

THE COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS WITH SIGNIFICANCE TO LIBRARIES: AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

Collection development is a dynamic and an essential process for every library. It involves determining the selection policy, identification of the requirements, selection of documents, resource sharing and proper budgeting. It is very important to evaluate the library collection and library professionals play a vital role in this aspect. It is important to maintain a balanced and quality collection.

Keywords: Collection Development, Collection Development Policy, Library Document.

Introduction

Collection development is a process that provides the basic step for systematic development in library collection. It is a challenging activity which involves acquiring, selecting, preserving and weeding out of documents after analyzing / assessing user needs. A good and proper library collection helps to serve in studying, teaching, research activity and fulfilling other needs of the library users.

Definition

According to Lower Columbia College, collection development is the means by which the library provides high quality information resources of print and non-print materials and provides access to electronic resources that will meet instructional requirements.

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) emphasizes that acquisition and collection development focuses on the methodological and topical themes pertaining to acquisition of print and other analogue library materials (by purchase, exchange, gift, legal deposit), and the licensing and purchase of electronic information resources.

Purpose of Collection Development

The basic goal of the collection development process is to build a collection that help to satisfy the need of the users of a particular library. It is the duty of the library to assess and recognize the requirement of its users and build up their collection accordingly so that relevant information can be provided. The entire library collection comprises materials that are in print, non-print, electronic and other formats.

Collection development is a continuous process which involves the participation of users, librarian and library staff, subject expert and others.

The purpose of collection development includes:

- To develop a collection that satisfies the need of the users.
- To select best and useful documents for the users.
- To provide better and current information service according to users' approach.
- To review the old stock periodically and withdraw the unused, unwanted and useless materials.
- To use the fund judiciously in buying new useful materials and documents.
- To ensure that available resource support the aim of the institute following certain policies and principles.

Steps involved in Collection Development

It is process of building a collection for meeting the information need of the users. The process comprises:

- Analysing the information need.
- Developing a selection policy and implementing them.
- Acquisition of materials.
- Evaluation
- Recourse sharing and its effect on collection development.
- Weeding out policy.

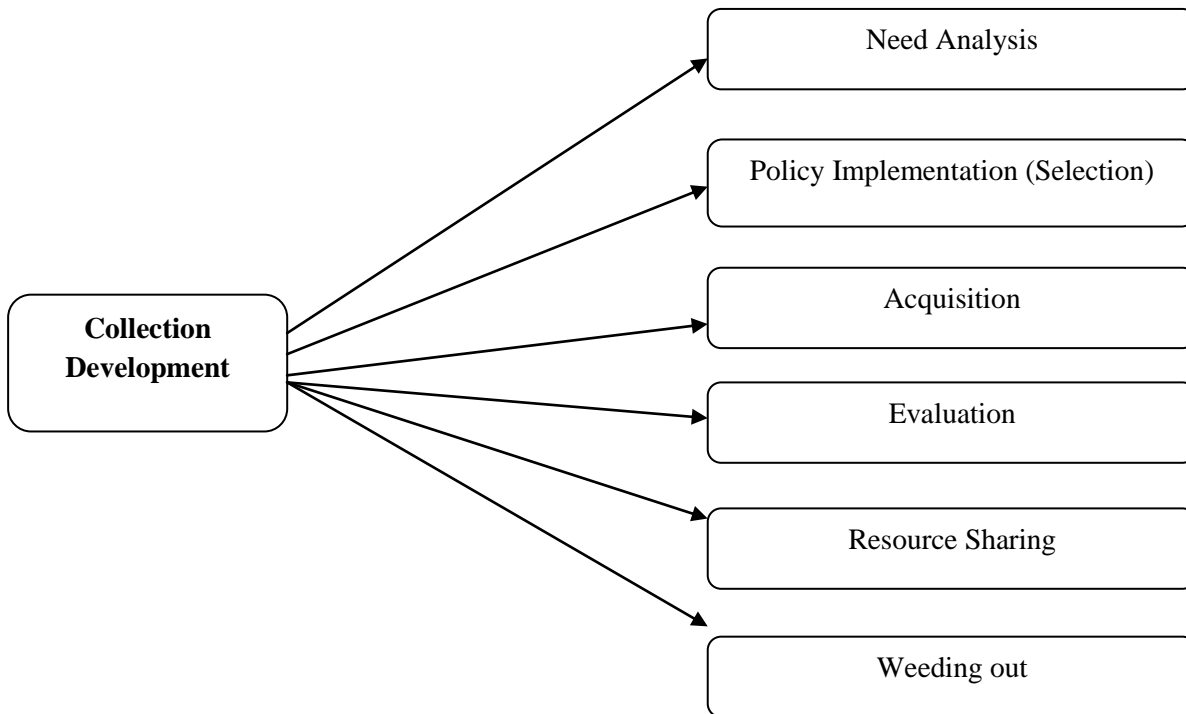


Fig.1: Steps in Collection Development

Need for Collection Development

There are a number of reasons for which a proper and systematic procedure is maintained while acquiring documents for a library. Some of the needs for the collection development are:

- i. Increasing demand of the users.
- ii. Information explosion.
- iii. Limited budget.
- iv. Increasing prices of documents.
- v. Availability of information resources in various formats (print, non-print, audio-visual, etc.)

Collection Development Policy

Collection Development policy provides a theoretical overview that explains the educational, social and cultural rationale for the development of the collection. It also states the directions, guidelines, controls and standards for the overall management of the collection.

According to Paul Mosher, “collection development is a process that should constitute a rational, documented programme guided by written policies and protocols and should reflect, in sense a contrast between library users and library staff as to what will be required, for whom at what levels.”

Fourine describes collection development policy as “the written statement that provides planning and implementation guidelines for most collection building tasks”.

M.K. Donave and others has stated the purpose of collection development policy in the following way:

1. “To provide a public document which reflects the internal process of evaluation by which the university library determines collection objectives.
2. To represent an objective process for establishing long and short-range priorities for collection intensity and depth.
3. To facilitate consistency in planning and communicating priorities.
4. To provide guidance for fund allocation and approval profile construction.
5. To determine areas of cooperative sharing and development of resources.
6. To provide guidance in withdrawal of materials from the collection.”

Advantages of Collection Development Policy

There are certain advantages for having a proper Collection Development Policy

- i. It helps in giving a base for accurate planning of collection development.
- ii. It helps in best selection and acquisition of library documents.
- iii. It helps in appropriate use of funds for acquiring books and other library documents.
- iv. It helps in weeding out of unwanted materials.

Role of Librarian and the Library Committee in the Collection Development

The collection development activity requires professionals such as the librarians for proper implementation. Collection development requires mainly **subjective judgment** and the **expenditure** involved. Regarding the judgment, the professionals have to decide about the

already existing materials / collections and also selection of new materials. These activities require expert knowledge as it will affect in shaping the overall collection the library. Suggestions from subject experts can be sought in this process. Both short and long term goals as well as priorities have to be taken into account during selection of materials. Regarding expenditure, budgets have to be allocated as selection for purchase depends on it.

Regarding the policy making and the management of the library, the librarian is assisted by the administrative experts of that particular organization. The Librarian along with these persons comprises the Library Committee. In other words, Library Committee is a body consisting of several members that is engaged in governing a library.

Usually, universities and colleges have library committee which along with the librarian act as an advisory body and formulate policies for development.

Weeding and withdrawal

Weeding is a vital component in the collection development process. It involves removal of documents and materials from collection that are not useful or whose services are no longer required. The librarian with the library staff evaluate the collections periodically taking into account the currency, relevance, condition and age of the document. Those materials that meet the standard criteria are kept in the library.

In the modern age of information explosion, numerous documents are published daily. New ideas and thoughts are generated outdating the previous ones. Moreover, the problems of fund and space have to be considered.

Evaluation of Collection Development

For proper evaluation of collection development, the following important aspects are to be taken into account:

- According to the objectives set for collection development
- According to the users approach or need
- Updating the collection
- Physical form of the materials
- Authenticity and reliability of the materials
- Frequency of use of the materials
- Physical condition of the materials

Conclusion:

Collection development is an important part of a library in any institute that provides the users with information they need. The main responsibility rests on the librarian along with other experts who are involved in the process. Both the traditional as well as electronic or digital materials have to be considered together in building up the collection.

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