Acquiring print book materials for collection development in Mahatma Gandhi University Library : An overview of the current practices

Deepa.R
Reference Assistant, Mahatma Gandhi University,
Kottayam, deeparamak@gamil.com 9847324175

Abstract: The study aims to examine and investigate the current acquisition practices and procedures of print book materials in Mahatma Gandhi University Library. MGU library has been making earnest efforts to build a quality collection of academic and general collection in the past few years. Though there is increasing demand for electronic resources, acquiring print book collections still remains a vital function of the library. Interviews were conducted with acquisition staff to gather information about the procurement procedures and the data provided is of the previous financial year . Findings reveal that the University library follows the quotation system for the acquisition of print book materials. There is transparency in purchase but the process has its merits and demerits. The article attempts to give an overview of the current practices in acquisition including selection, financial provisions, faculty relations etc. The article also makes a few suggestions to enhance the acquisition practices in the library.

Keywords : Acquisition, Book Selection, Budgeting, Print materials, Collection, Development, Academic libraries.

1. Introduction

In the present information technology environment the very concept of services provided by academic and university libraries have changed and the libraries are compelled to adopt the new technologies to cater to the changing information needs of the users and to extend state-of-the-art services. This is also reflected in the Collection development process which is one of the primary functions of the library which requires an understanding of the needs of users, and a sound knowledge of books, publishing and information market. The collection of a library is often considered as its strength and collection development comprises planning and decision making, budgeting, acquiring materials and evaluating them. The selection and acquisition of library materials for developing a balanced collection is central to both collection development and overall development of the library. The aim of the acquisitions program of the University Library is the development of a comprehensive collection in the core subject areas of research and a selective collection in the peripheral areas of interest.

2. Literature Review:

Literature review covers aspects related to acquisition practices including selection tools, faculty relations, patron driven acquisition etc. Ajidahun,C.O (2007) examine the book acquisition practices in the Nigerian University Libraries and concludes that acquisition is done mostly through purchase. He also finds out that Nigerian university libraries patronize the British-based multinational publishers more than the local booksellers for their acquisitions and payments made to book vendors in Nigeria are taxed by Nigerian universities.

Agee, Jim (2003) reviews a number of print and online sources of materials to acquaint librarian's with new selection tools. Traditional print sources are discussed to locate core and specialized materials in addition to private and association online sites.

Yang, S(2012) tries to develop a book-acquisition recommendation model and system based on text mining technology and internet technology to provide librarians with suggestions of book-acquisition.

Jense, K(2009) describes how online survey tools can be utilized to gather input and feedback from faculty related to monographic collection decisions to evaluate current and guide future decision making. He finds out that online survey tools are an easy and valuable tool for gathering direct feedback from faculty and provide opportunities to engage faculty in conversations about a wide range of scholarly communications issues.

Anderson, Rick (2012) discusses traditional library acquisition models which involves acquiring materials anticipating patron needs and examines alternative models. He notes that putting acquisition into the hands of patrons raises issues of budget control and suggests loading of monographic records into catalogues where patrons can vote on book acquisitions.

3. Objectives

- To analyze the book acquisition practices and procedures followed by MGU library.
- To examine the budgetary provisions allotted to the library for collection improvement of books.
- To find out the current status of faculty participation in building academic collection.
- To examine the role of vendors in the procedure.\

4. Scope and limitation

The study is limited to the acquisition practices and procedures of print book materials of Mahatma Gandhi University Library. Data collected for the purpose is limited to the previous financial year.

5. Methodology

Interviews and discussions were conducted with library professionals and staff associated with acquisition to procure information about the acquisition procedures and policies.

6. University Library

Mahatma Gandhi University Library was established in 1989. MGU Library system consists of University Central Library and more than 30 libraries of departments, schools and study centres existing in various campuses. The members consist of faculties and students of University departments and affiliated colleges, research scholars who have registered under M G University, and the non teaching staff of University. The library is fully automated using the open source software KOHA. The MG University Open Access Digital Archives provides access to the full text of all the theses awarded by the University and is the first of its kind among Indian Universities and has got national and international recognition. INTUTE, the consortium of UK based Universities has rated this archive as one of the best research resources. The Library has a collection of about 53000 books, print and e journals, e books, and also access to many databases. Recently the Library inaugurated the Graduate Membership programme opening the doors to the public who are graduates in any field.

7. Acquisition and Collection development:

Acquisition of books still remains a central part of the collection development process. It is the process of procuring materials for the library through purchase, gifts or exchange

programs. Collection development is a term representing the process of systematically building library collections to serve study, teaching, research, recreational, and other needs of library users. The process includes selection and de-selection of current and retrospective materials, planning of coherent strategies for continuing acquisition, and evaluation of collections to ascertain how well they serve user needs (Johnson,2009). Collection development therefore is a planned, continuous and effective acquisition of relevant and quality materials to meet the goals of the library and the requirements of its clientele. Collection development activities include formulation of a collection development policy, budgeting and finance, selection and acquisition, collection evaluation etc. Though there is an increasing demand for electronic resources the quality and quantity of books also determines the level of standard of a University library. The acquisition policy and procedures of MGU library is determined by criteria like academic needs and user demands, quality of collection and transparency of procedure etc.

8. **Acquisition activities of the University Library include:**

- ➢ Selection of materials.
- ➢ Convening Book Purchase Committee.
- ➢ Approval of budget and selected materials by the committee.
- ➢ Selection of supply sources based on quotation procedure.
- ➢ Duplication checking and ordering.
- ➢ Claiming, cancelling, receipting and verification.
- ➢ Follow ups and claims for unfilled orders.
- ➢ Invoice processing and Payment initiation.

9. **Selection procedure**

Good selection promotes the building of an excellent collection that is well balanced in all formats (print and digital) and content (general and subject specific) . Good selection helps the library to meet the current and expected needs of the users by procuring core materials that are frequently used, less used materials and rare materials. According to Johnson(2009) selection is a four step process :-
- ➢ Identification of the relevant
- ➢ Evaluation and assessment
- ➢ Decision to purchase
- ➢ Order preparation and placement

Selecting relevant and up to date materials form the core of building a quality collection. Suggestions and recommendations are invited from faculty of various departments/schools in their respective subject areas , students, research scholars , general readers etc. While the selection of academic book materials are suggested and approved by faculty and subject experts in the concerned fields the general materials and references, alternative literature, Government Publications etc. are selected by Acquisition staff and the Librarian which forms one of the exciting and interesting aspects of the job. The quality of the collection is one of the criteria by which the Librarian is often judged and it is desirable that he is well acquainted with the literary field and keeps up with current trends and thoughts. The Graduate Membership Programme of the University Library has increased the task of Acquisition staff as they have to concentrate on building a collection with a balanced coverage of academic and general materials that reflect and meet the educational and recreational needs of the diverse user communities.

10. Sources of book selection

MGU Library depends mostly on traditional selection tools like :
- Print and online publisher's catalogues, vendor catalogues and book lists
- Book reviews from magazines and newspapers
- Popular media advertisements
- Journals and newsletters
- Online sites like Amazon

11. Faculty participation

Librarians and faculty are engaged in a common instructional enterprise that requires the expertise and cooperation of both to select appropriate materials and ensure their use (Scudder and Scudder 1991). Faculty input and feedback is crucial since a major share of materials bought in the University Library is to cater to the research needs of the scholars and to provide instructional support. Faculty plays a significant role in the development of academic collection and a cordial and productive relationship exists between the Librarian and the faculty of most of the schools in the University. Each department is allocated a book budget and the faculty members are requested to submit book suggestions in a particular format in their respective areas.

Table 11.1   Number of titles recommended by the faculty

Sl.No	Department/School	No. of titles suggested by faculty
1.	School of Behavioural Sciences	88
2.	School of Biosciences	191
3.	School of Chem Sciences	55
4.	School of Computer Sciences	120
5.	School of Gandhian Thought & Dev.Studies	31
6.	School of Letters	194
7.	School of Pedagogical Sciences	03
8.	School of Pure & Applied Physics	87
9.	School of Social Sciences	330
10.	School of Tourism Studies	120
11.	Institute for Intensive Research in Basic Sciences	33
12.	Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, SME	52
13.	School of Physical Education & Sports Science	57
14.	School of Communication & Journalism	06
15.	Centre for Nanoscience & Nanotechnology	23
16.	SME, Gandhinagar	100
17.	University study Centre,Pala	210

Table 11.1 shows that School of Social Sciences had recommended maximum no. of titles (330), followed by School of Letters (194), Biosciences (191), Computer Sciences and Tourism (120) and Medical Education (100). The rest of the schools had less than 100 titles.

12. Book Purchase Committee

Book Purchase Committee is convened once or twice every year comprising University Librarian, Deputy Librarians, Acquisition Head and staff, Head and staff of Periodicals Section, Directors/ Heads of Departments, Registrar and other officials. Decisions regarding any change in purchase procedure/policy have to be approved by the Committee. The final list of all the selected documents including journals, electronic resources etc. is placed before this Committee and approval sought before purchase is effected. The Book Purchase Committee convened on February 2013 approved 1950 titles submitted by 17 schools and Central Library.

13. Budgeting

A significant portion of the library's budget is reserved for the purchase of book materials. A percentage wise allocation of fund for books for each department is approved by the purchase committee.

Table 13.1   Departments/Schools and their allocation for the year 2013

Departments/Schools	% allocation
Central Library	15 %
Science Schools	6 %
School of Computer Sciences, Social Sciences, Pedagogy, Management Studies , Tourism, Gandhian Studies, IIRBS	4 %
School of International Relations, Legal Thought, Letters, Physical Education & Sports	4 %
Centre for Nano Science and Technology, SME, STAS	3 %
Dept.of LIS & Printing & Publishing School of Communication & Journalism, Lifelong Learning	2 %

Table 13.1 shows that Central Library holds a major share of the budget with 15%, followed by Science schools with 6%, Social Sciences, Arts and other humanities have 4%, Medical Education, Technology & Applied Sciences and Nano Sciences is allotted 3% and 2% for the rest of the schools.

14. Purchase Procedure:

Since 2007 the University Library has been inviting quotations for the purchase of book materials. Competitive quotations are invited from publishers/distributors/vendors etc. for the supply of books of Foreign and Indian publishers. A list of major publishers of Foreign, Indian and Regional language books are prepared and discount rates for each publisher for different categories are to be quoted by the bidders. Book suppliers/vendors quoting highest discount for a specific publisher or group of publisher's is entitled to supply all titles of the concerned publisher ordered by the University Library. A detailed tabulation statement is prepared for each category of publishers and the firms which have quoted highest discount rates for the specific category is sorted in the descending order of the discount rates. Firms quoting highest discount rates for each publisher are expected to supply books of that publisher abiding by the terms and conditions of the procedure. A confirmation regarding the supply of books is to be provided by the book supplier/ vendor on receiving the supply order within a specified period usually 14 days on the failure of which the supply order stands

cancelled and issued to the next vendor. At least 75% of the titles should be supplied within two months by the firm confirming the matter. A security deposit is to be provided along with the quotations and on failure to supply the items within the specified period the items are ordered from the next bidder and the loss so sustained due to purchase at lower discount rates is recovered from the security deposits provided by them. An agreement is entered into by the approved vendors who agree to abide by the terms and conditions of the quotations. The approved bidders who fail to fulfill the terms and conditions of the quotations are likely to be removed from the University Book Supplier's list and the security deposit forfeited.

Table 14.1   Quotations

Procedure	No. of quotations received in 2013	No. of quotations rejected	No. of approved vendors
Inviting quotations and placing supply orders to the highest bidder.	14	6	8

Table 14.1 above shows that a total of 14 quotations were received , 6 rejected after verification and a final list of 8 vendors approved for the supply of books to the University Library System.

15. Acquisition sources

Table 15.1   Discount percentage quoted by vendors

Publisher	Vendor/Supplier	Discount %
John Wiley	Calicut Book Distributors	40.2 %
Elsevier,	Cosmo books	33.6 %
T&F group	Calicut Book Distributors	40.2 %
Sage group	Mathrubhumi	38.10 %
CUP	Calicut Book Distributors	42 %
Springer, OUP	Current Books	31.6 %
McGraw Hill	Cosmo	29.10 %
Other Foreign Publishers	Calicut Book Distributors	35 %
Penguin	Cosmo	33.6 %
Oxford India	Cosmo	31 %
Pearson India	Calicut Book Distributors	28 %
Other Indian Publishers	Arunima Book Distributors	35.51 %
Other Malayalam Publish.	Mathrubhumi	30 %
DC Books	Current Books	34 %
Chintha, Green, Poorna	Mathrubhumi	34 %
Olive, Prabath	Mathrubhumi	34 %

Table 15.1 above shows the discount rates quoted by various vendors for different publishers. The highest discount rates is quoted by Calicut Distributors for major foreign group of publishers, Arunima Book Distributors for Indian Publishers and Mathrubhumi for major regional publications. The major source for science books in 2013 were Wiley, T&F, CUP, Springer group publishers while Social sciences, humanities, literature were mostly by Sage, OUP, Penguin etc. Regional publications were mostly by Mathrubhumi and DC books.

16. Acquisition Process

The University Library is automated using the open source software KOHA and the activities like request processing, pre-ordering/bibliographic verification , ordering and post-ordering work are done through the acquisition module of KOHA. Method of acquisition of books is through purchase and gift. Some core subject areas acquired by the library include :-

- ➢ Life sciences, Applied physics, Chemical sciences
- ➢ Environmental Sciences, Computer Sciences
- ➢ Behavioural sciences, Social Sciences, , Tourism Studies
- ➢ Gandhian Studies, International Relations, Pedagogical Sciences etc.

17. Gift materials:

While the University Library encourages the donation of gift materials for enhancement of its collections, it reserves the right to refuse or discard items in poor physical condition and that which do not meet the selection criteria and collection parameters of the Library. For accepted materials the Library provides the donor with a receipt indicating the addition of items to the collection. About 178 books were added to the Library collection as complimentary copies in 2013.

18. Findings:

- ➢ MGU library follows the quotation system for the acquisition of books. Invites quotations from suppliers/vendors and places supply orders to the highest bidder.
- ➢ Ensures transparency of purchase along with building quality collection with support from the finance department.
- ➢ Active faculty participation in selection from most schools, only few schools showed lack of co-operation.
- ➢ Allocation of funds highest for Science schools each having 6% of the total budget, followed by Social Sciences, Humanities & Arts at 4%, SME, STAS & Nano Sciences sharing 3% and the rest 2%. University Library has a good share of 15% for purchasing general materials.
- ➢ The major suppliers include Calicut Book Distributors, Cosmo Books, Current Books, Mathrubhumi Books and Arunima Books.

19. Merits of procedure

- ➢ Transparency of purchase ensured as only titles approved by academic experts in their specific disciplines are ordered and purchased .
- ➢ The practice of agents trying to sell their old stock list discouraged.
- ➢ Each Vendor/Supplier has an equal chance of participation in the supply.
- ➢ Personal relationships/collaboration and influence of vendors/suppliers discouraged.
- ➢ Inordinate delay in supply considerably decreased.
- ➢ Maximum discounts available which further has a good support from the finance department.
- ➢ Defaulters are blacklisted from the University Book Supplier's list.

20. Demerits

- ➢ Criticised as the book treated as a commodity.
- ➢ High discount rates quoted by bidders who fail to supply the items.

- ➢ Suitable for bulk purchase of items only as individual titles may not be supplied at high discount rates.
- ➢ Freedom of on the spot selection and purchase restricted.
- ➢ Approved titles alone purchased, hence inability to procure new items immediately after publication.

21. Suggestions

- ➢ Encourage faculty from non co-operating schools to contribute more to library book selection by interacting with them about the inadequate support in their subject areas.
- ➢ Increase use of online selection tools and electronic review resources.
- ➢ Preference to newly emerging subject areas and general reference works.
- ➢ Conduct user surveys periodically to gather their feedback and reviews.
- ➢ Involve users both academic and general in selection by extending a "suggest a purchase" facility.
- ➢ Modify purchase and budget allotment to incorporate subject areas outside University departments and schools.
- ➢ Apply market strategies to promote optimum utilisation of print resources.
- ➢ Initiate steps to enhance collection which caters to the needs and requirements of Graduate members also.

22. Conclusion

MGU Library still gives much importance to the collection building of print book materials even though there is high demand for e-resources. The University Library has for the past few years deviated from the usual practice and adopted a different mode of acquisition by inviting quotations for acquiring books. In spite of criticisms and some disadvantages the library still follows it owing to the transparent nature of the procedure. The library requires input from all faculty to build a responsible academic collection . Greater preference has to be given to general materials and newly emerging subject areas and steps may also be taken to implement creative ideas and suggestions.

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