
UNIT 6	COLLECTION	DEVELOPMENT
	POLICY/WEEDING OUT POLICY	

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6.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- explain the meaning of collection development;
- state the advantages of collection development policy;
- describe the guiding principles and the components of collection development policy;
- explain the meaning and purpose of weeding out policy; and
- describe the details of weeding out policy.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the Bachelor's Degree Course we learnt that the four important factors of a library are the documents, users, staff and the equipment within a building. We cannot imagine a library with all modern equipment and well trained staff but with no information records. We also learnt that in modern times useful information is available not only in the traditional types of documents like books and periodicals but in other formats like audio-visual materials, microforms, plans, maps, models, manuscripts, pamphlets, etc. These types of documents are known

as Non-book materials or Non-conventional documents. All of them and the conventional books and periodicals together are known as “Information Records” or “Information Resources”.

A modern library therefore should enrich its collection of information records keeping in mind the needs of its users – potential as well as actual. In addition, it should also see that the information available in its documents is relevant, nascent and authentic.

A library can serve its real purpose if it acquires, processes and puts to use documents that are useful to its users. Collecting latest documents relevant to the aims and objectives of the parent organisation within the constraints of the funds and infrastructure available is a great task for any library. Similarly, weeding out the documents that become irrelevant and unusable for one reason or other needs sound judgment and policy.

6.2 COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

6.2.1 Definition and Meaning of Collection Development

Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science says “ Library Collection is the sum total of library materials – books, manuscripts, serials, government documents, pamphlets, catalogues, reports, recordings, microfilm reels, microcards and microfiche, punched cards, computer tapes, etc. – that make up the holdings of a particular library”.

Collection development in a library therefore would mean building up and improving the collection in that library. Earlier librarians were concerned merely with acquisition and preservation of reading materials.

At that time number of documents was more important than the information they contained. That is to say quantity was given utmost importance in a library. There is a change in this outlook now. User needs have gained importance now.

The term Collection Development has evolved to emphasise the need to respond to user's needs. Bloomfield (1987) says "to meet the demands, librarians have evolved theories of collection development, which imply a more active role in managing libraries collection and indicate that the role may change and develop in response to changing conditions". With the change in our outlook towards library and information services we are now more conscious of user needs; usefulness of information, available with us, and exhaustive and expeditious dissemination of information.

Harrod's Librarian's Glossary (6th edition) defines collection development as "the process of planning a stock acquisition programme not simply to cater for immediate needs but to build a coherent and reliable collection over a number of years, to meet the objectives of the services".

Collection development is sometimes considered as synonymous to "Collection Building" which means that there is already nucleus of collection in the library and the librarian is going to build up the collection. But collection development is a term other than collection building, since the word development implies qualitative improvement of the collection. That is why Shipman has said "Building a Collection may occasionally involve the selection and acquisition of ...materials *ab initio*, but in most cases it is likely to mean the planned systematic development of an already existing collection".

6.2.2 Purpose of Collection Development

Collection development implies selection, acquisition and evaluation of the library collection in order to see that both print and non-print materials that are available in a library are really useful to the clientele. Collection development therefore dispenses away with arbitrary selection and acquisition of documents. Similarly it envisages periodic evaluation of the library stock both to improve its

collection as also to weed out the irrelevant, outdated and unnecessary documents from the library. It also means that users' needs should be kept in mind while building up the collection.

The purpose of collection development now becomes clear. Its purpose is to find out the users information/document needs to:

- fulfill the library's obligation to the user community to provide relevant and nascent information.
- find out the users information/document needs,
- select and acquire documents that are really useful to the clientele,
- adopt systematic and judicious spending on document collection, keeping the objectives of the service in mind, and
- periodically review the collection for weeding out unwanted and outdated documents from it.

Self Check Exercise

1) State the meaning and purpose of collection development.

- Note:** i) Write your answer in the space given below.
ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

6.2.3 Prerequisites of Collection Development

Collection development is an interplay of the library's aims and objectives and the strategies of the librarian and his staff in order to meet the users needs within the constraints of the library. For this purpose the library has to formulate a clear policy of the acquisition, periodic evaluation of the collection and the systematic weeding out of documents.

Bloomfield observed that the collection development involves identification of some of the key issues like:

- Identification of the purpose and mission of the library/parent organisation.
- Formulation of library's collection development policy by library committees or by library staff.
- Matching between users requirements and institutions aims and objectives.
- Budgetary provisions and the contingent problems.
- Working out the strategies for implementing the policies and programmes;
and
- Maintaining, revising and updating policy statements.

We shall now study these and other related issues.

Self Check Exercise

2) What are the prerequisites for collection development?

- Note:** i) Write your answer in the space given below.
ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

In 6.2 we have seen the purpose of collection development and its prerequisites. Now, let us see the advantages of Collection Development policy. As noted in 6.3 it is always better that the Collection Development policy is in written form. From time to time the library may have to review its CD policy due to policy changes of the funding agencies or the parental organisations. But, by and large many aspects may remain the same.

Several authors like Katz, Magrill and Hickey mentioned the advantages of a written Collection Development policy. Their views can be summarized as follows:

A Collection Development Policy:

- expresses openly its relationship with the objectives of the parent organisation/ library.
- forms the basis for planning collection development.
- provides practical guidance in day to day selection of reading materials free from personal bias.
- helps in determining the best method of acquisition.
- supports and assists in justifying the selection/collection. CD policy offers some help against censorship by a clear statement of the type of materials to be purchased and indicating that the policy has the support of the library authority/ committee.
- acts as a rational guide for budget allocation and also helps in long range budget planning by stating priorities and outlining growth and development goals.
- helps in making best use of resources.
- facilitates cooperative programmes like inter library loans, resource sharing and networks.

- resource sharing and networking.

The guiding principles for evolving the Collection Development Policy are :

- the goals and objectives of the organisation/institution.
- the needs of the user community, actual users as well as potential users;
- and
- the availability of financial and other resources.



Goals and Objectives of the Institution

The institution or organisation of which the library is a part and parcel and for whose information needs it works keeping in mind its aims and objectives is known as the parent organization.

In case of academic libraries the academic institution whose aims and objectives are the concern of the library will be the parent organisation. For example University of Delhi is the parent organisation for the Delhi University Library System. The system is supposed to keep in mind the aims, objectives and activities as the three important objectives of college, university and other institutions of higher learning. However, in case of school libraries the objectives can be identified as 1. Instruction 2. Recreation and 3. Extension activities.

Though broadly common aims and objectives can be stated for academic libraries there may be differences in the objectives and goals of one academic library to another academic library even in the same category. This is because the parent organisation's priorities, specialisations and thrust areas may differ from one organisation to another. Even the same library may evolve new functions and new goals from time to time.

CD policy of an academic library therefore should be guided by the aims and objectives of that type of library in general and of that library in particular.

The policy also needs periodic review to keep in tune with its changing objectives and goals. Even otherwise policy review is necessary to meet the changing situations and requirements.

Needs of the Users

For any library, users are very important. A library gets its justification when the users are satisfied with its services. There is another aspect also. It is not sufficient if the library satisfies the regular users, it should also attract those of its

clientele who for one reason or other are not using the library regularly. That is how users of a library are classified as actual or real users and potential users. Potential users are those people who are not using the library and its services at present but who are likely to use them once they are informed and or motivated by the library about its functions and services.

The clientele of an academic library can be grouped into three categories, namely, students, teachers and the supporting staff working for the academic institution.

In the case of a university or an institute of higher learning the student community can again be classified as students taking the regular courses; and research scholars. Though recreational reading materials are not the prime concern or essential concern of an academic library, to meet the needs of supporting staff some amount of such literature also should find place in an academic library.

Collection Development Policy should therefore strike a sensible and judicious balance between the various requirements of different users at different levels, in a variety of disciplines.

Availability of Resources

The Collection Development policy is heavily dependent on the resources available for the library. The finances, the infrastructural facilities like library space, furniture and equipment, the hook up with other libraries for resource sharing, etc., determine the planning of the CD policy. Above all the availability of documents is yet another constraint on the policy. Particularly if the relevant and useful documents happened to be foreign publications the CD Policy has to recognize the problems of foreign exchange, higher costs and time lag in collecting such documents.

Self Check Exercise

- 4) Mention in brief the guiding principles for a CD policy.

- Note:** i) Write your answer in the space given below.
ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

6.3.3 Components of Collection Development Policy

In the earlier sub-section 6.3.2 we have seen that based on certain guiding principles, a Collection Development policy should cover the selection and acquisition policies; the evaluation programme; the storage and weeding out policies and the resource sharing and networking programmes.

In a summarized form, Katz lists the various components of a collection development policy as follows:

- Objectives of the library
- Philosophy of the library
- Purpose of the library
- Brief description of the community
- Who is legally responsible for the operation of the library and selection of materials.

- Method of selection as well as limitations of budget served, different age groups of users and similar information.
- Type of materials excluded.
- An indication of how the collection is to be built in terms of a) level of collection intensity b) language c) chronological period covered d) geographical areas collected c) form of materials collected, and f) who is responsible for selection.
- Acquisition of foreign language materials.
- Statement of handling gifts.
- Clarification on weeding out and discarding practice; and
- Statements regarding intellectual freedom.

The above points give an idea as to what items are to be covered when Collection Development Policy is prepared. You have already noted that it is better if the collection development policy is in written form.

In the next sub-section you will know about weeding out policy. In subsequent units of this Block you will be studying about selection and acquisition policies; and other essential aspects of Collection Development Policy.

For developing a sound and comprehensive collection of knowledge – old and new – for use by the living ones and the posterity there are just three possible ways :

- Academics of the country produce standard works,
- Simultaneous publication of standard global works in India for Indian market, and
- Standard works from abroad are systematically acquired.

Book Production by Academics

“The real academic climate in a country is generated when a common academic conducts rigorous inquiry (which is properly assimilated) synthetic in character, and continues intellectual work for life. This common academic teaches effectively the younger generation, continues himself to learn through research and objective thinking, and ultimately fruits of his or her efforts are produced as academic works. These academic works are called books. Right from 1800 A.D. the Indian teacher did not earnestly take to book production as one of the major responsibilities of an academic. It was always a practice to import all needed books written by English authors for use in Indian colleges and universities. Even independent India has textbooks programme, duly stamped by Government of India, for acquiring British, American and Russian books for use in our colleges and universities. Scores of top level experts as professors in universities and renowned institutes have not produced quality books for use by their students. No evidence exists to show that our academics ever took to book-writing as a part of duties of the academic community. We left the gaps to be filled by other professions”. (Prof. A.P. Srivastava).

One of the heavily used book series in India is “ELBS” books from England. The British government has been subsidizing this programme since last fifty years. Now, the British government has decided to withdraw the subsidy, resulting into a crisis for Indian students. Indian authorities in five decades have done nothing in this field. They perhaps thought that the British subsidy shall be a perennial one, and they have no role to play in generating standard books for higher education.

Simultaneous Publishing

On the one hand our performance has been very poor. Secondly we observe that many books get simultaneously published from English language world, viz. New York, London, Sydney and Canberra, but Bombay or Calcutta or Delhi does not

get included in such collaborations. The main reason for absence of India in simultaneous publishing has been the lack of trust of foreign publishers in Indian publishing houses and the book trade in India. If the Association of Indian Universities or the University Grants Commission had sponsored collaborative publishing with foreign publishers, it would have been possible to get the simultaneous publishing in India. Therefore, for sustaining higher education in India only the third alternative of professional collection building has been left.

When the money is so scarce and its utilisation on books, etc., is unsystematic, unprofessional, casual and ad-hoc, it is obvious that much success is not going to be achieved in collection building in our university libraries. This anarchy has not created problems leading to an academic revolution of a threatening nature because, as Gidwani stated in 1967, the faculty and the students as a routine did not require books, journals etc. for their teaching learning processes. Gidwani observed :

“The causes why Indian University Libraries continued to be grounded and have so far failed to reach a take off stage in spite of the grants pumped in by the UGC are the same which underline the ineffectiveness of higher education itself. A main reason is that we have today a self satisfied faculty which inexplicably does precious little to keep itself intellectually alive, with the consequence that practically no rubbing of mature minds takes place on the campus. The teacher lacks a persistent drive for initiative, enterprise and experimentation both in his teaching content and methodology. The wide-spread apathy on the part of the academician will be amply established if one goes round the reading halls of a University Library. One rarely finds the faculty there. Senior teachers seem to feel that it is derogatory for them to be seen often in the library.”

The collections available in various university libraries are not there as a result of any meticulously drawn acquisitions policies covering curricula needs and users' demands. The modern roles of professional library and information science are not involved into it. As stated earlier, these collections have developed through the routine phenomenon of happenstance, where money has had to be spent by the end of each financial year on whatever limited and casual stocks could be managed by the booksellers of the country.

Self Check Exercise

5) Name the components of a CD Policy.

- Note:** i) Write your answer in the space given below.
ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

6.4 WEEDING OUT POLICY

6.4.1 Meaning and Purpose

We have noted earlier that weeding out policy is an important component of collection development policy. Weeding out documents means removing documents which are found not useful or not serviceable from a library.

Documents so removed from the library may be completely discarded where they are not serviceable; are donated to some other library where they may be useful; or kept in a reserve place called a dormitory library. Weeding out policy means a policy statement on a) what materials are to be weeded out? B) when to weed out? c) who should weed out? d) how to weed out? e) what to do with weeded out materials.

With the explosion of knowledge documents are now being published in millions.

New areas of knowledge are coming up and some of the earlier ideas and thoughts are becoming outdated.

For a modern library it is a question of money and space to get all new documents which are relevant and useful. Particularly space for keeping the documents has become a major problem for university libraries. Solutions were attempted earlier and even now attempts are being made to find suitable solutions.

Saving space is not the only reason for thinking about weeding out of documents.

Some of the documents may get worn out because of continuous usage. Similarly some of the documents may become brittle and unusable with passage of time.

But the most important reason of all is that some documents may become useless since the thought content therein has been modified in a subsequent edition; or because the information in the document has become obsolete. In modern times documents may be weeded out after transferring the information contained in them to microforms and computer tapes and disks.

Report of the Library Committee of the University Grants Commission speaking on the need for weeding out says: "Many works lose their value within one generation, say in twenty-five years. By that time, their thought-content of same may even turn out to be wrong. In a service library no useful purpose is served by retaining such pedestrian books and providing shelf space for them after they

have become obsolete. The proper course is to weed out periodically. They should give place to current variations of them.”

6.4.2 Discouraging Factors

In spite of the compelling reasons for periodic weeding out documents from a library many librarians hesitate to put it in practice. It is quite evident in our country. The following are some of the reasons for such apathy:

1) Love for Numbers

The glory for numbers in libraries is still there. Though modern librarians realize that it is quality of service that is more important than the quantity of documents in a library even then they hesitate to weed out documents which are no longer useful. This is mainly because official reports to be submitted by them emphasize on numbers.

2) Sanctity of Collection

Many feel that every book, however old it may be, has its value. Sometimes they think that antiquity enhances the value of the book even though its exact reprint in a better physical condition is available in the market. But in a service library documents lose their value and significance if they get mixed up with large number of outdated and useless documents.

3) Pressure of Work

Library being a dynamic organisation, work pressure will always be on the library professionals. Since weeding out implies careful, judicious and justifiable action, which needs time, librarians hesitate to weed out. Hindrance to or dislocation of the routine duties, due to time consumed by weeding out work, may not be appreciated by the clientele.

4) Fear of Audit and Clientele Comments

- Books that are mutilated by users because of constant use should be withdrawn.
- Best sellers, fiction non-fiction used by hundreds of readers become worn out after sometime. Such documents should be weeded out.
- Text books and language books printed on inferior quality paper deteriorate soon. They can be weeded out once they are worn out.
- In the field of science and technology the developments are so fast that the books published twenty or thirty years ago become outdated. Such books have to be weeded out and replaced by latest edition or by new books on the subject.
- Reference books such as Yearbooks, Annuals, Handbooks, etc. that are published periodically have to be replaced with their new editions and the older editions are to be discarded.
- With the advent of microforms, CD-ROMs, and other space saving technology useful information can be stored in them. So, some of the books and journals after the frequency of their use get reduced or even in the beginning itself should be replaced by such new form of documents.
- Finally, a library should always keep in mind Ranganathan's Fifth Law "Library is a growing organism". With the increase in the number of documents space becomes a problem. So it is essential to weed out all unserviceable materials to find place for new and urgently needed books and other documents.

When to Weed out?

At any time throughout the year the librarian may come across documents which may have to be stopped from circulation as they are found to be worn out and

unusable. Chopra says “in college and university libraries, if time permits each time a book is handled in the library it should be examined from the angle of its physical condition and to its continued suitability. At least once a year the entire collection should be examined”.

Annual weeding out of unwanted documents is ideal.

Who Should Weed out?

Weeding out is an exercise which requires necessary judgment and expertise.

The librarian has to be personally involved in it. Sometimes members of Library Committee or the nominee(s) of the library authority or members of a committee appointed for the purpose may take decisions and implement weeding out of materials from the library. The advice of subject experts or senior faculty members, whose judgment can be trusted, should be taken for this purpose.

How to Weed out or Guidelines For Weeding out

Weeding out should not be arbitrary. Because once we take out a document from the library we should think of:

- its replacement with a new copy or a new edition or a new book on the subject; and
- what should be done if the same document is needed at a later date?

Several theories and guidelines on weeding out have come out in the West.

Fussler and Simon felt that past use is the best guide for future use of documents.

Trueswell developed a technique for weeding out a collection which would ensure a given degree of satisfaction in the future by examining the past use.

There are studies by Marianne Cooper and by Raffel and Shishko. Raffel and

Shishko suggested publication date should be the important criterion for weeding out documents.

The Council of American Library Association holds the view that in public libraries “annual withdrawals from the collections should average at least 5 percent of the total collection” saying that “unnecessary items remaining in a collection can weaken a library as surely as insufficient acquisitions”.

Sinha Committee Report (Library Advisory Committee Report) (1958) holds a similar view in the case of Indian public libraries. The Report observed “Weeding out of worn out and out of date books is as important in a public library as acquisition of new books....It is said a conscientious librarian should discard 5 percent of his fiction and 2 percent of his non-fiction every year...”

Ranganathan observes that “many of the modern books get out moded in ideas expounded in them within 20 years. After that period such books should not be preserved in library but should be weeded out and written off.

What to do with Weeded out Materials

Our next problem is, what is to be done with materials that are weeded out on sound principles? Of course, books and other materials completely worn out, mutilated and irreparable can be sold just like old news papers and ephemeral materials.

But if the books are in good condition particularly if they are older editions of reference sources like encyclopedias, handbooks, etc. they may have to be donated to other libraries which are not in a position to buy such costly books.

Yet another way is to store the weeded out documents which are otherwise useful, in what is known as “Book Reservoirs”. At least one copy of the weeded out documents should be preserved at a place within a region of the country.

According to UGC Committee on University and College libraries (1965) headed by Ranganathan “While weeding out, it is necessary in service libraries – and generally modern university libraries are service libraries – that it should not be

Total stock of reading materials available in a library is known as its collection.

Since in modern times information may be available in any form like books, periodicals, AV materials, Microforms etc. all the types of information resources are needed in a modern library.

Collection development means improving the quality of materials and building the collection over the years keeping in mind the user needs and the aims and objectives of the parent body. The purpose of collection development is to select and acquire documents that are useful to the clientele and to periodically evaluate the collection and take out from the library documents that are not useful from the point of view of their physical shape as well as their information content.

The policy relating to the selection, acquisition, organisation, evaluation and weeding out of documents in a library, as per the needs of the users, and keeping in mind the aims and objectives of the parent body and the financial and other constraints of the institution is known as Collection Development Policy. Generally it is preferred in a written form, and reviewed periodically as the situations and the environment change. It is prepared on the basis of some guidelines covering certain components.

There are several advantages of a written CD Policy. It provides practical guidance in day to day problems of acquisition and weeding out of materials; justifies the action of the librarian in collection development; helps in making best use of the resources; works as a rational guide for long term planning of the budget. It will also help the library in planning cooperative programmes like resource sharing, networking, etc.

In the present Unit Collection Development Policy and weeding out policy have been described. What materials are to be weeded out; when they are to be

weeded out; how to weed out and what to do with weeded out materials have also been elaborated.

Various other aspects of collection development will be taken up in other Units of this Block.

6.6 ANSWERS TO SELF CHECK EXERCISES

- 1) Collection development means improving the collection of a library with all kinds of documents (information records) which are useful and necessary for the users of a library. It is not the increase in number that is more important but the provision of useful materials. Through collection development a library can fulfill its objectives; achieve its goals; carefully plan the budget and spend on relevant documents. It should also evaluate the stock periodically and weed out unwanted, outdated and useless books.
- 2) The prerequisites for collection development are: a) identification of the purpose and mission of the library b) formulation of a collection development policy c) strategies for implementing the Collection Development Policy and programmes d) maintaining, revising and updating the policies e) budgetary provisions and f) identifying and satisfying the user needs within the limits of the policies of the parent body.
- 3) There are many advantages of the Collection Development Policy. Once it is laid down the objectives of the parent body and of the library and their limitations will become clear. It will help in planning for immediate and long range needs. It provides practical guidance for day to day acquisition and justifies selection and acquisition of materials. Helps in making best use of resources and in planning resource sharing with other

libraries. Particularly, CD Policy gives a clear guidance on evaluation of stock of reading materials and on weeding out unwanted documents.

4) There are three important guiding principles for a CD Policy. Whenever the policy is formulated, these three principles should be considered.

They are the objectives and goals of parent institution; the needs of the users; and the availability of the resources.

5) The various components of the collection development policy are as follows: 1) The objectives, purpose and philosophy of the library, 2) A brief description of the community it is going to serve and its needs, 3) Legal responsibility for the operation of the library and the selection of the materials, 4) Types of materials including foreign language materials to be acquired, 5) Nature of collection building, 6) Policy statements on handling gifts, weeding out and discarding practices to be followed.

6) Traditionally libraries go on adding documents to the stock and seldom weed out and discard them. Some of the reasons for librarians hesitating to do so are: i) Their love for numbers. They feel pride in more number of documents in their collection whether they are useful or not, ii) Their feeling that books gain importance with their age – the older the book greater the charm, iii) A service library always hums with activity and so librarians find it difficult to go with the slow process of carefully weeding out unwanted documents, iv) Above all the traditional notions of audit of collection against the amounts spent is a bug bear for librarians. They do not want to take any risk.

7) Because of constant use or because of revision of the thought content documents become useless and outdated. Some of them can be weeded out without any hesitation. Books which are mutilated and worn out; text

books and language books printed on inferior quality paper; reference books for which latest editions have appeared; and books in science and technology whose thought content became outdated, can be weeded out after they become unserviceable.

- 8) Weeded materials can be disposed in the following manner: a) If they are completely worn out and unserviceable they can be disposed of just like used newspapers and ephemeral materials, b) Costly reference tools when replaced by subsequent editions can be donated to other libraries which cannot afford such costly documents, c) Sound copies when weeded out because they are outdated can be preserved as a separate collection. It is always better to keep few copies of all weeded out documents.

6.7 KEY WORDS

- Book Reservoir** : A place either within the library or at a predetermined place within a region or country where weeded out documents can be stored or preserved.
- CD-ROM** : Stands for compact disk/read only memory. A high volume convenient and inexpensive storage disk for computer data. Updating is not possible with this disc.
- Censorship** : Prohibition of production, distribution and circulation or sale of material considered to be objectionable on grounds of politics, religion, obscenity or blasphemy.
- Clientele** : Users of the library and its services.

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