

THE NEED OF IMPLEMENTING A COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN SRI LANKA

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A collection development policy can be regarded as the fundamental necessity for the better functioning of a library. The first task of the collection development committee is to determine what should be included in the collection development policy. Studying other related guides and policies such as the ALA guide for Written Collection Policy Statements can be of assistance in this task.

Collection development is a professional library task which systematically plans the library collection in a cost - efficient and user - relevant manner.

There is no written collection development policy in academic libraries in Sri Lanka. Until recently there has been no theoretical framework to guide in collection development policy. The developing role of the library, the declining Sri Lanka Rupee coupled with higher inflation rates, shrinking library budgets, continued rise in both the quantity and cost of publications, constant broadening of user demands for information have emphasized the need of implementing a collection development policy for academic libraries in Sri Lanka.

Definition of Collection development

Collection development is one of the most discussed aspects of librarianship and also one of the least understood. (1)

American Library Association described it as the process of planning, building and maintaining library information resources in a cost efficient and user relevant manner. This includes the identification, selection and sometimes procurement of locally appropriate material, the allocation of the resources budget among different subjects and formats ; collection management, analysis and evaluation, liaison with library users ; planning and implementation of resource sharing and related programmes ; and the determination and coordination of poli-

cies and procedures governing these functions. (2)

Collection development policy of New South Wales State Library is defined as the Planning process by which information resources selected and acquired from the totality available in order to meet library's objectives and information needs of its clients, taking into account the existing collection, the library's internal and external environment and the finance available. (3)

Mosher goes to provide an interesting definition :

Collection development is effective and timely selection of library material forming carefully constructed area of subject collections, shaped over time by bibliographic experts. (4)

Until recently there has been no theoretical framework to guide collection development policy. Most of our libraries did not have formal collection development policies. Though detailed policies are rare, some libraries are developing them or have embryonic policies in some areas.

Magrill defines it as planning for the systematic and rational building of a collection. (5)

The Need for a collection development policy.

With the escalating cost of acquiring, processing, housing, maintaining and servicing materials, developing a library that will meet the pressure of the growing demands of the readers will always remain a dream.

Past decades have been identified by considerable expenditure cuts in all types of libraries. Acquisition budgets have been strictly affected. Books and periodical prices rise at a rate well above that of general inflation. The number of titles published annually have grown phenomenally. Reader demands for materials have increased remarkably. (6)

To cope with the lack and insufficiencies in collection, the only solution is to implement a collection development policy in a cost-efficient and user-relevant manner and work within that policy.

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collection development policies. Though detailed policies are rare, some libraries are developing them or have embryonic policies in some areas.

Collection development committee membership.

In formulating a collection development policy the first step is forming a collection development committee. The chief librarian, Reference, reader Services and Subject librarians should be the library officers responsible for implementation of the policy. Relating to academic libraries, the Vice Chancellor, Deans of the faculties, some users should be the other members of the committee.

Formulating a collection development policy

In formulating a collection development policy the following need to be initiated. (7)

1. Determining preliminary matters, such as what a collection development policy is, the intended audience and purpose of the policy, agreement on collecting level codes and subject descriptors ;
2. determining the format, content and presentation of the policy ;
3. The allocation of tasks, with deadlines ;
4. Devising the timetable for the completion of the policy ;
5. Analysis of the existing collection, determining future collecting intentions.

The committee's main responsibility is overseeing, the whole process, mentioned above. In relation to above tasks the following actions need to be taken :

- i. Designate one person with responsibility for writing the policy
- ii. Look into existing policies before the preparation of the draft.
- iii. Devise a timetable for completion of the draft policy
- iv. Distribute the draft for comment
- v. Review draft
- vi. policy endorsed by council
- vii. Issue completed policy document
- viii. ongoing review.

Major functions of a collection development policy

Major functions of a collection development policy can be identified as follows (8)

I have related these functions to the academic library setting.

1. Communication and training: With the library staff, faculty members, users, the cooperating libraries. Communicate an understanding of what the scope of existing collection is and what the future collecting intentions are.
2. Public relations : Communicate the role and value of the library. It explains to users why some things are acquired and why others are not.

3. **Accountability :**
Demonstrate the accountability and explain what the library does with its money and why.
4. **Co - operation function :**
Communicate with co-operating libraries.
5. **Planning :**
Includes the coordinating of the selection and weeding of library material, allows rational decisions to be made with authority, priorities to be established and funds allocated accordingly.

Contents of a collection development policy

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I have related the contents speciality to academic libraries. The policy should include :

1. Goals of the institution
2. Objectives of the library
3. Purpose of the collection development policy
4. Existing resources of the library
5. A system of allocation of the book budget among the faculties and the library

The idea of a library as a simple repository of books had changed with the growth of professional librarianship. This idea led librarians to consider formulation of the policies in which they collect library resources to store, to preserve and make them accessible to serve their readers. The activities by which they have collected resources can be described as selection, acquisition, collection development and management.

6. Collective responsibility of the faculties in collection development.
7. Responsibility of the library in implementing suggestions made by the faculties for collection development
8. Methods of selection and acquisition
9. Planning and implementing co-operation with other institutions
10. Appointing a committee to make decisions on collection development.

The objectives of an academic library.

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The objectives of an academic library are ;

1. To support teaching and research of the universities
2. To provide access to literature
3. To organise that access and to collect and preserve that literature.

Collections are there to support the basic functions of universities as teaching and learning institutions.

Collections of academic libraries must cater sufficiently to the following ;

1. Key collection of books which all academic libraries should have, regardless of their educational programmes.
2. A collection to support undergraduate courses.
3. Basic research collections to support graduate studies.
4. Comprehensive research collections to support advanced research.

A system of allocation of the book budget between the faculties and the library

The book fund is the most important item in the academic library budget. Distribution of the book fund between the library and faculties plays an important part in the process of collection building. The primary purpose of a book fund allocation is to match the funds with needs of teaching, learning and research. It should be allocated between the specific needs of the faculties and the general needs of the library.

Many University libraries are revising their budgetary procedures and allocations in order to ensure that their resources are redistributed as effectively as possible.

The allocation I suggest is that sixty percent of the total book fund could be allocated to the faculties, and the balance forty percent for the general library.

Responsibility of the faculties in collection development

In spending the allocated fund systematically, faculties are required to follow formulas. The faculty allocation could be divided according to a four - point formula, namely ;

1. availability of current publications,
2. cost of publications,
3. total enrolment at the university,
4. library-use reader population.

Once such allocations are made to the faculties, each will be responsible as to how such funds are distributed among the different departments within it. Each department will then decide how funds are to be better utilised for library material. The resources for teaching, learning and research purposes should be selected by the teaching staff who are specialists in the subject fields. They would also be able to judge the faculty and research needs and the needs of the students.

Responsibility of the library in spending the allocated fund

The forty percent of the fund allocated for the general library collection should be administered by the chief librarian with reference, reader- services, subject librarians. Of this collection a limited sum decided on at the beginning of each year could be utilised to support the educational programmes.

The forty percent allocation to the general library is meant for ;

1. Reference books, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, atlases etc.
2. General and interdisciplinary purchases.
3. Retrospective purchases, rare books, past copies, periodicals etc.
4. Replacements of lost or destroyed books.

Selection of library material

The selection of material is a matter of prime importance to university libraries, because the development of the library collection depends on it.

Library material has varied, with the development of modern technology many media forms have emerged. Each has capability that may be suited for specific reader, need or situation. The task of the selection committee is to select those media forms which communicate a specific form of information most effectively. (9)

Selection of library material can only be done by persons with mature experience in reference service. They should have knowledge of the theory of book selection and knowledge of the sources of book selection. (10)

The sources for book selection are varied. Therefore the following steps need to be taken by the members who are responsible for the selection of material :

Examining the readers' suggestions,
 Reading subject journals,
 Checking bibliographies,
 Reading reviews in journals and newspapers,
 Checking the second hand catalogues,
 Checking the catalogues of other libraries,
 Personally examining the new books.

Planning and implementing cooperation with other institutions

Generally no library with limited funds at its disposal can be self-sufficient in collection development. It is the experience of every librarian that it is beyond the scope of a single library to cope with the literature explosion, rising cost of publication, demands from readers and new developments in library service and information technology. Therefore to meet this problem, each library should plan to seek cooperative agreement with other institutions which includes inter-library lending, document delivery service, participating in networks and online information.

The benefits of the collection development policy

Academic institutions will be benefited by collection development policy in various ways which can be outlined as follows ;

- * Provide a plan to develop the collection.
- * Rationalise budget allocation to set priorities.
- * Identify organisational goals to be met by the collection.
- * Provide a document which contributes to fulfilling the requirements for the accountability of the organisation.
- * Provide guidelines in selecting materials for library staff.
- * Facilitate the coordination of selection.
- * Reduce the influence of a single selector and personal bias.
- * Inform clients about the nature and depth of the library's holdings.
- * respond to client needs and demands.
- * provide orientation tools for new staff

- * Provide a guide for cooperative collection.
- * Development with other libraries and institutions.
- * Provide a model which other libraries may wish to use as a guide to the formulation of their own collection development policies.

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