
UNIT 7 LIBRARY RECORDS

Structure

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7.0 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After going through the Unit, you will be able to:

- explain the meaning of the word ‘record’ and its need in libraries;
- describe the kinds of records maintained in libraries;
- identify the kinds of records maintained in different sections of a library; and
- elaborate the records pertaining to library assets, library policy, library building maintenance, etc.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Libraries maintain different types of records to exercise control over its routine functions as per established norms. Some records are created prior to the period the library becomes operational; the others are created and captured in the course of conduct of library operations and services. As a student of library science you must learn and understand about the nature and type of such records and their functions in the context of library work. In this Unit we are going to study library records, their meaning, need, kinds and the roles that records play in various sections of a library.

7.2 LIBRARY RECORDS

7.2.1 Definition

Records are created and captured by individuals or organisations in the course of conduct of their affairs. Most records are evidences of administrative, executive, service or work related transactions. Traditional records formats include letters, minutes, memoranda and reports, etc. The electronic record formats include spreadsheets, databases, e-mails and facsimiles. In some ways, what technology has done is to re-define traditional records formats. For example, e-mail is very similar to a letter. It is the fact that it is transmitted electronically that differentiates e-mail from letters.

Records provide information in the form of description, statistics, or routines carried out by an individual or a group working in an institution or organisation. While all records convey information, not all sources of information are necessarily records. For example, a published book or an externally provided database (online or offline) will not be a record, although information selected from it and reused in a new context may itself become a record.

The records keep on accumulating as transaction proceeds and by the time the activity is over, records take the shape of documents providing complete details of the history, process and outcome of the activity. The activity may be about making of a policy, carrying out an operation, or introducing a new service. In this context, records are perceived as a 'snapshot' of an action or event. They offer a picture of something that happened.

Records arise from actual happenings. For instance, an exhibition of rare books would generate a series of records arising from questions that visitors may put to the staff managing the exhibition and also from the opinions that they may record about the exhibition in the visitor book before they leave. Records that may arise from such an event would include - some files, the exhibition brochure, the bibliography of the books exhibited, the visitor's book and so on.

Some of the records have both current and future uses, while others are required to be used only in future, as source material. For example, the files created for the exhibition will be used mainly in future when another exhibition is organised. On the other hand the bibliography of the books may be used at present as well as in future.

The term record has been in use in the context of archives for a long time. But now it is a widely used term in industrial houses, institutions, organisations and in libraries. In library science, it refers to the documents containing details of process, activity and results of some function of either the whole organisation or a part of it.

ISO 15489: International Standard on Records Management defines a record as: "recorded information in any form, including data in a computer system, created, received and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in the transaction of business and kept as evidence of such activity".

A library is an organisation where sources of information in its various form such as books, serials, microfiches, CD, etc. are acquired, processed and made available to the clientele for their use. In making provision for resources and later on for offering various services, libraries also generate many records, both in descriptive as well as in the form of statistical tables.

7.2.2 Need for Records

The records contain information that serves as evidence of functions executed and activities performed and as such they are a valuable source of knowledge as to how and why decisions are taken. Given that records are of value to any organisation, their proper creation and management is necessary to ensure current and future accountability and to support future actions. The need to properly manage records is also evidenced by the crucial role that records play when they are needed to protect the library's interests during crisis periods and when they are required to meet official audits, investigations and reviews from outside agencies. We can understand that library needs records for a variety of reasons such as follows:

- Records are needed to document actions and decisions taken in a library and to conduct library business in an orderly, efficient and accountable manner.

Library Routines

- Records are needed to provide consistency, continuity and productivity in the library management and administration.
- Records are needed to deliver services in a consistent and equitable manner as records help to bring and maintain uniformity in the routines.
 - Records are needed to support and document policy formulation and managerial decision making and to promote informed decision making.
 - Records provide benchmark measures to monitor and evaluate the progress in performance, efficiency and achievements.
 - Records lend support in the formation and revision of policies, programs, systems and long-term strategic plans.
 - Records lend support to various library proposals such as expansion in the building, demand for additional staff as well as to proposals for more funds for acquisitions and new service/services, etc.
 - Records serve as source materials to construct library history and maintain library memory.
 - Records, in the form of a catalogue, serve as a tool for efficient access to the library resources.
 - Records as a proof of budget utilisation to fulfil audit requirements.
 - Records of workload help in rational allocation of manpower across various departments.
 - Records as data of utilisation of services to justify library expenditure to the parent management and the society.

Self Check Exercise

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

1) Describe needs for records in library.

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7.2.3 Kinds of Library Records

Unlike records of government departments or industrial houses, which are mostly in the form of files, library records are created and captured in several different forms depending upon the nature of activities that take place in various library departments. In a fully computerised library such records are computer generated by the relevant software modules. In non-automated libraries, the dominant forms of records are: ledgers, registers, files, cards and statistical sheets.

Records may be categorised by

- i) their life span,

- ii) content and
- iii) form of presentation of information.

i) **Records as per their Life Span**

These records are categorised as: i) Permanent, ii) Semi-permanent, and iii) Temporary.

Permanent Records – Records which are retained on permanent basis include library policy documents, library procedures and guidelines, documents relating to library origin and growth, staff sanction approvals, accession registers, user registration forms, audit reports, inventory of furniture, fittings and equipments, building plan, electrical and sewage systems plans, etc.

Semi-permanent Records – These records include among others funds utilisation register, agreements with firms about terms and conditions of supply of books and access to databases and library circulation records, in-house usage records and online usage records, etc. Financial records are retained till the audit is over. Similarly records pertaining to the terms and conditions of supply of a firm need not be retained once dealing with the firm is over.

Temporary Records – Records which are generated for a specific work are to be destroyed upon completion of the work. For example, book selection cards/slips are usually destroyed once the books have been catalogued. These are not destroyed in case they are used as accession record. Serial registration card is also a temporary record. Once it is full, it is replaced by a new card.

ii) **Records as per their Content**

These records include:

- i) records of resources,
- ii) financial records,
- iii) service records and
- iv) administrative records.

Records of Resources – These records pertain to books and non-book materials such as audio books, audio-visual works, brochures, computer software, dissertations, globes, maps, microfiches, microfilms, photos, postcards, posters, reports, serials, slides and stamps.

Financial Records – Accounts books such as budget register, registers showing section-wise allocation of funds and bill register are financial records.

Library Service Records – These records include among others inter-library loan record, circulation record and reference service record, etc.

Administrative Records – The number of staff varies from library to library. There are libraries which are run by a single staff. Others have staff varying from a few to more than a hundred. Every staff has got a service book that maintains records of his entire service starting from his application for the service. Confidential reports of every staff written by their seniors are also carefully maintained. These are all important administrative records.

iii) **Records by Form of Presentation**

These records are of two types – descriptive and statistical. Annual reports of a library,

the stated library policies, minutes of various meetings, etc. are descriptive records. A library purchases a number of books in a year, processes them, issues them to the readers, replaces them after their return; and so on. Every day a number of readers use the library, some of them ask questions, want some services and so on. At the end of the year, cumulated records are analysed and data generated indicating the number of books purchased, processed, issued, number of queries answered and photocopies supplied, etc. and progress made over the previous years. These are statistical records.

Self Check Exercise

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

2) Explain the ways of categorising of library records.

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7.2.4 Records Maintained by the Individual Sections of Libraries

Libraries organise their activities under a departmental structure. The actual organisational structure in a library depends upon the size of its collection, the span of library functions or the administrative needs of the parent body. The following structure, with marginal variations, is more common among libraries:

- i) Acquisition Section
- ii) Technical Processing Section
- iii) Circulation-cum-Reading Room Section
- iv) Reference and Documentation Service Section
- v) Periodicals Section
- vi) Maintenance Section
- vii) Administration Section

Each section creates and maintains records to help conduct its routines in a systematic order.

i) Acquisition Section

This section is responsible for building up the library collection. The process of collection building begins with the formulation of library collection development policy and subsequently on its implementation on the following lines:

- Receiving suggestions from library members, staff and authorities,
- Recording suggestions for each title on book selection slips,
- Checking slips with various records for resources available in the library holdings to ensure that no title is duplicated unintentionally,

- Placing order with an appropriate supplier,
- When the ordered material is received - it is checked for correct supply, entered in the accession record and transferred to the Technical Section for further action,
- The invoice for the supplied material is recoded in a register, adjusted against financial provision and passed on to the finance department responsible for payment.

The above description of acquisition of materials through purchase order method necessitates the creation of following types of records:

Ledgers – There are different ledgers for record keeping as described below:

- Ledgers for recording of invoices *i.e.* bill registers for every category of library materials such as books, serials subscription and non-book materials including electronic sources.
- Ledger for adjustment of expenditure against funds allocation already made for each subject/department, *i.e.* budget allocation register.
- Ledger for accessioning of materials, *i.e.* accession register/accession cards tray.

Files – Libraries create and maintain a number of files as records for several different purposes. These can be categorised hereunder.

- **Correspondence File** – This type of file is used to keep all correspondences with the suppliers of library materials. Correspondences may be orders, reminders, complaints regarding supply of damaged or wrong books, etc. Correspondence files may be more than one. If a library is obtaining periodicals through consortia and books, etc. through institutional membership, then a file for the purpose is required. A library may receive books, periodicals, etc. through exchange or gift, in that case also another file is required for the purpose.
- **Suggestions File** – This file contains suggestions received for books, periodicals, etc. from library members, staff of various departments and authorities.
- **Legal File** – This file contains agreement documents such as terms and conditions of supply of general or rare books, serials, electronic sources, exchange of publications and receipt of gifts, etc.

Cards and Slips in Trays – These trays are used to hold suggestion cards/slips, slips for books on order and books awaiting technical processing.

Statistical Sheets – These contain records as to the number of books selection slips prepared, checked and filed in order tray, removed from order tray, etc.

ii) **Technical Processing Section**

The department has three distinct functions: classification, cataloguing and physical processing. The first two functions are done with the help of classification schemes and cataloguing codes adopted for the purpose, often with certain deviations in constructing class number or in providing details in the catalogue entry for a document. This is done in response to meet the local needs of the library. The library may decide to drop providing added entry for editors or class books on biography under 920 (DDC number) only. Such policy decisions are recorded in a file called authority file, for future reference.

Authority File - The authority file is the only file maintained in the department for recording deviations adopted by library in constructing class number, in providing details

in a catalogue card entry or in preparing maximum of number of cards for a book. Such deviations are called local variations.

Cards – Catalogue cards and shelf list represent the library collection. These are the two records which are generated by the technical department. The shelf list is usually retained in the department and the card catalogue is placed close to the entrance lobby or reading area. If any book is lost or withdrawn from the library, the relevant cards are removed from the catalogue cabinet and shelf list.

Statistical Sheet – The sheet records the number of catalogue cards prepared, filed, updated by adding information for additional copy of a book, cards replaced or withdrawn, etc.

Self Check Exercise

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

3) Write a note on statistical form of records in acquisition and technical processing section.

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iii) **Circulation Section**

The main function of the circulation section is charging and discharging of books. For carrying out this function successfully, the department has to perform many activities. Some of these are reservation routines, bespoke card writing, requisitioning materials on interlibrary loans, etc. Although binding is a distinct administrative function, it is dealt with by circulation department in some libraries as it involves keeping record of books going out from the library. These activities call for creation and retention of a number of records in all the three formats - ledger, files and card:

Ledgers – The ledgers maintain records of interlibrary loan materials, overdue charges, receipt books for overdue charges.

Files – There may be one or more files keeping various types of documents such as letters, list of books, etc. The circulation section will have files relating to library circulation policy, registration of library members, inter-library loan service and correspondence on overdue books or reserved books, binders for getting the books and periodicals bound, users complaints, etc. If the correspondence volume is small one file may serve the purpose for all these otherwise different files may be opened depending on the need.

Cards – In many libraries the issue record is based on membership card. When a book is issued to a member, her/his membership card is filed in the tray. When the book is returned, the card is removed from the tray and returned to the member. Membership cards filed in the tray is a valuable record that indicates the books that are issued out.

- Book cards of books sent for binding, repair, digitisation, etc. are also maintained systematically. When the books come back to the library after binding, repair,

digitisation, etc. the book cards are inserted to the relevant books and then they are shelved.

- Membership application forms or cards are also important records. Basing the data contained in the cards or forms, it is possible to know the total number of members, types of members by age group, by level of education, etc.

ISSUE RECORD CARD

**Indira Gandhi National Open
University Library
NEW DELHI**

Name _____

Designation _____

School/Division _____

Issue Date	Acc. No.	Return Date

Fig. 7.1: Circulation Section Card

Statistical Sheet – The statistical sheet records data as to the number of books issued, shelved and repaired, reminders sent, interlibrary loan request fulfilled, etc. These records provide valuable indicators as to the workload, types of materials in demand, number of books shelved, number of books repaired, etc.

iv) Reference and Documentation Service Section

The nature and level of reference service varies with the nature and size of a library. In public libraries it is mostly question answer type service. In academic and special libraries in addition to such queries, the staff is also expected to prepare documentation list and offer current awareness service. In special libraries, the staff is also expected to provide selective dissemination of information (SDI) service to individual scholars. Since much of the dealings in reference section with users are about providing reference service with the help of reference tools not much records are generated or maintained in this department. The following types of records are maintained in the department:

Cards – Scholars' profiles are maintained on specially designed cards for providing SDI service to them.

Files – Reference enquiries received through various channels like telephone, e-mail,

SMS, letters and so on. In most cases replies are also given using these channels. A copy of the reply is kept in the file which may help in replying queries in future if it is on the same topic.

Statistical Sheets – Statistics of: i) queries attended, ii) abstracts of articles prepared, iii) bibliographies compiled, iv) SDI services provided, etc are maintained on a daily basis and cumulated on yearly basis.

Self Check Exercise

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

4) Explain why records are not generated or maintained in large numbers in a reference section?

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v) **Periodical Section**

Different libraries have different system for organising acquisition and maintenance of periodicals. Libraries with large number of serials’ subscription organise the entire routines in an independent section. Smaller libraries often include subscription and related routines, along with books, in acquisition section and leave the receipt and display, etc. only for a separate section. Various records are maintained in this section relating to ordering, receipt and non-receipt of periodicals, issuing of reminders and binding of periodicals, etc.

Ledgers – Some libraries use Kardex for recording receipt of periodicals. Many libraries record the receipt of periodicals in a register. If the serials department places orders for periodicals on its own, then it will have to maintain a bill register also.

Files – Depending on the need one or more files may be required. The following papers or documents are kept in the files:

- Correspondence relating to subscription of periodicals. It may include quotation papers, price list from the publishers, list of periodicals, suggestions received from users, etc.
- An organisation publishing periodicals gets many periodicals in exchange of their periodicals. All correspondences and related papers are to be maintained properly for the smooth functioning of the activity.
- Many libraries are members of one or more consortia. This also results in correspondence and accumulation of various other papers such as list of periodicals according to publishers and list of members of the consortia.
- Non-receipt of issues, receipt of defective copy, duplicate copy, or unsubscribed copy also leads to correspondence.

Cards – Some libraries use cards for recording the receipt of periodicals, issuing reminders for the non-receipt of issues, expected date of arrival of the next issues and

so on. The cards are of varying sizes. For example, the Kardex card is usually bigger than the catalogue cards.

Statistical Sheet – Number of serials registered against subscription, gift, exchange, or consortium, reminders sent, volumes prepared for binding and such other routines of the section are maintained in the statistical sheet.

vi) **Maintenance Section**

The section is primarily concerned with upkeep and maintenance of library materials in good condition and in an order that helps users to have access material with ease. For achieving this objective, the section puts the collection in different sequences and in a specific order in each sequence. It provides the stack area with helpful guides and identifies titles in need of repair or binding. It makes periodic check to identify books which need weeding out from the collection. The section also conducts stock verification at fixed intervals, as per library policy. The records in the section are mainly in the form of list of books kept in files. The list may include the books that are withdrawn from the shelves for weeding out or repair. The notes in the files may relate to the acquisition of new furniture, removal of old or unused furniture, request for equipment and materials for cleaning, etc. Preservation of rare and important documents is also an important activity of a library. This also generates a lot of records.

Files – All the records generated by the activities discussed above are maintained in files. Often more than one file is required.

vii) **Administration Section**

The administration section looks after the administrative activities of a library which involves library manpower, finance and accounts, library building, library assets such as furniture and equipment. It also functions as the nodal point for contact with the administration of the parent body of the library. The records in administration are mostly in the form of files, registers and ledgers.

Manpower Records – The manpower record comprises among others the attendance register, service books of employees, leave records and staff deployment record. Salary and wage records are also maintained where the library is the wage disbursing authority. You should note that some of these records are in the form of registers.

Statistical Records – Statistical sheets collected from each department are consolidated whereby the overall scenario of the library comes up.

Financial Records – These records comprise correspondence relating to annual budget, budget register, budget allocation and utilisation register, etc. The last mentioned record is very useful as it always provides information as to money already spent and the money that remains to be spent. When anything what needs to be purchased this record is always very useful.

Records of Library Assets – Every library has various types of assets comprising book shelves, almiras, tables, chairs, fans, etc. In modern libraries there are computers, photocopying machines, microfilm reader-printers, videos and so on. All these furniture items, fittings, machines, tools, etc. are recorded in a register. When something is issued to someone, a record is maintained. Record is also maintained for those items that are written off.

Records concerning Library Development, Policy, etc. – These records include annual report of the library, proceedings of library committee meetings, development

plans and proposals of the library, library rules and regulations, contracts and agreements and so on.

Library Building Records – Many libraries have their own buildings. There are records relating to library building plan, maintenance and repair. A library usually grows requiring construction of new rooms, new storeys and at times new buildings. Security is of great concern for a library as it contains many rare books, manuscripts and other valuable materials. Hence flawless security arrangement is made. All these also generate records. These records are usually maintained in files.

Disaster Management Manuals – Disasters like fire, flood, earthquakes and tsunami sometimes afflict libraries. That is why many libraries prepare disaster management manuals that act as guides to help librarians to save valuable books and other materials of the library when a disaster strikes. Records are usually maintained in the record room by the record keeper who functions under the head of the administration department.

Self Check Exercise

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below.

ii) Check your answer with the answers given at the end of this Unit.

5) Enumerate the records of the administrative department of a library.

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7.4 SUMMARY

Records in library terminology are documents containing details of processes, activities and results of some functions of either the whole organisation or a part of it.

Records bring uniformity in library tasks and serve as standard for evaluation of performance. They are used as supporting documents for new proposals and serve as source materials for compiling the history of the library. They also help meet audit scrutiny and justify the need for library as a social institution.

Records can be divided into various categories by using different criteria such as their life span, contents and form of presentation of information.

Library records are maintained in the form of ledgers, registers, files and cards/ slips.

7.5 SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Visit a nearby library and collect the details of the following records:

- Accession register
- Attendance register
- Correspondence files
- Statistical sheets
- Library manual
- Library assets

7.6 ANSWER TO SELF CHECK EXERCISES

- 1) Records are needed in a library because they bring uniformity in routines, render help for evaluation of performance, efficiency and achievements, lend support to various library proposals, act as source materials for constructing the history of a library, serve as a tool for efficient access to the library resources, provide proof of budget utilisation for the fulfilment of audit requirements, indicate workload that helps in rational allocation of manpower among the departments and finally justify desirability of library services for society.
- 2) Records are categorised according to their (i) life span, (ii) contents and (iii) forms of presentation. When records are categorised according to life span, we find three types of records. They are permanent, semi-permanent and temporary. Records of library resources, finance, services and administrative functions are based on their contents. Records can be categorised according to the form of presentation of information also. Such records either provide descriptive account or statistical data.
- 3) The statistical sheet records data about daily performances in various sections. In the acquisition section it records the number of book selection slips prepared, checked with existing records, filed in order tray and filed in receipt tray, etc. In the technical processing section it records data about books and other documents classified and catalogued, catalogue cards filed, corrected, replaced, withdrawn, etc.
- 4) Reference job mostly requires staff to work with the resources in the library. The moment information is located it is made available to the scholar. Therefore the department does not maintain many files.
- 5) An administrative department of a library has records relating to: (i) manpower, (ii) finance, (iii) assets, (iv) development proposals, plans, etc, (v) building and (vi) disaster management manual.

7.7 KEYWORDS

Audio Book	: A recording of a book, magazine or periodical article being read.
Authority File	: It contains a record of all decisions made by cataloguers or classifiers in a library.
Besppeak	: Express the need or desire for, ask for.
Content	: The body of the record, that is, the information or text it contains.
Kardex	: A paper-based record-keeping device or system that uses products that bore the Kardex trademark.
Ledger	: A book of commercial accounts in which records of debit and credit are posted.
Serial	: A publication such as a newspaper or a journal issued in successive parts, consecutively numbered and intended to be indefinitely. All periodic publications issued regularly or irregularly are covered by this term.

7.8 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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