

ORGANIZATION OF LIBRARIES FOR BETTER USE

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1. INTRODUCTION

A library is a organized collection of selected documents. It facilitates utilization of not only its own documents but also documents in other libraries that are accessible to it.

The library selects documents that are most appropriate for the users; acquires them on priority basis; organizes them to facilitate easy location; analyses them to expose the contents; prepares information tools to assist in searching for them; creates awareness of their existence by disseminating information among users and preserves them for future use.

Library activities are divided into three broad areas:

- Library practices,
- Documentation,
- Information services.

Users who wish to explore information material personally to select what they need for study and research should be encouraged to visit the library. Large part of the collection is kept open to the users who prefer browsing the stacks while a small portion, mainly for economic use of space, is made closed access.¹

2. LIBRARY PRACTICES

Library practices are aimed at collecting most appropriate documents and make them available for use. Out of these practices the following make the highest impact on users:

- Collections development,
- Collections organization,
- Collections utilization,
- Collections preservation.

2.1 Collections Development

Collections of the library should satisfy the current and potential needs of different categories of users. The Library adopts a collections development policy for the provision of appropriate, current, comprehensive and authoritative information.

The collections development policy has the following parameters:

- (i) *Subject:* Define core subjects, allied subjects and general subjects. Specify allocation of resources (funds, space and staff time) for each group of subjects.

- (ii) *Media:* Media preferred by the library in collection development. Of more than fifty different information media, the libraries generally prefer the following:

Print - books, serials, reports
Visual - maps, drawings
AV - video, slides
Microform - microfiche
Electronic - CD-ROM, disks

- (iii) *Language:* Emphasis is given to the language that the users are familiar with. National languages (Sinhala, Tamil and English) should receive priority. Documents in other languages are considered if users are capable of using them and literature on the subject concerned is available only in that language.

- (iv) *Preferred*

User Groups: The library dealing with different categories of users select the category which should be given priority in resource allocation.

In general there are eight different categories of library users. No library can develop its collection to satisfy the needs of all categories and hence most appropriate categories are selected.

The main categories of users identified in the point of view of libraries are:

- (a) Managers,
- (b) Educationists,
- (c) Researchers,

- (d) Extension/Development Workers,
- (e) Journalists,
- (f) Information Scientists,
- (g) Students,
- (h) General Public.

Library collections are developed and library services are provided to meet the requirements of these groups.

2.2 Collections Organization

Documents acquired according to the collections development policy are organized into several separate collections taking into consideration the method of utilization and physical features. Each collection, except for the lending collection, is given a 'collection code' for the identification and location of items in the collection.

Main collections of an average library are described below:

(a) *Lending*

Core collection of books that are available for lending. The collection is arranged in open shelves by the call number. A broad classification is used for the subjects. A 'call number' is constructed as follows: Broad Subject No., Author Code.

(b) *Reference*

Books with reference value (dictionaries, directories etc.) and books that are difficult to be replaced (rare books) will be available only for reference. Reference books will be organized in a separate collection.

The reference collection is updated from time to time by replacing old editions with the latest.

(c) *Repository*

A repository of documents is organized by many libraries to store following types of material:

(i) Unpublished reports. (even published reports on complex and narrow subjects with a fewer number of pages will be added to the repository).

(ii) Reprints and photocopies of articles: reprints of journal articles, photocopies of newspapers and journal articles and chapters of books.

(iii) Conference documents: individual papers presented at conferences. (conference proceedings should be in the lending collection).

(iv) Technical and research reports.

(v) Thesis and dissertations.

When books, journals, conference proceedings are acquired, they are analyzed to identify items for the repository. When a photocopy is obtained for the repository, the citation of the principal item is recorded in the photocopy.

(d) *Serials*

Serials are organized in several separate collections.

(i) Current serials: These are stored in periodicals display racks with the back issues of the year. Since displaying space is limited, only titles having high demand will be included in the current serials collection.

(ii) Retained journals: This collection has three types of items:

- current journals that find no displaying space in the current serials collection.
- permanently retained journals awaiting binding.
- temporarily retained journals during their retention period.

(iii) Bound journals: Journals retained permanently by the library are organized in a separate collection.

(iv) News letters: Current issues of selected newsletters are displayed in the current serials collection; all other titles could be added to the newsletter collection.

(v) Annual reports: Annual reports, transactions, programme reports etc. which records programmes and activities of selected organizations are organized in a separate collection.

(e) *Microform*

Information sources, particularly secondary sources, are available as microforms. Librarians prefer microforms to print media for secondary information sources (indexes, bibliographies, directories etc.) as they are convenient to handle. Although microforms are being replaced by the electronic media, a vast number of secondary sources and special primary sources (dissertations etc.) are still only available in microforms.

A Reader (Microfiche reading machine) should be available for reading microfiche.

(f) *Audio visuals*

Audio visuals are used as very effective information sources for educational purposes. Organizations engaged in promotion and training pay special attention to AV materials.

(g) *Electronic media*

Information technology has introduced several electronic media which are widely used in modern libraries in storage and retrieval systems. Electronic media stores digitally text, references, graphics and sound.

In addition to space-saving features, the electronic media have several advantages:

- (i) Exchange and transfer of information can be done quickly and conveniently.
- (ii) Retrieval of information is more efficient.
- (iii) Easy to convert to paper media. (print-outs)

- (iv) Can be obtained in different formats (information in outputs can be arranged as desired).

The collection would contain following types of material:

- CD-ROM -full text
- CD-ROM-bibliographic references
- CD-ROM-images (maps, pictures etc.)
- Diskette-bibliographic references
- Diskette-images

(h) *Maps Collection*

General maps and maps relating to subjects of the library are organized in a separate collection. The collection would contain maps printed in separate sheets and also maps extracted from various documents.

(i) *Clippings Collection:*

Short articles, news items, announcements on environmental serials will be extracted and organized in a separate collection.

(j) *Profile Collection*

A profile is a collection of documents on a given topic. Three types of profiles will be created.

- (i) Subject of event,
- (ii) person,
- (iii) organization.

File dockets are used to store profiles.

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2.3 Collection Utilization

(a) *Reading Facilities*

Provision of reading facilities is the basic function of a library. Libraries endeavour to provide adequate reading facilities to the users who visit the library. Analysis shows that library users engage in three types of reading: browsing (relaxed reading), scanning/skimming (light reading) and study (concentrated reading).

Depending on the space availability, libraries organize separate reading areas for each type of reading:

- (i) Relaxed reading area - For browsing journals and newspapers. Current serials are stored in this area. A settee with low tables is provided.
- (ii) Light reading area - For scanning and skimming reference material,. Reading tables and chairs will be provided.
- (iii) Study area - Allocated for concentrated reading. Some libraries provide study carrels to create quiet and undisturbed environment for users who wish isolation.

Four types of study carrels are used in libraries:

Reading carrel: With low desk-top shelf and a reading light.

AV carrel: For using AV material . A TV set, cassette players (audio/video) and head phones.

Computer carrel; For using online databases and CD-ROMS. Monitor, keyboard, CD-ROM player.

Microfiche carrel: For using microfiche. A microfiche reader.

(b) *Lending*

Books and serials in the library are loaned to members for a limited period of time. A lending policy specifying type of material, number of items issued at a time, period of lending for each category of members should be formulated.

(i) Personal loans: Library material (books and journals) lent to personal members.

(ii) Inter-library loans: Library material (books, journals, AV) lent to institutional members and to libraries participate networks.

3. DOCUMENTATION

3.1 Documentation Functions:

The basic function of documentation is exposing the information packed in documents so that it could be exploited by the users. Thus documentation converts a static document into an active information source.

Documents acquired by a library are processed using different techniques.

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|---------------------|--|
| (i) Analysis | - identify important parts |
| (ii) Classification | - group subjects according to their relationship |
| (iii) Cataloguing | - describe items for easy identification |
| (iv) Indexing | - provide access points for easy retrieval |
| (v) Profiling | - assembling analytical items belonging to a given topic |
| (vi) Translation | - conversion of documents from one language to another. |

3.2 Analysis

Documentation identifies two types of documents:

(i) Macro (parent) document (ii) Micro (offspring) document. A micro item is a part of a macro which cannot be identified without the identity of the macro. Micros are distinguished from the macro by the method of presentation, the authorship or the subject.

Macro

book
journal
conference report
newsletter
newspaper

Micro

chapter, map, book review
article, announcement
paper
news item, announcement
article, news item

Analysis is the process of dissecting a macro document into micros and identifying the important micros that should be highlighted. A decision has to be taken regarding extracting a micro item from the macro item. If the macro is not retained indefinitely or if the two items go to two separate collections, the micro should be photocopied: bibliographic citation of the macro should be recorded for the full identification of the micro.

Analysis of macro documents is explained below:

(a) *Books*: A book would contain a chapter relevant to the core subjects of the Centre. If it is not documented, its existence would not be known to the users. If the book is not added to the collection, the chapters are extracted by photocopying.

(b) *Journals*: Articles on the core subjects are identified for indexing. Articles in the journal that are not retained are photocopied.

(c) *Newspapers and newsletters*:

Items extracted are:

- Articles on the core subjects;
- news items relating to the parent organization;
- news items and articles on topics, organizations and persons in the profiles list

(d) *Conference proceedings*: Important papers on core subjects published in conference proceedings are identified for indexing. These are photocopied if the conference proceeding is not retained.

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Although classification can be used to satisfy the subject approach to information, computer assisted indexing techniques introduce more efficient methods for searching information by the subject. Therefore most libraries now use classification only for arranging the collection by the subject. Such libraries restrict classification to shelf arrangement of lending and reference books. A shelf arrangement does not require in-depth classification, and hence the library could adopt broad classification.

Libraries in Sri Lanka use international classifications to organize books in shelves and to organize information in catalogues or databases. Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) is the most popular scheme generally used mainly in public, school and university libraries. The Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) is generally selected by Scientific and Technical libraries for subject arrangement, mainly because of its capability of providing specific class numbers for complex subjects.

3.4 Indexing

Indexing helps retrieval of items. The terms and phrases that represent the subject of the item are used as indexing terms in subject indexing. The indexers should be able to foresee the terms that would be used in search-

ing the item. To ensure use of uniform indexing terms and to guide the indexers in selection of appropriate indexing terms, a controlled vocabulary is used in indexing.

Libraries use thesauri or lists of subject descriptors as controlled vocabularies. Two types of thesauri are used: General and Special. General thesauri list terms (subject descriptor) covering all subject fields while special thesauri list terms associated with a specific subject.

Indexing terms selected from the above three tools should be recorded in the input sheets.

Computers are capable of generating indexing terms automatically from the searchable fields such as title, author and series. Therefore indexing fields other than the subject will be handled by the computer.

3.5 Cataloguing

Libraries generally restrict the cataloguing practice to description of documents. Libraries in Sri Lanka use the Anglo American Cataloguing Rules, generally referred as AACR in cataloguing.

A card catalogue is maintained by libraries to help searching for documents in the library. The catalogue can be used to search by author, title, series and subject. This is done by preparing a separate card for the above search keys. Hence a document would be represented in more than one card in the catalogue.

Libraries using computers now store their catalogue in computers. Since a computer can store more than one search key in a record,

preparation of multiple records to satisfy different search keys is not required.

Computerized libraries would in the future provide Online Public Access Catalogues (OPAC) for users.

3.6 Profiling

Action of assembling various documents for a profile is called profiling. This involves selection of items, translating if necessary, mounting them on paper, labelling for identification and filing in the relevant docket. Profiling is an extension of the analysis activities mentioned in 3.2. Three types of profiles, as mentioned in 2.2 (j) are maintained by libraries.

3.7 Translation

Important articles, news items and announcements that are identified for inclusion in library publications are translated if necessary, into national languages. Service of in-house translators or external translators would be obtained.

The libraries make arrangements to provide translations of selected documents published in foreign languages. A panel of translators are appointed by the libraries for this purpose. The library would maintain a Register of Translators giving bio-data, language capabilities, subject specialization, terms and conditions etc.

3.8 Editing

Information products that are output in the documentation process have to be presented in appropriate formats. Editing involves organization of the material such as computer outputs, clippings, photographs, maps, captions, into readable formats. Knowledge of typography, art work and computer graphics will be required for editorial work.

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4. INFORMATION SERVICES

4.1 Organization

Operation of various information services to satisfy user needs is one of the main functions of a library. Users seek information for research, study and recreation aiming at expansion of their wisdom, improvement of their quality of life and enhancement of their efficiency of work.

Information needed by the users fall into four main types:

- (i) Reference - Information on information sources (help in identification, selection and location of information sources).
- (ii) Factual - Information that could be assimilated.
- (iii) Statistical - Numerical data tabulated and displayed illustrate effects, progress and trends.
- (iv) Graphic - Geographic and pictorial presentation of data in maps, drawings, plans etc.

Above information is stored in books, serials, conference proceedings, unpublished reports, AV and electronic media.

Documents that are available to a library belong to two categories:

- (i) Owned (documents owned by the library)
- (ii) Accessible (those in local and foreign libraries having links with the library)

Information on documents owned and accessible by the library is stored in bibliography tools and computer databases prepared by-

- (i) the library itself (catalogue, bibliographies etc.)
- (ii) local libraries participating in networks (union catalogues, union lists, accession bulletins etc.)
- (iii) foreign organizations (indexing and abstracting serials, current awareness bulletins etc.)

Libraries utilize these three types of information products to satisfy the user needs. Regular information services of libraries are discussed below.

4.2 Reference Services

Reference collection of a library helps answering specific questions of the users. Efficiency of the reference service depends on three factors:

- (i) knowledge and skill of the reference librarian
- (ii) comprehensiveness of the reference collection
- (iii) currency of the reference collection.

When a query is received by post or by telephone, it should be analyzed to understand the actual problem. When the query is made in person, the library has the advantage of interviewing the user to identify the actual requirement. If reference tools that would provide the answer to the user's query is not available or if the reference tool is obsolete, the

library would contact a library which possess the reference tool. The library should store information on important reference tools possessed by other libraries.

4.3 Referral Services

Any query that cannot be answered by the library due to non availability of relevant information sources, are directed to an organization which is capable of answering it. The library need to evaluate the stocks and capabilities of the associated organizations for operating effective referral services. The profiles collection and information tools such as directories compiled by the library help identifying the external organization which would answer the query.

4.4 Literature Search Service

The library undertake search of information on subjects specialized by it. The three types of information tools mentioned in 4.1 (domestic, local and foreign) are searched for literature.

A request form is used to specify the literature search. This will ensure defining the subject of the search with respect to time limit, language, type of material etc.

The search request form is used in formulating a search expression. While domestic databases require a standard search expression, external databases specially those presented in CD-ROMs require specific methods.

The search results are organized into a bibliography which is presented to the user.

4.5 Current Awareness Services

Current awareness services are provided to the information users to keep them informed of new documents added to the collections of the library. This service is particularly useful to the users who find it difficult to visit the library regularly to update their knowledge.

Following publications which records new documents are used in current awareness services.

- (i) Library Accessions Bulletin - Books, AV , new serials added to the library.
- (ii) Library index - Journal/newspaper articles, reports, conference papers.
- (iii) Journal Contents - Contents pages of selected journals received by the library.

4.6 Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) Service

SDI Services are designed to provide relevant current information to users. Current information is selected for each user considering their interests. Interest profiles maintained by the library are used in selection of information.

An interest profile will be created for each user. Information for the profile is collected by surveying and evaluating the information requirements of the user. An interest profile would contain the following types of information:

- (i) personal - name, address, designation, place of work, affiliation
- (ii) activities - research, consultation
- (iii) subjects - subject headings, keywords
- (iv) databases - databases that should be searched
- (v) journal title - journals that should be included in searches

As the above information can change, interest profiles should be revised from time to time. Feed-back of the users is necessary for this purpose.

4.7 Selective Dissemination of Contents Pages (SDCP) Services

This service provides the users with photocopies of contents pages of journals selected by them. This is organized as a cooperate programme of library networks such as AGRINET. The users are asked to name the journals they are interested in. A list of journals acquired by the library or the library network is provided to the users to identify the titles. The titles selected by each user are included in their interest profile.

The library undertakes supply of photocopies of journal articles selected by users from the contents pages.

5. CONCLUSION

Effectiveness of library services largely depend on the skills and attitude of the library personnel. Development of library personnel is essential for planning, operating and maintaining library services. Professional skills and technical know-how can be gained through library education, training studying and by participating in professional activities. Librarian's capability of using resources of other libraries depend on the personal relationships that he/she develop with other librarians.

The librarian should be prepared to serve the readers and to look into their needs at all times. He/she should be easily approached and be disturbed by readers.

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