

PROBLEMS OF COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT IN SPECIAL LIBRARIES

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Discusses factors affecting collection development, scope, definition and process of collection development, highlights importance of collection development policy manual, presents peculiar circumstances and background of document acquisition transaction in libraries, points out many problems relating to document selection and document procurement processes. Discusses various types of vendor-controlled order plans with their merits and demerits. In conclusion other problems concerned with technical reports, microforms, vendor-controlled order plans and journal subscription are mentioned.

1. INTRODUCTION

The important resource of a library is its reading material followed by A V aids. Maintaining the most useful collection of information resources is the primary objective of a library. A special library files information, often semi-published or unpublished and emphasises unit of information

rather than entire document. It aims at building a small, compact comprehensive and upto-date collection. Serving limited users, a special library tries to reflect in its collection policies and objectives of the parent organisation. A special library may have to deal with specific, current and upto-date information in a variety of forms, including unconventional forms like technical reports, reprints, off-prints, pre-prints, conference papers and proceedings, trade catalogues, instruction manuals, equipment manuals, codes of practice, data sheets, engineering drawings, newspapers, market surveys, slides, cassette records, motion pictures, video cassettes, photographs, microforms, etc. It may also have a large part of internally generated information and classified information.

A number of factors affect collection development in a library such as the institution, its clientele, purposes and objectives of the library, present collection, available

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finance, human, informational, inspirational, recreational, bibliographical, evaluative and other resources, possibilities of resource sharing, modes of information transaction, current demand and use of information by users, traditions, publishing patterns, alternative to purchases, etc. (Hazen, 1982; Magrill and Hickey 1984). Ideally library collections are deliberately created and should not be left to a chance. Each of the item added to a library collection, reflects the interaction of above factors.

This presentation attempts to highlight the major problems of collection development, such as information sources from the point of view of a special librarian.

2. SCOPE AND DEFINITION

Collection development involves understanding the nature of requirements of users and anticipating their demands. Then follows the selection and matching of available information resources/products with user requirements and their anticipated as well as current demands. In other words selection of items and the actual process of acquiring them constitutes in itself a wide area of professional work. Systematic, reliable and continuous collection evaluation and management is equally important in getting appropriate feedback for collection development process and also to identify obsolete, irrelevant and unused part of collection in order to decide on remote/compact storage and/or discarding. Collection development is not an end in itself. Nor are reading materials selected and acquired to balance the growth of collection but to meet information requirements of users.

Collection development is defined as "a process of making certain the information needs of the people using the collection which are met in a timely and economical

manner, using information resources produced both inside and outside the organization" (Evans, 1987, p 13). Three main elements of information transfer concerned with collection development are identification, selection and acquisition. Evans (p 13) describes collection development as a cyclic process having six major components, namely, market analysis, selection and collection development policies, document selection, document acquisition, weeding or deselection and evaluation of collection. They are interrelated activities. Obburn (1982, p 51) aptly summarises the knowledge and capabilities required in collection development as "knowledge of the information and publication universe, ability to control that information bibliographically, knowledge of the community related to publication and information, understanding of the likely causes of change in the community, knowledge of signs of change in each, ability to adjust policy and procedures, knowledge of quality control methods, and ability to integrate collection development policy and procedures into library operations."

Collection development is not just equivalent to acquisition of documents but much more than that. Acquisition of documents consists of selection and procurement of documents. Document selection is a highly professional work. Acquisition work involves three sets of people viz., (i) Library management and users (ii) Librarian and library staff (iii) Publishers and suppliers. Hence acquisition problem can be looked from three different ways. Normally when we say acquisition of reading materials, we exclude information in other media and accessing and using information in other than purchase mode. Acquisition work calls for elaborate purchase and accounting

functions in library work and involve more of para-professional and non-professional work than professional work.

Even an excellent collection of documents development in a special library is bound to deteriorate. There are a variety of reasons for stock deterioration. Some of them are: (i) Errors and omissions in the original selection of documents, (ii) Inadequate replacements and withdrawals from stock, (iii) Aging of stock, (iv) Lack of sufficient fund over a period of time, (v) Fluctuation in demand, (vi) Change in population and its objectives. As a continuous activity, collection development and management should also take care of stock revision, weeding, remote/compact storage, preservation, collection evaluation and stock readjustments. Periodical stock taking or physical verification and weeding can help a lot in such stock re-adjustments, remote/compact storage, preservation and collection evaluation.

3. COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY MANUAL

Though everyone agrees that a written collection development policy is a must for any library, many libraries do not venture to have a written policy. If it is just lethargy in some cases, some think it may not be worth the trouble to design a collection development policy manual. Few may even put forth an argument that many libraries have excellent collections without having a policy manual. A collection development policy manual to a library is like a 'documentation' to a software package. It tells nature and scope of the collection, sets priorities, calls for commitment to organisational goals, provides inclusion and exclusion guides, eliminates personal biases of selector, helps to maintain consistency by orient-

ing new staff and controlling old staff, aids resolving complaints, weeding and evaluation of collection and collection development programme and serves as a public relations and accountability tool (Evans, 1987, p 66-67). Further, it forces one to give consideration to unspoken and unrecorded assumptions, think systematically about collection development, reduces the complexity of collection development process and improves the quality of collection development work (Perkins, 1982). A successful collection development manual describes the users or patrons, parameters of library's holdings, priorities, subject areas and formats covered, evaluation of suppliers, responsibility of collection development, languages to be covered, ways of dealing with exchanges, gifts, weeding, censorship, cooperative collection development resources sharing and evaluation.

4. COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

It should be noted that creation and development of basic collection of a new special library demand quite different strategy and even procedure due to its own peculiar problems. Normally a special library takes birth when the need is felt to assemble existing scattered materials under the control of individuals and departments. Apart from the requirements at the time of creation of a new library, 'retrospective collection development' or 'stock revision' (Mc Clung, 1985, p15-16) may become necessary to fill in gaps in the collections, to respond to curriculum changes, to spend available funds, to replace materials that have been lost, stolen or badly deteriorated. Unless the selector has discovered 'holes' in the collection through all kinds of serendipitous methods like browsing stacks, talking to users, reviewing assorted catalogs, bibliographies,

finance, human, informational, inspirational, recreational, bibliographical, evaluative and other resources, possibilities of resource sharing, modes of information transaction, current demand and use of information by users, traditions, publishing patterns, alternative to purchases, etc. (Hazen, 1982; Magrill and Hickey 1984). Ideally library collections are deliberately created and should not be left to a chance. Each of the item added to a library collection, reflects the interaction of above factors.

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inter library loan transactions, etc., it would not be wise to resort to retrospective collection development'.

There are many modes of acquisition of information resources, the most popular being the outright purchase. There are many methods within purchase mode of acquisition of information resources. They are approval plan or dealer library plan (mostly for books), bid, purchase of specific items against specific orders, blanket or standing orders, package deals, membership purchases, subscriptions, etc. The orders could be direct with publishers or through Indian or foreign agents including wholesalers wherever accessible or a combination of them. The modes of payment include advance payments, credit supply, payment against delivery, etc., depending on type of material being purchased and terms of suppliers. Outright purchase is only part of the collection development strategy. Buy, beg, borrow or hire' at the least possible cost and time should be the objective of collection development in special libraries. Other modes of acquisition of information resources include free-on-request, unsought gratis/gift, rental, lease and exchange (which is more popular with grey literature like technical reports, pre-prints and reprints).

One important aspect to be considered as integral part of collection development policy of a special library is policy of resource sharing with other libraries in the vicinity or region. Hence information resources can also be obtained on free loan through inter library cooperation. For effective and efficient resource sharing not only the factors militating against the philosophy of resource sharing should be respected but one also has to overcome the psychological and physical barriers. The concepts such as

'library without walls', library as a window of access than a 'fortress', need to provide access to information than ownership, learning to pay for service or use of information, collective ownership, buying information in new ways like digitalised form or fax or telefacsimile are yet to be operationalised in this country. Lastly, rental or hire purchase is another mode of getting information resource, but it is not yet popular in Indian libraries.

5. DOCUMENT ACQUISITION PROBLEMS

5.1 Background of Document Acquisition Transaction

Libraries regularly buy information products and services apart from equipment, consumables, furniture, etc. Products include books, reports, standards, journals, etc. and services include translation, reprographic or photocopy, current awareness, literature search, etc. These purchase activities call for a basic knowledge of the relevant laws of the land, purchase procedures, norms and financial audit (which are not taught in formal education for librarianship) on the part of acquisitions librarian.

There are some peculiar circumstances under which purchase of information products and services are normally made in libraries. Firstly, neither the seller nor the buyer is fully aware of the value of the product being transacted. Further, the buyer is not the consumer of the product. Secondly, the product specification is inadequate on most of the occasions and often misleading too. Occasional wrong announcements of new books lead to acquisition of duplicate copies. In other words libraries buy a product based on a title or a short abstract or at the most based on a review. In case of journals, libraries pay for products even

before they come into existence. Thirdly, almost all the products are proprietary in nature and publishers dictate price and terms. At the same time they are available through multiple letouts under differentiated pricing. Fourthly, for obvious reasons neither a system of calling for competitive quotations (i.e. bids) nor extensive contracting is workable. In the situation, each library has to evolve its own procedure keeping the broad guidelines of GOC (Good Offices Committee) and terms of book trade in view. However, in practical situations such procedures cannot be strictly enforced for lack of a workable mutually agreed contract.

5.2 Document Selection Problems

The theoretical book selection principles like providing the right book to the right reader at the right time (Drury), the best reading for the largest number at the least cost' (Melvil Dewey), book selection determined by demand to maximise service (L R Mc Colvin), etc., may at the best serve as optimistic or idealistic objectives for collection development. To achieve these objectives is not an easy task. There are many practical problems in document selection work of a special library.

Document selection for a special library is done by library staff, library committee and users. Library committee and users are very much constrained by the inputs provided by library about existence of new materials. Often, users may tell whether a book is good or not but not whether or not it is needed. The multifaceted problem of document selection starts with problems of ascertaining user requirements, lack of clearly defined boundaries of core and peripheral areas of interest, lack of clear policy of collection development, lack of priorities in collection development, heterogeneous

nature of user-requirement and literature scatter, if any and multimedia nature of special libraries and the resultant problem of enlisting large number of sources of reading materials for regular scanning. In a practical situation, assessing a book against standard criteria like book production standards, date of publication, publisher, author, etc. is given less importance than relevance of book to the needs of users.

5.2.1 Need for Subject Background

Due to lack of sufficient subject background on the part of library staff, adequate staff participation in reading material selection and collection development takes place quite rarely.

5.2.2 Lack of User Participation

Developing relevant collection in anticipation of demand depends heavily on active participation of users in terms of timely, adequate and useful suggestions for documents. But direct and overt participation of users in collection development is often limited to few handful users of a special library. Lack of user (or subject experts) participation in selection of documents becomes a serious problem where librarian and library staff lack sufficient subject knowledge.

Some suggestions to improve user participation in collection development are : (i) Intensifying current awareness services and disseminating information about new titles/documents to a large cross section of users. (ii) Systematising literature searching, reference services and other information functions and services to get regular feedback to acquisition system for procuring useful items. (iii) Speeding up procurement of suggested documents to create a drive of achievement motivation in users.

(iv) Involving actively the project teams and the information personnel in identifying precise requirements of information and documentary resources of new and on going projects/programmes.

5.2.3 Multiplicity of Vendors

There is a havoc of multiplicity of vendors (today's salesman of a firm is tomorrow's independent vendor) and a consequent flood of books on approval of popular publishers which are easily available but normally above average cost. This problem in major cities is going to such an extent that an encyclopedic book is sent on approval to a library by not less than six vendors in their fervent efforts and hence they aim at creating an artificial need among users for books readily available with them by sending them on approval basis. As such the relative assessment of these books against books to be bought on confirmed orders will not be made. In the process, the document selection may become highly flexible to suit the requirement to the readily available documents and by mathematical induction serve the hidden and derived objectives and needs of users than real objectives and needs. This is often called the tension between what users say as they need and what librarian and his colleagues think as their users need.

Contrary to above situation, if a library is not located in one of the major cities or capital of the state, it lacks quick and easy access to the stock of the vendors to make best choice of off-the-shelf-documents.

5.2.4 Inadequate Products Specification

As mentioned earlier, the details of the documents (other than books received on approval) is so inadequate that confident selection cannot be made even by the subject

expert. The announcements of vendors usually lack year of publication, edition, publisher and other details of documents. Most of the announcements of Indian vendors are for off-the-shelf costly books. Inadequate information about documents constraints preorder searching to establish existence of an item as well as to establish the need for an item.

5.2.5 Lack of Information about Cheaper Editions

Another serious problem coming in the way of economical acquisition of documents is the lack of correct and timely information about availability of latest edition, low priced/Indian/paperback editions. This problem together with the differentiated pricing policies and deliberate manipulation of some vendors in avoiding supply of cheaper editions leads to inefficient purchases.

5.2.6 Lack of Confirmed Prices

Yet another peculiar situation under which document selection has to be made is non-availability of confirmed price of a document at the time of selection. Unfortunately, publisher and suppliers keep the right to revise the price till the date of billing/supply.

5.2.7 Need for Avoiding Duplication

A very crucial problem of document acquisition is avoiding duplication in the collection. This assumes additional significance in special libraries where collection has to be compact. The duplication may appear in the form of duplicate copies of documents, different editions (with or without revision) of the same document and it may be substantial content duplication among different documents. As far as duplicate copies are concerned one can have a

thorough checking with existing stock, on order files and just received but not processed; files. The duplication arising out of contents has to be checked only with the help of subject experts and users. However, the duplication due to reappearance in different forms like special issue of a journal or a book, journal article, conference paper, thesis, and a report at times is difficult to check.

5.3 Document Procurement Problems

Having seen some of the problems faced at the time of selection of documents, the problems related to the document procurement transaction are discussed below. The foremost task and problem in procurement activity of a special library is to determine the vendors of all types of materials, their terms, credibility, efficiency and service. One had to be aware of bogus companies and individuals in the trade and continuously evaluate vendors based on sample orders and other criteria. A special library has to sequence its orders in such a way that a steady stream of documents arrive at regular intervals in the library.

5.3.1 Lack of Ideal Strictly Enforceable Purchase Procedure

The options open to a library, in Indian context, are choosing any combination of the following sources for supply of documents: (i) Publishers, (ii) Foreign vendors, (iii) Indian wholesalers, (iv) Indian retailers (vendors), (v) Indian exclusive/specialised agents. Publishers and foreign vendors invariably require advance payments creating an element of risk for advance payment and transit loss apart from losing normal library discount and requiring to pay additional handling and postage. It is difficult to enforce price verification procedure with foreign vendors. Rest of them work under

almost similar terms and conditions. Selection of vendors is not a problem where purchases are made against bids (questions). But Government of India has exempted libraries from purchasing reading materials on quotation basis in order to overcome difficulties faced in that process.

A problem of an upcoming library is determining the purchase procedure, choice of mode of procurement and selection of suppliers. The issues involved are whether to buy directly from publishers or from agents, through Indian agents or foreign agents, keeping in view the differentiated prices, mode of payment, discount and handling charges. Accordingly, the procedure of calling for quotations (bids) for terms or for individual titles, mutual acceptance of terms of payment, basis for conversion rate for foreign currencies, procedure for ascertaining price, etc., have to be evolved.

5.3.2 Choice of Vendors and Problem of Local Vs Foreign Suppliers

When selection of vendors is made discretionary, it may be necessary to have some criteria to assess credibility and efficiency of vendors. Some of the 'credibility' criteria that can serve as elimination criteria are: (i) Involvement of a vendor in any scandal or cheating or any similar affairs elsewhere, (ii) Credibility and credit worthiness of vendor with publishers and wholesalers, (iii) Past experience of a library with a vendor, (iv) Estimation of risk of advance payments, if any, (v) Practices of marking up prices and avoiding or refusing to provide price proofs, (vi) Improper billing, (vii) Bad practices noticed or heard, if any.

Some of the efficiency' criteria for selection of vendors include: (i) Getting quickly what are needed by a library rather than just trying to supply what are available

with a vendor, (ii) Specialisation of vendor, if any, (iii) Providing bibliographic details, information about availability of books, etc., as a free service, (iv) Accepting stray requests to search one or two items and rush them to the library, (v) Occasionally accommodating return of duplicates received against confirmed order, (vi) Allowing flexible (30-45 days) credit system without penalty or interest.

Many times local vendors try to propagate that direct import of documents from publishers or foreign agents is quite costly as one loses the normal library discount (10%) and at times one may have to pay additional postage and handling charges. But it is not always true. Except for books of exclusive agencies, cheaper Indian editions and off-the-shelf-books of popular publishers, the supply of all other documents will be more efficient from publishers and foreign vendors. In fact, it is not desirable to approach local agents for short discount titles (what are called society publications) wherein library has to pay additional handling charges. However, prolonged correspondence, levy of arbitrary handling charges and risk of advance payments go against direct import from publishers and foreign agents. Further, at times, it is economical to import directly and save on conversion rate, discount, differential pricing, membership prices, paperback editions, etc. yet it may not be worth importing a book of popular publisher which is locally available.

Vendors can certainly provide added value service to libraries. They can save time and money for libraries by reducing cost of paper work involved in cancellations and reordering, by providing accurate and regular status reports about supplies, by reducing the encumbered funds of libraries, by providing continuation cataloguing/

processing, refined approval plan and other services.

5.3.3 Short Lived Titles

Irrespective of the procedure followed and selection of suppliers, the following other problems exist to varying degrees in document procurement process. Most of the off-the-shelf-books are available in a seasonal way from few months to few years from the date of publication and if they are missed at the right time the library has to wait for a minimum of four months to import them. Many a times such books may become out of print and may not be available till they are reprinted. In other words, a special library must catch a new book at appropriate time.

5.3.4 Delayed Supply and Non-supply

Quick and timely procurement of suggested/on-demand books act as achievement motivator for further suggestions from users. On the other hand, procurement delays could be dangerous disincentives to the limited users participating in collection development activity. On-demand-documents are supplied as late as two years. It was found that approximately little over 50% of on-demand-documents are supplied within one year from the date of order (Sridhar, 1985). The delayed supply or nonsupply do not carry any penalty and acquisitions librarian has to wait patiently accumulating and bearing the dissatisfaction of users. This may also paralyse the budget and expenditure planning of a library where unusually excess commitments are not allowed.

5.3.5. Mandatory Airfreight/Airmail Charges

One welcome development of recent years is that many publishers are sending books in bulk airfreight to selected exclu-

sive/specialised agents cutting the delay. Unfortunately this is mostly restricted to few popular publishers. Another problem of mode of supply is mandatory airfreight or airmail supply. Items like technical reports consume 10 to 20% of their cost price on mandatory airfreight charges but suppliers take as much times as any other surface mail supplies.

5.3.6 Problems Relating to Terms of Payment

The procurement procedure should have taken cognizance of terms of payments. Though an element of risk is involved in advance payment, it is necessary to make advance payments to many publishers and foreign vendors if the volume of purchases is less than the minimum prescribed. Some conservative suppliers/agencies have deposit account schemes and prepaid coupon systems in place of advance payment with a favourable edge to the seller. For others including local suppliers a 30-45 days credit terms should do. If credit terms are not agreeable it is better even to agree for payment against delivery in case of publishers and foreign agents. It is here that the acquisitions librarian has a moral responsibility to arrange timely payment for suppliers. Just as delayed supply is a serious problem to libraries, the delayed payment is a serious problem to suppliers. In fact mutually agreeable genuine penalty clause for both sides is a good step in the right direction. An extreme type of case one often hears is that the advance payments made towards journal subscriptions are not immediately transmitted to publishers by agents leading to delayed or nonsupply of initial issues of the year. Further rare cases are those where libraries have been cheated by local vendors/agents after taking advance payments for journal subscription.

5.3.7 Loss in Transit

Another perennial problem very much faced in case of journals and occasionally in case of books is 'loss in transit'. In majority of the cases suppliers refuse to supply at their risk unless the agent acquires the documents to their office and distributes them. Yet, many publishers and foreign vendors do replace free of cost the items 'lost in transit'. The trade cannot afford to go for insured safe delivery as the total cost of insurance far exceeds the value of loss in transit.

5.3.8 Custom Clearance and other Import Problems

In case of direct importing of documents, occasionally the problem of custom clearance might arise and hence it is better that the organisation as a whole takes an OGL. In addition, it is better to be in touch with import procedures as and when revised and also have an agent for custom clearance work. In case of non-book/audio-visual materials, concerted efforts to meticulously follow the procedure is necessary. In case of films and videos, apart from custom clearance and payment of almost arbitrarily levied duties, obtaining Censor certificate after making arrangements as demanded by the Board including arrangement for screening the film or video to the authority at the time and place indicated and arranging payments of small fees in the form (sometimes only in DD) demanded, etc. In some organisations, it may be appropriate to acquire audio-visual materials through central purchase department of the organisation which is expected to have a clearing agent. Alternatively, library should be allowed to hire a clearing agent for the purpose.

5.3.9 Price Verification

Another sticky issue often faced in libraries is price verification of documents supplied. As noted earlier there is a regular price hike (of documents ordered) without notice. In case of journals additional invoices for additional volumes will be coming throughout the year. Unless the suppliers cooperate and produce necessary information as and when sought the acceptance of revised prices become extremely difficult. On the other hand since upward revision of price takes place in almost all the documents supplier after 3 months, a vendor (more so in case of foreign vendor) is likely to get annoyed for such price proofs. It may be desirable to make a random check of all hikes upto 25% and an 100% checks for items where price hikes are more than 25%. Some suppliers do not maintain the consistency of applying conversion rate as on the date of billing or supply and occasionally manipulate and adjust the date of billing to suit conversion rates of GOC.

5.3.10 Problems of Fiscal Management

A large part of a library budget is consumed by reading materials. On an average, increase in prices of reading materials is always above the average inflation rate. Prices of serials and journals increase much more rapidly than prices of monographs. In addition to increase in prices of reading materials, the value of Rupee is also steeply falling against hard currencies like US \$, Sterling Pound and Japanese Yen. Marginally increased budgets are unable to match the devaluation and increases in prices. A science and technology oriented special library has to necessarily have to acquire a very large proportion of foreign documents and hence the consequent buying power of such a special library is drastically curtailed. Even during the periods of tight bud-

gets, it is reading materials budget of a special library is more vulnerable than salary and other maintenance budget. Allocation of reading materials budget among different subjects or different types of documents is becoming increasingly difficult. The unconfirmed prices and unexpected increase in prices of reading materials further complicate the fiscal management in special libraries. Increased postage also adds its might to the problem.

The process of encumbering the available meagre budget and moving 'monies' back and forth in a manual system can lead to errors and too broad approximations of expenditures, commitments and available balance funds. The process of encumbering funds is further complicated by fiscal policy of parent organisation normally bound by the artificial year called financial year.

5.4 Other Problems of Documents Acquisition

There are many miscellaneous problems of documents acquisition in special libraries. A selected few deserve mention here. Often vendors do not provide upto date and quick status report about supplies. Indian vendors do not even agree to or indicate/intimate the automatic cancellation of pending/unsplied orders after expiry of stipulated time. On the other hand, careless declarations are often made as out of print or out of stock for a given book. Wrong supplies, supply of defective copies, frequent errors in invoices and incorrect crediting of payments are not usual with suppliers.

Users of special libraries will be constantly in touch with their counterparts and their organisations throughout the world for exchange of views, information and publications, particularly reports and reprints (grey literature). In the process many sup-

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pliers abroad treat free requests of users as orders and bill them to concerned libraries. Such bills and page charges for publishing articles in journals of professional bodies are likely to be adjusted towards advance payments made by a special library.

Many new and small suppliers abroad do not maintain extensive records and the same often leads to unwarranted and hasty credit collection actions on bills or proforma invoices already paid. Airfreight/postage, handling and other incidental expenses including telephone or telex charges levied by foreign suppliers are too heavy and disproportional to the cost of the material being supplied. Some times airfreight and expenses like foreign postage, custom clearance charges, etc., are also arbitrarily levied by local suppliers too. Another peculiar tactics of obscure publishers and suppliers within the country is to send books by VPP or by freight-to-pay basis without proper order from libraries.

Just like suppliers are born overnight both within the country and abroad, there are companies abroad who go for liquidation in short time and claims of libraries are passed on to their chartered accountants. Of course within the country it is difficult even to locate the liquidated supplier or his chartered accountant. Only a proplonged endless court proceedings will be left with for a library to recover dues, if any.

5.5. Vendor Controlled Order Plans

Irrespective of the size of a library, more desirable and possibly least exploited methods of procurement, which can considerably enhance the utility of limited monetary resources, are standing/blanket orders, package deals, combination subscriptions, membership orders and other vendor controlled order plans. Normally, specialists

tend to be more concerned with book selection within their own relatively narrow subject specialities rather than collection development as a whole. Collection development, in the strict sense, involves costly, time consuming and specialist-labour intensive judicious selection activity. Reviewing and evaluating all the books published in any area is very difficult. Thus, delegating initial identification of current reading materials to vendors frees library staff and specialists from the arduous tasks, so that they can carry out actual selection of current, retrospective, specific and serial titles more efficiently (Cargill, 1979). Ofcourse, the delegation is meaningful if the vendors are well organised to do the task.

A standing order is normally placed for a series like advances and annual reviews while a blanket order is placed in terms of a subject field, grade level, country's publications or publishers's publications. Certain package-deal offers, such as those offered by professional bodies, (e.g., IEEE and AIAA) and membership offers (individual, student, associate, institutional, patron membership of ACM, ISI (now BIS), BSI, etc.) provide considerable saving in price, procurement time and office work. Combination subscriptions, such as those for SIAM journals, also result in considerable saving. Much less known terms in Indian libraries are 'Greenaway plan', 'Till Forbidden' order and 'Gathering plan'. The greenway plan is a contract between a library and a publisher for a library to buy, at a large discount, one copy of all or most of the publisher's trade books. The purpose is to provide examination copies immediately after publication so that the library can decide which titles should be acquired in multiple copies. If the library does not buy multiple copies, however, publishers will cancel

the agreement. 'Till bordidden' is used by a library in serials work to indicate that the publisher or supplier of a journal should automatically renew a subscription without any further approval from the library (Evans, 1987, p 109). 'Gathering plan' means a blanket order arrangement with a foreign dealer, who is, in effect, given instructions to gather and ship whatever can be obtained in specified categories. Another vendor originated book supply plan not practiced in India is the lease or rental plan designed to provide regularly changing collections of best sellers.

It may be desirable to discuss certain issues relating to popular 'dealer library plan' or 'approval plan' in the Indian context. Most of the vendors use 'approval plan' as a tool for promoting sale of leftover items with them. Vendors are quite poor in building up profiles of libraries for 'approval plans'. They neither have dealer's thesaurus to enable libraries to select subject descriptors nor allow for any nonsubject modifiers like academic level, publishers, country of origin, language of publication, geographic and time limitations, subject treatment, physical format, price, etc., in building profiles of libraries. Though approval plans should exclude unrevised new editions, reprints, government publications, dissertations, translations, serials, textbooks, juvenile and popular books, many vendors do not strictly adhere to such understanding as well as to profiles. As a result the predictability and dependability of approval plans are poor. Further a good approval plan should result in less than 10% rejections. But in practice more than 50% (at time even upto 80% or 90%) of items received on approval basis get rejected, wasting precious space and labour of libraries. For lack of proper assessment of approval plans

libraries are not able to restrict approval plans to two or three vendors.

The main advantage of such blanket orders are : (i) Automatic receipt of relevant documents and no chance of missing a relevant book published. (ii) Saving in office work with fewer invoices and no separate orders. (iii) Saving in price. (iv) Saving in time of staff from selection work. (v) Cutting delays in supply of books. (vi) Eliminating preorder searching. (vii) Helps developing a profile of library and reviewing collection development policy of library. The main disadvantages are : (i) Uncertainties regarding number, cost and relevance of books. (ii) Library may have to accommodate irrelevant and/or duplicate items supplied under blanket order and yet, a relevant title may not be supplied. (iii) Blanket order may create a budgetary problem with abnormal increase in price and number of books supplied. (iii) At times, it may cost more in terms of service charges and accommodating irrelevant items supplied than that saved. (iv) A library may incur more cost in terms of time and efforts needed to process and organise irrelevant item than that saved. (v) Precious storing space of library would be consumed by irrelevant items supplied against blanket orders. (vi) Scope or slant of a series may change and such unpredictability and unreliability may cause unexpected gaps in collection. (vii) Integrating such plans with individual orders and deciding how long to wait for an important item/title under such plans are difficult. Thus a discretionary, intelligent and judicial judgment on blanket/standing and other vendor controlled order plans is necessary.

6. CONCLUSION

It is said that an elegant library building

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is a white elephant unless it houses material appropriate for its users (Spiller, 1980, p15). Collection development in a special library is an important preparatory work accounting for nearly two-thirds of its operational expenses and space (Buckland, 1989) and has strong effect on efficiency and effectiveness of its services. Collection development policy should take into account the degree to which material has to be borrowed from other libraries. Collection development should aim at balancing among buying, borrowing and available space. There are a number of problems in collection development: many are common and few are unique to library concerned. Judicial and scientific assessment of problems is bound to reveal options open to special libraries. Value judgment of practitioners alone is not adequate.

In the light of a number of peculiar problems of document acquisition it would not be wrong if one says that a sort of blind man's choice takes place in document acquisition without really knowing how much is being paid for how much of utility of the product. Document acquisition in libraries calls for a business oriented approach. It is a continuous activity where changes in book trade, and other environments have to be taken into account in addition to continuous monitoring and evaluation of existing suppliers, vigilant look out for alternate sources of supply and opportunity for efficient and economic acquisition. In addition, acquisitions librarian has to keep an eye on what collection he has, its strength and weakness, how it is being used and what changes in the requirements of users are anticipated to suitably modify the document acquisition programme. In other words, acquisitions librarian has to involve himself in all the phases of collection management and evaluation.

The unusual problems of negative and excess bibliographic control, duplication among reports announcement bulletins, problems in eliminating duplication in collection, highly differentiated pricing policy, problems of report numbers, poor physical getup and conditions of reports, excessive application of security classification and abundant number of internally generated reports are some of the unique problems of collection development of technical reports in special libraries.

Microforms are versatile, economic and efficient information handling media without which no library of present day can hope for comprehensive collection development. An important aspect in developing micrographics in special libraries is to consider it as a system. It is very necessary to identify relation of micrographics with other systems such as reprographics, automation, etc.

The problems of journal subscription are the most complex and peculiar in any library. Choosing an agent, taking risk in huge advance payments, handling irregularity in supplies, transit losses, getting extension of subscription period or refund for non-supplies, checking prices, handling unconfirmed prices and supplementary invoices, promoting resource sharing, disposal of duplicate and stray issues of journals, etc. are some of the important problems of journal subscription. Quite a few of the problems evade solutions and some cannot be generalised to all libraries. Diverse opinions and experience have been aired by professional colleagues and experts on these issues.

The problems of collection development in special libraries require serious, continuous and systematic study and research by

practitioners with a view to put forth better and alternative solutions. Collection development is largely neglected area of research in librarianship. Simple surveys and reporting of statistics of libraries are not enough. Well designed experimental research on many of these problems could provide some bases for decision making by practitioners when collection development problems are faced. For example, participation of users, staff and higher level managers in collection development continues in special libraries in varying degrees. Incidentally, they are analogous to some demand forecasting methods. It is not clear about the relationship of use of documents and the group of people who select them. In fact a simple and small study in four institutions indicated that there was a higher percentage of use of librarian-selected material than of others (Clark, 1976, p122). Due to insufficient sample and lack of reinforcement of the finding in different environments, librarians have not been able to use this result with confidence.

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