for a long time.
10. Select only those documents which are authentic and extensively/intensively deal with the subject contents suiting the users's needs.
11. Only documents of permanent nature having late obsolescence factor are to be procured. Others inspite of any of the regions must be arranged.
12. Documents (primary, secondary and tertiary) must be procured according to the demands of the service activities being rendered by the library.
13. Check to avoid duplication.
14. Make final lists for purchase, inter library loan, reprography separately. It must be done regularly keeping shortest possible time interval.

### Formulation of acquisition policy

1. Select suppliers on the basis of their field of specialisation in supply. Some are specialised in supplying codes, others are in maps & atlases, some medical, others may be engineering and so on.
2. For society and non profit making institutional publications, rely on direct orders with publishers. This will ensure the receipt as well as faster and some times in less cost or as a compliment<sup>2</sup>.
3. Place orders to those suppliers who meet the delivery time schedule by efficient service and so also meet audit requirements (lowest quotations ; conversion rates, discounts) etc.
4. Keep the ordering process regular to get a regular supply and to keep the work load evenly distributed. Be sure regular follow up till supply.
5. Don't compromise in terms of quality, getup, accuracy and efficiency in supplying documents as per specifications asked for.
6. Stress must be laid upon indented documents for supply, rather to utilise budget on approval basis supply,
7. Always follow the procedure in full. By passing any activity may create

further complexities.

8. Always keep time schedule so that the users must get their desired documents in shortest possible time. Avoid bottle necks as far as possible.
9. Be sure prompt payments to expect prompt supply from the suppliers.

### Conclusions

The work of right selection and procurement in shortest possible time to serve the users at the time of need is a difficult and challenging one. The library personnel must try to follow the correct course of work to achieve the satisfaction of users.

### Acknowledgements

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