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# The Expression: An International Multidisciplinary e-Journal

(A Peer Reviewed and Indexed Journal with Impact Factor 3.9)

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## **ROLE OF ACQUISITION AND TECHNICAL SECTION IN COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT IN ACADEMIC LIBRARY**

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### **Abstract**

The selection and acquisition of library materials have always been one of daily tasks of academic libraries. The purpose of this study is to review the roles of acquisition section in the development of academic library collections. In the information age, with the emerging information technology and the new information delivery systems, users and libraries need to work together to make their teamwork easier to acquire the collections for academic libraries such as books, manuscripts, serials, Compact Disk, pamphlets, reports recordings, microfilm, and microfiche, computer tapes and so on, to build up the collection and improving the collection. Technical section is responsible in acquiring all library materials needed in the library and proceeded before they are prepared for circulation to the users. Selection, acquisition, management-evaluation, weeding, storage and preservation of collection are the important areas of collection development. Document selection is a highly professional work and growth of the collection involve understanding the nature of requirements of users and anticipating their demands and it is not possible without participation of group of the people i.e. library management, users, librarian, staff, publishers and suppliers.

### **Keywords**

Acquisition Section, Selection, Process of Procurements, Library Collections,  
Digitization Services, Flow Chart.

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### **Introduction**

Information technology is scattering its magic on every field now. That magic has changed the lifestyle and scenario of society. It is important to get familiar for the change. Now Library and information science professionals must get an opportunity to learn the techniques of information technology and its application to library. As man started understanding his surroundings he recorded his observations on materials like stone, palm leaves, wood, clay, metal, paper and so on. Emergence of learned societies and educational institutes as knowledge also increased, he devised new techniques to record his knowledge. With the development of printing technology, multiple copies of a document were easily possible. Printing led to the spread of literacy throughout the world. As a consequences, demand for books increased. Accordingly the number of libraries housing these books also increased. The library users wished to take the documents outside the library. Thus the role of librarian shifted from only recording to acquiring, organizing and disseminating documents stored in the library. Trading revolution brought in the concept of mass production of books. Libraries started acquiring more publications and increasing their collections. The number of the users also increased. Managing libraries became difficult with the traditional methods. New techniques need to be adopting in organizing and disseminating information.

Information explosion continued, the publication prices were also increasing while the library budgets faced severe crises and reduction of budgets on one hand and cost hiking, the librarian's role is extended to collection development and effective management of funds. Thoughtful acquisition for libraries in the context of users becomes very critical. With the tremendous growth of knowledge and the rapid development of literature, and to provide quick access of documents and information, use of Computers began in 1960s. Online systems were available in 1970s, but the micro computers which started since 1980s have made greater impact

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on libraries. Library activities require professional skills as well as systematic and accurate functioning of routine work and needs. As Computers conscientiously perform habitually, they are found willing to library activities and it maintaining order records, keeping track of issue/ return of library material, intimating the non- receipt of journals or providing multiple access points for library catalogues, Computers are able to perform these operations.

## **Acquisition vs. Digitization**

Acquisition is the first step in a library's operations. It is through acquisition that an item is added in the library's collection, and it is the collection which gives importance to a library. The image of a library is mirror in the position and perception of its acquisitions operation. But the acquisition work involves both professional skills and routine works. With the increase in the variety of publications, the demands from users are also increasing. The increases in book prices are not met with comparative increase in book budgets. At times there may be serve cuts in book budgets. The acquisition professional has to strike a balance between the depleting funds and increasing book prices. In such economic crises, acquisition work needs to be performed with greater efficiency. The variety of similar titles published and the limited access points available in card catalogue reduces the accuracy in checking for duplicates. Keeping track of titles ordered also needs to be done regularly to acquire books in time. These necessitate the use of new techniques to perform acquisition work. Computerization is one solution that can take the burden of performing the routine work and free the professional to use the skills.

Acquisition is an important library operation, includes all aspects of procurement of all types of library material whether by gift or exchange. Apart from the managerial skills of running the acquisition unit, professional skill are required in framing acquisition policies and procedures, acquiring various types of library materials, critically dealing with the vendors and locating information on recent publications. Skills are required even in verifying bibliographic details and checking duplicates. Hence there is a need for maximum utilization of Computers and Library Management System (LMS) in acquisition work. Digitization library acquisition means making use of systems to perform functions of acquisition such as receiving recommendation of items, checking from system establishing that this items are not already in library order, preparing list to vendors, maintaining account. Majority of the tasks performed in acquisition involved the intense use of 4Ms' – Manpower, Money, Material and Machine. Most of the tasks are routine and repetitive in nature and involve the maintenance of fabulous amount of paper work. The manual method of record keeping is time consuming as well as inadequate in answering immediate queries of superiors and library users. The use of 4<sup>th</sup> 'M'- Machine will reduce these problems and increase the efficiency of the acquisition process. The use of computer and library management system creating the acquisition function will help to streamline the process. The automation of acquisition function will certainly help to avoid the human errors and repetitive task in manual acquisition by generating variety of files like books recommended, books ordered, books received, amount spent etc. The constant updating of these files will help to solve the queries instantly and enhance the library's ability to satisfy users.

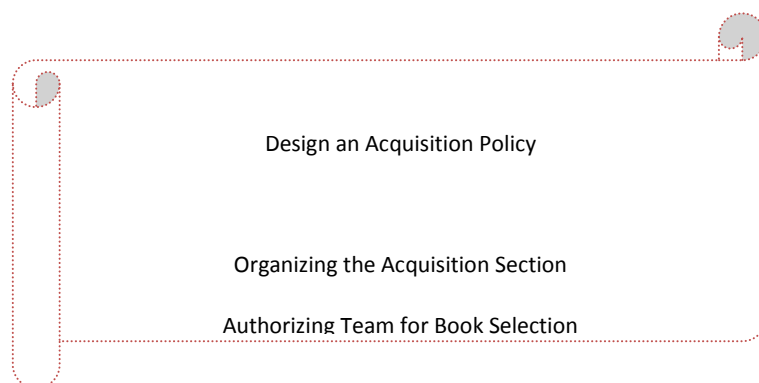
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There are different methods to develop the computerized Library acquisition activity viz. outsourcing, using commercial software packages, develop in-house software packages, etc.. All these methods have their own advantages/ disadvantages and selection of method also depends on various criteria. Out of many, most important criteria is the allocation of budget for automation. Most of the organizations don't have sufficient funds to spend on library automation because of the increasing cost of resources. In such a situation, in-house developed software package is the cost-effective solution for an organization. This can be managed by taking the help of the computer specialist along with library staff within the organization.

## **Process for Digitization Acquisition**

An acquisition is logically the first process in any library system. When a computer is used for acquisition system what we get is a computerized acquisition system. Certain prerequisites are essential for setting up an acquisition system so that the basic functions involved in it can be performed effectively. The Prerequisites for acquisition systems are:



## **Design an Acquisition Policy:**

Acquisition policy serves as a guiding document for those who perform the acquisition work. Acquisition policy includes a statement on acquisition procedures, special practices in acquiring library materials such as urgent orders, persons authorized to sanction the purchases, any financial limits for purchases, and fund accounting methods. It also included need for collection development and criteria of selecting materials.

## **Organizing the Acquisition Section:**

Organization of an acquisition unit depends upon the size and type of a library. The acquisition work load, number of staff available in the acquisition section and the type of computer system used are considered while planning an acquisition unit. Working tables, other furniture and equipment are placed according to the job allocations of each staff within the acquisition department. The relationship of acquisitions unit with other departments is also kept in mind during organization.

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## **Authorizing Team for Book Selection:**

Book selection is an intellectual activity and a crucial job. Usually a library committee with representatives of its clientele is authorized to approve books. But acquisition librarian requires skills in evaluating and selecting books with regards to the quality, illustrations, binding quality, etc

## **Preparing Important Documents for Acquisition Records:**

Acquisition has to maintain a number of records for smooth functioning of the operations. Most libraries keep separate records for unverified recommendations, books on order, books in-process, outstanding orders, standing orders, vendor correspondence and fund accounting. In a computerized acquisition system a minimum of three files are maintained. Firstly the bibliographic data file which includes on- order and in – process records. Second file is the vendors file which includes name and address of all suppliers. The third file is the budget file indicating the budget allocation for different budget heads. Vendor codes and budget codes are used for linking the respective file with bibliographic data file.

## **Using Standard Formats for Acquisition Efforts:**

- Acquisition section includes the following input formats to accept bibliographic data-
  - Recommendations Receiving
  - Duplicate Check.
  - Resource Entries.
  - Data entry for publisher's name and address and subject heading indicating their specialization
- Order details.
- Required Copy
- Payment details.
- Department Selection
- Budget Section
- Various currency codes, budget codes, Subject codes, type of acquisition, Library material types etc.
- Acquisition section generated below output reports–
  - Requisitions Sheet
  - Approve/Unapproved requests
  - Purchase order
  - Acquired items
  - Order History
  - Vendors/suppliers wise detail
  - Publishers wise detail



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- Accession register
- Expenditure statement
- Invoice forwarding letter
- Reminder information
- Cancellation of order

## **Deciding on Budget Allocation:**

The essential purpose of budget allocation is to have an objective growth in the collection. Budget allocation helps in the collection. Budget allocation helps in controlling the commitment and expenditures. Computer which gives a detailed statistics of expenditures and encumbrances provides an up-to-date budget status which helps in planning further purchases. It also assists management in decision-making for further budget proposals.

## **Acquisition as a Subsystem of an Integrated System:**

Integrated system means a computer system which is used for two or more of the library functions sharing a common database or having an interface between the functions. In a library, particularly the acquisition system has to interact at four levels, the library users, the library material suppliers (Vendors), other libraries and its relationship with other subsystem of a library.

## **Library Users:**

The interaction with library users is concerned with accepting recommendations and informing them about the order status, and arrival of a book recommended by them. An integrated system should also provide a facility to access acquisition record to view the order status, and put in reservation if required. But this facility provided with suitable system security like password levels to access and view data without modification. If OPAC can be accessed from home terminals, the facility of clamming books- on-order can also be extended on home terminals.

## **Library Material Suppliers:**

Just as online ordering facilities are available, an integrated system should have online access for acknowledgements and vendor status reports. Provision should be made to transmit online follow up actions and receive online replies for the same. Stock list of vendors and new announcement may be sent periodically by a vendor based on the interest profiles of each library. Alternately, Artificial intelligence techniques may be used to match library's interest profiles with vendor's stock list and a feature to automatically download new titles into the library file for selection and purchase.

## **Other Libraries:**

Library holding of other libraries, if available online can help in two ways. Firstly, in confirming bibliographic details and secondly, in deciding whether a title must be added in the library's collection if it is already available in another library. Use of network and acquisition modules can help in cooperative acquisition can be a good method of sharing resources. Libraries can also assist one another about vendor performance statistics to select a vendor, framing weeding out policy, preservation and conservation, ILL service and transmission of data required by a reader.

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## **Relationship of Acquisition System with Others in a Library:**

Working relationship amongst library units helps in smooth functioning of the library.

**Collection development** – In an Integrated system, the acquisition records (books, microforms, CD's) can be scanned by collection development staff which helps in avoiding overlaps/ duplications of library material ordered. Up-to-date budget status report of commitments, expenditures and balance are regularly available to help in developing library collection.

**Cataloguing** - It can be created as an output of acquisition system. Once an item is acquired, accessioned and bill is processed, the bibliographic data is transferred through an interface, into the cataloguing system. An integrated system should have provision to download a record available in cataloguing system, if additional copies of a title are required. Maximum advantage of an integrated system with cataloguing unit is in checking of duplicates.

**Circulation** - Acquisition system also works in close relation with circulation. Along with book labels' and shelf list cards, book card required for circulation can be generated as an output of acquisition unit. If barcode technology is used, the data entered in the acquisition system can be used as an input for creating bar codes for new items. The statistics maintained by circulation section indicating use of library collection and acquisition statistics indicating cost of each item can help in collection development.

**Reference services like CAS and SDI** - One of the outputs of acquisition system can be list of new additions which may be a sequential list or sorted by author or subject. If new additions are matched with user's profile, SDI service can include new books acquired in the library and then supply actual document to the respective user. Access to acquisition database at the reference desk helps in checking books received and in-process. Directing users to libraries or acquiring a book on ILL can be avoided if the same is already available in process file.

An integrated system provides an easy check and scan of any subsystem. It also helps in quick analysis and correction of data which helps the subsystems and in turn the library.

## **Importance of a Digitization Acquisition System**

The importance that is available in the existing acquisition systems and those are expected in future systems are enumerated below:

- Interactive with sufficient help options and easy to follow error messages, screen formats.
- System security – different levels of passwords for different users.
- Data security, particularly from viruses and power failures.
- Data validation on as many fields as possible.
- Data entry should be possible by both the modes – online transfer of data from other. Terminals and through keyboard.
- Checking for duplicates should be automatic when data is being entered. If the first element to be entered is ISBN or author, it should be checked with respective entry in library catalogue, books on – order and books in – process. The system should provide facility to copy the record and avoid retyping if additional copy is required.



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- A interface with the electronic formats like CD-ROMs, Diskettes or tapes used to verify bibliographic details.
- An interface on networks to link with library users, other libraries, and library suppliers.
- This interface should be a two way process to exchange data from either side required during various stages of acquisition process.
- Provision to generate essential output as well as user defined outputs to suit individual library's requirements along with the facility to define/modify various letters required in acquisition work. Provision of default parameters like reminder period, cancellation period, currency for payment, mode of acquisition, etc.
- Facility to accept non-roman scripts like Devnagri, Japanese, etc. and gives outputs in the respective scripts.
- Preparing order letters in ways, Viz. Print outs and online ordering to booksellers.
- Interface with accounts department and vendors including the facility to make online payment adjustments of deposit accounts and updating of fund status. A provision of online transfer of payments with data validation for electronic signatures.
- Online access with binders especially because a library may have a policy of binding paperbacks before bringing them in circulation.
- Word processing capabilities like spelling checker to correct spelling mistakes; window facility to consult authority file, Vendor codes file, etc. without leaving the record being modified: copy, cut and paste feature to transfer data while creating multiple entries.
- Various types of search techniques like sequential, Boolean logic, truncation, and proximity search, etc.
- Acquisition policy documents should be embedded within the system which can be viewed through window facility as and when required.
- Integration with other subsystem of an integrated system.
- Maintaining of statistical data and simplified means of analyzing the data for management and administration of acquisition work.
- Conversion of existing records into a new system. For example, an interface to do data entry with optical scanners directly from books, publisher's catalogues or converting a database created in old system into the new system.

## Objectives

Acquisition module developed for this project fulfills the following objectives:

- Ascertain the activities necessary for automation of the acquisition function of the library.
- Initiate the functionality of acquisition modules by using tools like MS-Access and Visual Basic.
- Reduce manpower and paper work involved in manual acquisition.
- Maintain up-to-date information records of all activities involved in acquisition.
- Effective and efficient control over ordering, claiming, cancellation function.

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- Provide accurate and timely financial information.
- Provide necessary management information report whenever they are require.

## Scope:

The scope of the topic can be viewed better in the light of the title selected “Design and Development of Acquisition Module for Library Management System’.

Design – Plan for the construction

Development – Growth through the series of the progressive change.

Acquisition – with reference to library, acquisition refers to “the functions of obtaining the library material which make up a library collection. The term acquisition includes obtaining material by Purchas, gift and exchange. Acquisition System can be defined as a set of process (Operations) that are logically interrelated to achieve a common goal of adding a book in the library’s collection. Acquisition can be viewed as a process viz. receive request, complete bibliographic details, verify for duplicates, get purchase sanction, select a vendor, place order, follow up/reminder, receive book, accession the book and make payment. Computerized acquisition system means that acquisition system in which computer is used as a tool to perform the basic operations involved in the acquisition work.

Library – Library is a place in which literary and artistic materials, news papers, printed record tapes, and CD’s are kept for reading.

Library Management – LM is the art of securing maximum results with a minimum of efforts, so as to secure maximum prosperity and happiness for both clientele and librarian and gives to public the best possible service.

Library Management System – Library Management System is an integrated system to manage all the in-house operations of the library (i.e Acquisition, Cataloguing, Circulation, Serial control) as well as Information Handling and providing Information Services.

Among all the operations, automation of acquisition is vital. The book database created in this system can be a base for all other operations of the library. For example, to automate the circulation function books database is required for charging and discharging of books. It is a difficult task to cover all these activities within a short time span. The study therefore restricted to cover only to design a stand-alone automated acquisition module for the library.

## Methodology

The acquisition process include the- Documents request -Bibliographic verification- Order preparation- Allocation and encumbrance of fund- Library’s control records (outstanding order file)- Purchase orders for vendor- Processing of invoice- Processing of received items- Adjustments of fund account & Forward items to cataloguing.

The acquisition process discussed here is divided into ten steps groped into three stages :

### Pre-Order Stage

- Receipt of recommendations
- Verification of bibliographic details
- Checking of duplicates
- Receive authorization for purchase

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## **Order Stage**

- Selecting a vendor
- Placing purchase order
- Follow up actions – reminders/cancellations

## **Post Order Stage**

- Receipt of book/bill
- Accessioning of books received
- Processing of payment

## **Pre-Order Stage:**

### **Receipt of Recommendations**

The first step in acquisition work begins with the receipt of a recommendation. But maximum automation can be achieved if recommendations are obtained online through a worksheet display format directly into the acquisition file. Data elements essential in a book recommendation are: Author, title, edition, publisher, year of publication, number of copies, price and ISBN. Apart from this, recommender's name, and a brief justification/remarks regarding title recommended are often included.

### **Verification of Bibliographic Details:**

It is essential, firstly to check whether a book is in print and secondly to verify and complete the bibliographic details. It can be checked using various bibliographic tools like National bibliographies, Trade bibliographies, Indian Books in Prints, British Books in Prints, Publishers catalogue, Union Catalogue of libraries, online book shop sites etc.

### **Checking of Duplicates:**

The basic purpose of checking is to avoid unwanted duplicates, which helps to save funds and divert the same for buying more books. Verification is done firstly with the library catalogue, secondly with books on order. Thirdly with books received and in – process. Apart from these three important files, records of books acquired as gifts, exchanges, depositories are also checked.

### **Receive Authorization for Purchase:**

Different libraries have different methods of receiving authorization for purchases. Mostly the authorized person from library committee or board of Management put approval/sanction remark if any on the recommendation slip. Once purchase authorization is received, 'Approved', 'Rejected' or 'Unapproved' remarks are noted on the slip. The recommendation slip for approved titles may be used further for recording information on books-on-order.

## **Order Stage**

### **Selecting a Vendor:**

The skills of acquisition librarian tested at stage of selecting a vendor for purchase. Computerized acquisition systems a vendor file may include vendor performance statistics, maintained and calculated by the system that shows the average amount of time taken by a vendor to supply a title. Good supplier takes care to supply books in good condition and without printing or binding errors.

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## **Placing Purchase Order:**

The bibliographic record of a title to be ordered, is updated with information like order number, order date, order type, period of expected supply, mode of supply, and number of copies required. Then it is sent to vendor in predesigned format by e-mail or fax.

## **Follow Up Actions – Reminders/Cancellations**

In Computerized acquisition system, the record must be updated with any replies from the vendor. A default parameter to cancel an order may include at the time of system set up. In some programmer cancellation is done automatically after two reminders. Computer acts as an effective tool to keep track of reminders as well as cancel overdue orders

## **Post Order Stage**

### **Receipt of books/Invoices:**

When book and bill received, the condition of the book is checked for missing pages, blank pages, wrong/loose binding, etc. and also conform that the title ordered is exactly the title received. The book is returned if a wrong title is supplied or some pagination or binding problem is noted. This is a manual step where computer known so far are of no help.

The bill verification includes checking of conversion rates charged, discount given, handling charges, and bill total. If computer is used, bill details are entered in the computer. The program can do the bill verification. That is the computer displays a warning if the price of the book does not tally with the bill amount. After confirming the bill amount, discount, invoice date, and budget head/code, the record is saved.

### **Accessioning of Books Received:**

Once both bill and book are verified, the book is accessioned. In the manual Accession register provides a complete record of bibliographic details (Date, Accession No, Author, Title, Edition, Place of publication, Publisher, Year of publication, Vendor name, Invoice no, Date of invoice, Cost of book, Amount paid (Discount details), Collation, Call No. Budget heads and Remarks etc. If Computers (LMS) used, an accession number can be generated automated. Such records may save as a different file which is transferred to the processing section for bar coding, classification and cataloguing. In an integrated system same data file may be used.

### **Processing of Payment**

Once the book is accessioned the bill is sent to the accounts department which handles the further procedure of preparing the cheques/ demand draft or direct online payment through NEFT. Covering letter is attached with bill sent to accounts.

If online facilities are available the order records can be referred to by the account. The record can be updated by adding suitable information. Though of course hard copies of original bills are sent to accounts. Online facility can update the budget file automatically even in the account section. If vendor is available online and there is a deposit account with the vendor, the account can get automatically adjusted. This can help in reducing the number of cheques/demand draft sent to a vendor. The updated budget file can be used to prepare monthly yearly expenditures reports. In future when procedures for identifying electronic signature are standardized, transmission of payments will be possible through communication channels.

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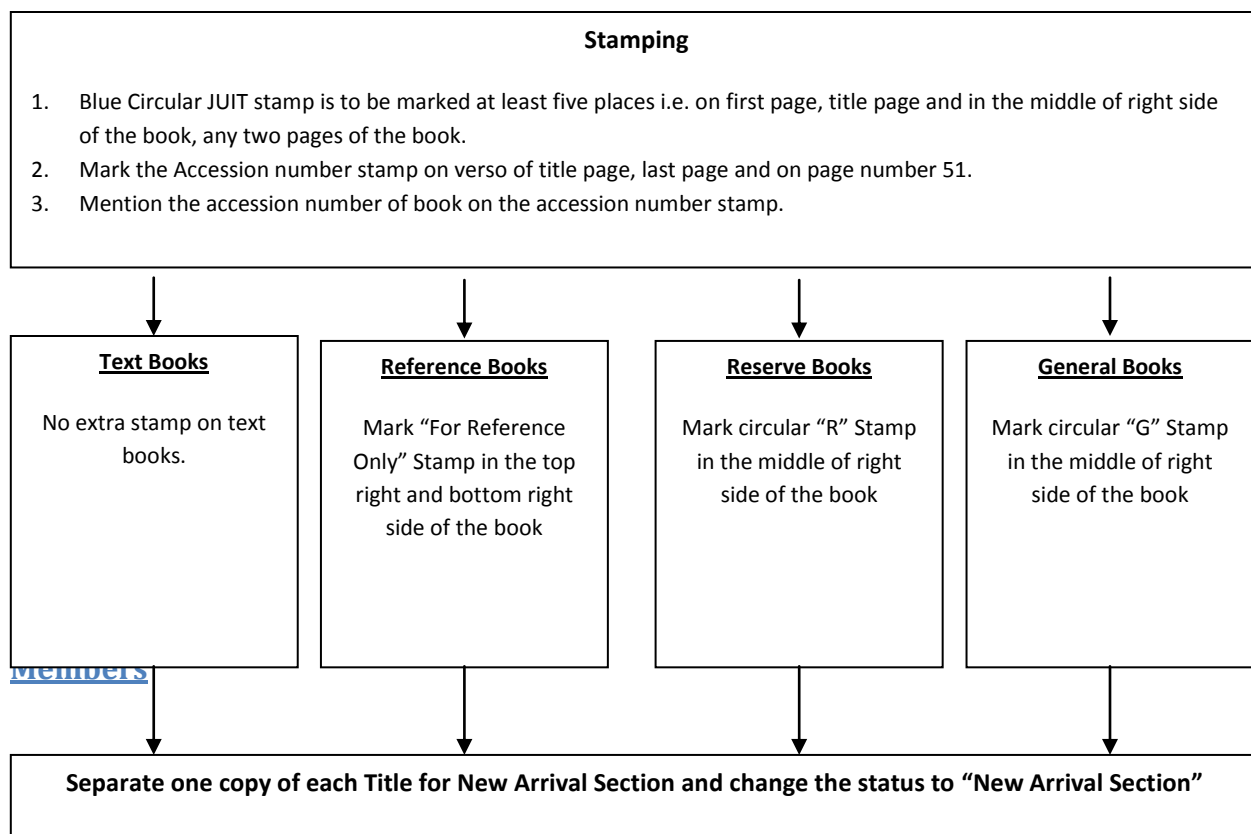
Books received from Technical Section after Cataloguing

## Tagging

1. After tagging the book, mark the "CATALOGUED" stamp on bottom center of first page and top center of the content page.

## Labeling

1. Barcode:
  - a. In case of paper back books barcode is pasted on the middle of the cover page.
  - b. In case of hard bound books barcode is pasted on the back side of the cover page.
2. Spine label:
  - a. Labels should be placed on the spine of the book at approximately one inch up from the bottom line.
  - b. Labels that cannot fit on the spine are to be placed on the cover page at approximately one inch up from the left bottom corner.
3. Stamps of Book Identification Stamping:
  - a. It is a label which contain circular blue stamp indicate "General Books" and circular red stamp for reference and reserve books.
  - b. It is pasted next to the spine label.
4. General Guidelines Slip:
  - a. General Guidelines slip is pasted at top left corner on the backside of cover page.
  - b. Mention the accession number on the General Guidelines Slip.
5. Due Date Slip:
  - a. Use yellow due date slip for text books and general books, red Due Date Slip for reference and reserve books.
  - b. Due date slip is pasted on the top middle of first page of the book.
  - c. Mention the accession number and call on the due Date Slip.
6. Accompanied Material Slip:
  - a. It is used to show that the purchased book have some accompanied material with it (CD-ROM/DVD-ROM/Floppy DISK/Chart/Table/Cassette Audio or Video/etc.)
  - b. It is pasted on the top left corner of the last page of the book.
  - c. Mention the accession number of the Accompanied Material on the Slip as well as on the material itself.
  - d. Accompanied material must be placed at proper place (CD Box) with Acc. No. of original resource.



## Conclusion

The "digitization" reduce human errors and to increase the efficiency. The main focus to reduce the manual works efforts. The maintenance of the records is made efficient, as all the records are stored in the database, through which data can be retrieved easily. The navigation control is provided in all the forms to navigate through the large amount of records.

The present acquisition system can generate various reports like list of the total recommended titles received for the purchase, no of the requests approved, Unapproved, rejected, total orders created, total order pending, total received books, books non-received books, accession register (gifted/Requested accessioned books report, pending for accession report), invoices processed, pending invoices, payments register, expenditure statement, vendor list etc. Also the system has the pre-designed letters like purchase order letter, reminder order letter, cancellation of order letter, invoice forwarding letter to the accounts. The files generated are useful to provide statistics in various managerial decision making process and also to assess the strength of library's collection. Our main aim to get correct information about the books and expenditure available is fulfilled. The acquisition module thus developed for this study is a stand-alone module to simplify the collection development activities in library.

This digitization will not only improves the efficiency but will also reduce human stress thereby indirectly improving the human resources. Acquisition section integrated by developing other section of library management systems as well as to initiate the OPAC for library and incorporating the bar-coding we can do stock taking of the library.



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