

ANALYSIS OF THE COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICIES: A CASE STUDY OF THE LIBRARIES OF KUMAUN UNIVERSITY, NAINITAL.

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Abstract: Purpose: This paper aims to analyse the collection development policy/methods of the Libraries of Kumaun University, Nainital. Kumaun University is one of the oldest and the largest state university of the Uttarakhand state of India and is the only university in the Kumaun region of Uttarakhand.

Design/Methodology/Approach: A survey was conducted through the questionnaire distributed to the librarians of the campuses of the University, apart from this; an unstructured interview of the librarians was also conducted for an in-depth understanding of the used process. The other sources of data used in this study are the annual report and official website of the university.

Findings: The findings reveal the details of the collection and the major problems of collection development in the Libraries of the University.

Originality value: This paper highlights the issues of collection building process of the libraries of Kumaun University and suggests certain improvement in the existing system with an emphasis on the written Collection Development Policy.

Keywords: Collection building, Collection Development Policy,

1.0 Introduction:

The objectives of the university libraries are to support the academic programs of the university by providing relevant information to the user community to fulfill the institutional mission and to achieve academic excellence (Nkamnebe et al., 2014). To achieve the objectives of the institution, libraries offer a variety of services and majority of these services are focused on how to ensure maximum utilization of library resources.

The work of any library starts with the selection and then a collection of these resources for its users by doing this they try to achieve predefined objectives; the objective could be very general like to provide literature to the community for their leisure or could be a very specific like to help a research scholar to stride towards its

research results. But there are questions which required to be answered, i.e. how do libraries develop their collection in a holistic manner? How do libraries ensure that they are responding directly to the needs of their users? And how do libraries ensure that they are helping their parent institution to achieve its goal?

Generally, a library includes librarian, subject specialist, faculty members and students as recommending authorities in the collection development process but if we analyze closely all of them have some sort of drawbacks; it is a fact that a Librarian cannot be an expert in all the subjects, subject specialist no matter how knowledgeable will have some biases or prejudice, faculty members cannot assure to recommend documents of all the subject in equal proportion, student's recommendation cannot guarantee that the requested title will actually be used. But despite all these shortcomings one cannot deny the importance of Librarian, Subject specialist, faculty members, students, in the collection development, they are the best resources in collection building if their recommendations are channelized through Collection Development Policy (CDP).

Collection development is a universal process for libraries and information centers. The process is composed of six major components, community analysis, selection policies, selection, acquisition, de-selection and evaluation (Evans and Zarnosky, 2004; Evans and Saponaro, 2005, 2012).

Every library has a collection development policy, through which it develops its collection and analysis of this policy will help to understand the policy in the more rational way and to rectify wrong procedure if any.

2.0 Review of Literature:

There are studies conducted on the collection development which is also dealing with the collection development policies, Susana Sanchez Vignau, B., & Meneses, G. (2005) in their study finds that the directors of university libraries and managers of collection development were aware of the process of collection development, few have collection development policies, and few have carried out user studies. Biggs and Biggs (1987) conducted a survey of the heads of academic library reference services to examine the collection development for the study titled "Reference Collection Development in Academic Libraries: Report of a Survey". It was found that selection and weeding were not guided by any written policy. Sridhar (1995) in his study "Problems of Collection Development in Special Libraries" explored the various factors affecting collection development in special libraries and highlighted the significance of collection development policy manual. The author pointed out the various problems related to document selection and procurement. Andrade and Vergueiro (1996) in their study under the title "Collection Development in Academic Libraries: A Brazilian Library's Experience" outlined the different models of collection development given by professionals. Haider (1996) in "Acquisition and Collection Development in Pakistan" analyzed the constraints faced by Pakistani libraries in the procurement of books from abroad. Lack of proper management, the absence of competent personnel, non-existence of acquisition policy statements, non-existence of selection aids, ever-shrinking library budgets, fluctuating rate of the rupee, inflation, import policy, trade embargoes against some countries, fiscal policy etc. were the major hurdles found. Gessesse (2000) in the paper titled "Collection Development and Management in the Twenty-First Century with Special Reference to Academic Libraries: An Overview" examined the concepts and problems which needed consideration for collection development in academic libraries for aligning the collection development activities with the changing environment of digital librarianship in the twenty-first century. Kovacs and Elkordy (2000) threw light on the guidelines and strategies to find, evaluate and select the web-based information resources in the study "Collection Development in Cyberspace: Building an Electronic Library Collection". The focus of the study was on the web-based information resources rather than the electronic information resources. Thornton (2000) in his study "Impact of Electronic Resources on Collection Development, the Roles of Librarians, and Library Consortia" finds the impact of electronic resources and the Internet on collection development and discuss the changing role of librarians, library co-operation, and collection development. It had been concluded that consortia will become more important sources in the electronic information world.

3.0 Background:

The Kumaun University, a residential-cum-affiliating university, was established on 1st December 1973 under the Act of State Legislature (U P State Universities Act) and is a permanent member of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU). Kumaun University is an ISO 9001-2008 certified institution, which follows International Quality Management System.

Kumaun University is spread over in three campuses (DSB Campus, Bhimtal Campus, and SS Jena Campus) these campuses offer variety of courses for study, and to support the educational and research activities, every

campus has its central library, these libraries offer excellent collection and services to its users. But despite the good collection in terms of numbers, it is observed that the users are not fully satisfied with the collection. This can be very often spot in an informal discussion with the students. The reasons for the dissatisfaction of the users could be many, it could be that libraries are not receiving adequate budget, could be lack of services for better utilization of its resources, could be lack of manpower to develop the library to the satisfaction level, could be managerial aspect or it could be the collection development policy (CDP).

To understand the problem the present study “Analysis of the Collection Development Policies: A case study of the Libraries of Kumaun University, Nainital” is analyzing the CDP for the possible cause of the dissatisfaction of the users in relation to the collection of the libraries of Kumaun University.

According to Oxford English Dictionary Analysis means:

1. A detailed examination of something in order to interpret or explain it.
2. The process of separating something into its constituent elements.

The study is an attempt to make a close examination of CDP by breaking it into its constituent elements and then making an assessment on the basis of some general parameters. These parameters include:

- Well defined goals/objectives of the parent institution.
- Well defined goals/objectives of the library particularly which are helping the parent institutions to achieve its goals/objectives.
- Objectives of the CDP particularly which are helping the library to achieve its goals.

Analysis of the CDP helps in

- understanding the ultimate goal of the CDP
- understanding the scope and depth of the collection
- measuring the effectiveness of the used CDP
- rectifying wrong procedure if any
- preparing a standard collection development policy

According to Negrete Gutierrez (1993), Collection development is a process that permits the library to develop a collection of materials that respond to the information needs and service requirements of the users

Sanchez Vignau (1999) Collection development: a process which assumes that the information needs of the users are satisfied in an economic fashion and inside of a reasonable period of time using resources as much internal as external to the organization.

The Collection Development Policy is an important document for any library. As a guiding tool for the basic activities of collection building, it helps to make a strong foundation of a focused library collection. The present paper is an attempt to analyse the policy of collection development in the libraries of the Kumaun University, Nainital.

4.0 Scope and Objective of the study:

The scope of the study is limited to Kumaun University, Nainital. The University has three campus libraries and number of departmental libraries. The policy of collection building followed by these campus libraries is also implemented in the departmental libraries. The Librarian of campus libraries is also a committee member of Departmental Library Committees.

Three main libraries of the University have the responsibility to satisfy the information need of maximum students. The data revealed that these libraries have a very good collection of documents with a total of 370000 print documents, subscribing more than 300 print journals, have an access to a number of e-journals through INFLIBNET and have a membership of a consortium.

The Objective of the study is to examine collection development policy, to understand the practices of collection buildings and to understand the strength and weakness of the used collection development policy/procedure of the libraries of Kumaun University, Nainital.

5.0 Research Methodology:

A systematic observation of the collection building process was done in the studied libraries, then Questionnaires were distributed to the librarians, the questionnaire includes both close ended and open ended questions. At last systematic unstructured interviews were conducted with the librarians to clear the doubt and to know more insight about the whole process.

6.0 Findings:

The Libraries of the University are not only serious but has made serious efforts for collection building, this can be visible through the data where S.S.J Campus, Almora library is having a total of 200000 books out of which 140000 are textbooks and 60000 are reference books. The D.S.B Campus Library is having 90000 books out of which 70000 are textbooks and 20000 are reference books. The Central Library, Nainital is having 80000 books in which 56000 are reference books and the rest 24000 are textbooks.

After seeing the data related to the collection it is difficult to understand if the libraries are having a good number of books, then why users are unsatisfied? And why there is a constant decline in the procurement of books in the recent years? The two questions were answered by the librarians in the interview. For the first question the librarians replied that libraries are still working on the policy to provide “each book to each student”, due to this policy, multiple copies of the same title were procured resulting increased number of books of the same title. The new book bank scheme launched in the recent past by the two libraries is also an extension of this policy, under which multiple copies of the same title were procured. Librarians agreed that this is a wrong approach and an obstacle in the overall development of a student and said that they are working on withdrawing of this policy in step by step.

“Does your library currently using any collection development policy”, all the libraries responded that they do have a collection development policy, but it is not a written policy. They are relying on subject expert (Q.No.7) for selection, here the subject expert means the faculty members of the department who are also a committee members of the Departmental Library Committee.

In the interview they said they are relying on subject expert for recommending the documents to purchase, but CDP has many components i.e. community analysis, selection policy, selection, acquisition, de-selection etc. and to depend solely on subject teacher for selection is not a right strategy, it has many shortcomings; the teacher can be biased, he may not have exposure to other related subjects and most importantly they may come and go.

Is your library a member of consortia?” two of the libraries are a member of a consortia, but they are not sure about “does the libraries of the consortium have a collection development policy”. About the use of consortium, in the interview both the librarians have pointed out the physical/geographical constraints as a major hurdle to fully utilize the advantage of a consortium.

For Question No.8 “What percentage of time is allotted for collection development activities?” The Librarians informed that they do not get much time for collection development activities, the reason is simple; collection development requires prior knowledge of allotted budget, but due to different reasons generally the university allocate the library budget at the end of financial year and requires to consume the same quickly, this unfavourable condition is an obstacle to the planned collection development. In the interview, it is also known that they have a very limited recurring budget which is not sufficient even to maintain the library, and they have to depend on either the UGC or state government for major development plans.

For Question No.9 and Question No.10: Concerned libraries review their collection every year, the reason is the inclusion of the new programmes in the University, and library requires preparing itself for these new programmes. The library frequently updates the subject experts (committee members of the department responsible for book selection) of different departments about the newly procured books so that they can include or exclude different books in their approval list.

It appears (Question No.12) that all the three libraries still engage in the traditional way of collection development, but patron-driven acquisitions (PDA) and demand-driven acquisitions (DDA) are also a part of the new norms. However, the comments indicate that the libraries preferred to use the traditional collection development methodology such as using approval plans. Though in the interview the librarians do talk about PDA and DDA but they do not have any concrete procedure to follow PDA and DDA. When asked about a separate collection development policy for ‘each discipline’, ‘each collection’ and ‘each format’ (Question No

16,17,18) all the librarian responded negatively. They do not have a separate collection development policy for the different categories and all are managed by a single collection development policy.

For Question No. 24 “Under what circumstances does your library conduct a collection analysis?” all the libraries responded that they do the collection analysis for three reasons one is “Accreditation” second, it is “Required by Administration” and third for a proposal to get “Financial Grants”.

Another factor comes in this category which is “Downsizing the collection” In the interview, the librarians of the concerned library told that they do Write-off books from the collection, which is a kind of downsizing the collection, but this is basically done to the physically not-usable books and which have old data and information.

In response to the question do you do collection analysis, the librarians replied in NO, they do not perform any collection analysis, but they do review the ratio of the books with the students.

In response to the question “For what your collection development policy used for?” the librarians told that they used the said policy for all the four purposes:

- for collection analysis,
- for weeding-out,
- for faculty communication,
- for administrative communication.

In the interview they explained all four; first is for collection analysis, they have a target user group to satisfy and through the policy they constantly check the ratio of the books with the students they also use the same to acquire new and upgraded titles. For weeding-out, also they do rely on unwritten collection development policy. They weed out old books especially those which are providing old data and information. They also use collection development policy for faculty communication and administrative communication to get funds.

7.0 Discussion and Conclusion

The Libraries under study do not have any written collection development policy, but their collection in terms of numbers is impressive. All the libraries are using traditional methods of collection building i.e. selection by the concerned subject faculty members. It is visible that they are not following the standard procedure, not having a written collection development policy and yet having a good collection is just a matter of chance, but this policy can be collapsed any time.

Though Libraries are communicating and updating the concerned faculty members about the collection and user’s demand while asking them to provide a list of the document for procurement but not directly involving students and librarians in the selection is not a healthy procedure. The financial management of the University is affecting the library for proper planning of collection building but libraries just not get away by blaming others, they have to find the best way within the limitations.

Although the data indicates that these Libraries reviewed their collection development policy every year but it is not a proper review, there is no user study/opinion/feedback, no circulation study, no ILL statistics study, no in-house use study, no expert opinion then how come one reviews the collection development policy?

Data also indicate that the libraries are considering PDA and DDA apart from the traditional selection process, but there is no concrete evidence of user analysis, user recommendation forms or any such policy.

Collection development is a complex process and highly subjective. A comprehensive written collection development policy developed with the advice and involvement of all parties concerned helps regulate the process and makes the collection development more focused and less problematic.

After the careful study of different collection development policies the paper proposed some suggestions:

1. All the stack holders of collection development require an orientation on collection development and collection development policy.
2. The Central libraries, campus libraries and department libraries first clearly define their objectives and target group for service any overlapping in the objectives needs to be rectified.

3. A written collection development policy with the advice of all the stock holders should be developed, incorporating following points:
 - a. Outline the priorities of each library.
 - b. Factors to decide number of copies of an item
 - c. Details of subject covers and formats collected. The ALA guideline suggests a five level system: Comprehensive, research, study, basic and minimal.
 - d. Who shall select: users, faculty members, librarians, subject specialist, and heads of department with a clear cut indication of the no of books or % of allotted budget?
 - e. Gifts: A written gift policy must make clear whether the library accepts only items matching the collection profiles or accepts anything.
 - f. Criteria of De-selection and Discards
 - g. Evaluation or review of the collection: The policy should indicate whether the evaluation process is for identifying collection strengths and weakness, for comparative purpose or for reviewing selection.

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