UNIT 5 : MAINTENANCE SERVICE

UNIT STRUCTURE

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5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- Know about the guides and shelf list;
- Explain the procedure of document maintenance in the stack;
- Find out the ways of how documents are selected for binding;
- Know about stock verification;
- Define the evaluation and weeding of library collection.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

Documents are acquired, processed, stored and displayed for use. So it is essential that these are maintained in proper order and in good physical condition fit for being used by the library users. In fact, the ultimate success of various other functions like acquisition, classification and cataloguing rests on the efficiency of the maintenance work. Maintenance

work involves continuous monitoring or keeping proper stocking, arrangement and display of books on the shelves in the stack rooms and taking care of them.

There are always some users who forget to return materials. There are also thieves who prey on libraries. The public may not always realize how valuable some of the library materials are. Again, the price to be paid in a retail store for books and other materials is much lower than what it costs for the library to acquire, process, store, and to maintain records and so on. Besides, some documents are rare and some go out of print. So the documents that are in the library collection can not be easily replaceable. The library security section that comes under maintenance should try to ensure that no document is lost, no document is mutilated and so on. If possible, the thief catching devices should be introduced in a library.

5.3 GUIDES

Guides should be put at different places in the library so that a user can find out his / her way without asking anybody in different parts of the library such as reading room, stacks, etc. Some general guides should be affixed at the entrance of the stack. It should give an overall view of the arrangements of books in the stacks. Besides general guides, the following will also need to be introduced, each of which should show the subjects covered in the particular area giving the inclusive class numbers as well as equivalent names of the subjects in the natural language / verbal plane.

a) Tier Guide: In case of more than one tier stack, a tier guide should be provided on each tier.

b) Gangway Guide: Each gangway should be provided a gangway guide.

c) Bay Guide: Bay is the part of the face of rack between two consecutive upright. The bay guide should be put for each bay in the stack room.

d) Shelf Guide: Each shelf should be provided a shelf guide.

5.4 SHELF LIST

A shelf list consists of cards of standard size 7.5 X 12.5 cm. A library can also use the catalogue cards without lines or colored cards for this purpose, or the duplicate copy of the main entry catalogue card of the book. For each volume there would be one card. The call number is written on the leading line in the left hand corner, starting from first vertical. Accession number is written bellow it. In the next line comes the heading. Last line contains title, edition and year of publication. These cards are then arranged in a classified order parallel to the corresponding books on the shelves.

Shelf list enables the library to maintain correct sequence on the shelves and to put every book in the correct place. It can also indicate immediately the position of any book on the self in the library. As such, the shelf list is an important record; so it should be kept under safety. Further, shelf list may be regarded as a stock register; therefore, it can be used for stock verification purpose also.

Shelf Rectification: The maintenance staff at all levels in a library can devote their free time in studying the books on the shelves so as to develop a fair knowledge of their contents. According to Ranganathan, shelf rectification is the process of restoring order among the books. In an open access library, users have the freedom to select books of their choice from the shelves. While doing so, some users may intentionally or unintentionally misplace the books in the shelves and a book wrongly placed is as good as lost. All these would require restoration of order. This can be achieved by reading the shelves systematically and shifting the misplaced books on the shelves to their proper places.

In order to control the movement of books in a library system, we make use of the shelf list. The cards will move with the books, wherever they are transferred. The regular shelf reading will provide efficient retrieval of materials and helps in the identification of the damaged books so that they can be removed for repair and binding.

5.5 DOCUMENT MAINTENANCE IN AND AROUND THE SHELVES

When the documents are in the shelves the following maintenance procedures are implemented

a) Shelving: The documents should be properly arranged in the shelves of the library so that they can be quickly located. The arrangement may be keyword based, classification based or such other. This practice should be followed for the new books received in the library, books just returned from circulation, books taken out by the user to the reading room, books taken out from shelves for carrying out some type of correction, books received after binding, books that are misplaced, and so on.

b) Maintenance of Document: If tags on books are found missing or get faded, then necessary action should be taken. Books in need of binding or repair should be taken out from the shelves for maintenance work. Maintenance of document will include following actions

i) Mending: Mending means minor restoration, not involving replacement with any new material or the separation of books from cover. For example, the mending of a tear in a page or the tipping in a loose leaf.

ii) Repairing: Partial rehabilitation of a worn volume, in which the amount of work done being less than the minimum amount of money involved in rebinding and more than the maximum involved in mending is called repairing. For example, the repairing of the cover cloth or restoring the lost leaf corners.

iii) Reinforcing: Strengthening the structure of a weakened volume usually by adding material is termed as reinforcing. For example, the strengthening of a hinge with cloth or the reinforcing of a page by covering it with tissue.

iv) Recasing: Replacing the cover of a volume, which is still in good condition but come out of its cover or has loosened in its cover, the sewing can be solved by recasing.

v) Re-backing: Attaching a new shelf back on a volume without any other binding in termed as re-backing.

vi) Re-sewing: The process of making a new cover and of attaching it to the volume.

vii) Re-covering: The process of taking out the volume out of its cover, removing the old sewing, sewing a new and replacing it in the same cover.

c) Dusting and Cleaning: Dust reduces the life of a book; further, the users will hesitate to take out for consultation such a volume which is full of dust. Again, the books lying unattended in dark corners for a long period have a greater possibility of being eaten by silver fish and other insects. To avoid this, dusting and cleaning of books should be done on a regular basis, at least in an interval of 20-30 days. In a library where the stack area is very large, cleaning can be done by mechanical devices like vacuum cleaners, etc.

5.6 BINDING

Binding enables the stock to be kept in proper physical conditions. Routine bindings as well as specification are similar for both books and periodicals publications. Big libraries should have their own binderies both for binding and repair of books. Other libraries should get their books bound and repaired by commercial binders.

a) Picking up Books: Damaged books are picked up in the issue or return of the books by the users, during shelving, shelf rectification and stock verification. New books having weak casing should also be taken out for binding before being released for use.

b) Noting Details: For each volume the librarian needs to prepare a binding slip. The binding slip should contain information regarding author, title, call number, accession number, kind of binding required, colour of binding, lettering (in gold or ink), matter for lettering on the cover page / spine, etc.

c) **Sending the Books:** The librarian needs to prepare an order copy for binding from the binding slips, giving instructions to the binder. The order copy along with the books now should be sent to the binders.

d) **Receiving Books:** On receiving the books, these should be checked with the binding slips to know whether specifications listed out are followed or not. Specification should cover matter regarding assembling (collation, removal of wrappers and advertisement), stitching (sewing, mounting of maps, and illustrations, use of end papers, cutting of edges), forwarding, lettering, sizes, materials to be used etc. If everything is found in order then the labelling and pasting should be done, to be followed by shelving and releasing of the bill of the binders for payment.

In many libraries, the issues of a complete volume of a periodical are bound together in hard covers which are known as bound volume periodicals. The bound volumes are shelved with other books by classification number in some libraries. In other libraries they are shelved in a separate periodical area. Some libraries acquire some of the current copies of periodicals in paper and the back issues in digital form.

5.7 STOCK VERIFICATION

Stock verification means a systematic checking of the library holdings with an aim to find out the missing volumes in the library stock. It is a physical check-up of the documents on record.

a) **Need:** Books may be mutilated, misplaced, and lost. The damaged books have to be repaired; misplaced books should be taken out for correct placing, and the lost books should be simply written off. Those books, which are important and in heavy demand, would need to be replaced. In case too many books are found to have been lost, mutilated and misplaced, then steps have to be taken to improve the situation. For all these stock verification will be necessary.

b) Disadvantages: One of the disadvantages of stock verification is that during the stock verification process many libraries have to close down. The books borrowed by users are recalled for physical verification and this may cause inconvenience to the users. Again, very often the cost of stock verification is higher than the cost of the lost book.

c) Stock Verification Procedures: Let us now discuss stock verification procedures as given bellow:

i) Accession Register: In this method, the accession register is taken to the shelves. One person calls out the accession numbers of the books on the shelves and another person ticks the same accession number in the accession register with a pencil. After this, the items on loan, the items sent for binding, etc are ticked in the register. At the end of this operation, a list of untraceable books is prepared. An effort is also made to trace the missing books. This method is time consuming, cumbersome and it spoils the accession register.

ii) Register Listing Accession Numbers: In this procedure a separate register is prepared that contains the accession numbers. The register is taken to the shelves. One person calls out the accession number from the book, another person ticks the relevant column against the particular accession number. The rest are same as that of access register procedure.

For small libraries whose collections are within the range of 25 thousand can use any of the above two methods. They can also use similar method that includes Check Cards, Book cards, and so on. Large libraries cannot use these procedures.

iii) Loose Sheets Listing Accession Numbers: In case of loose sheet, on each sheet consecutive accession numbers are written down. A single sheet may contain 100 accession numbers. An accession number called out is crossed out in the sheet. This procedure has the advantage over the above two in its ability to carry out the stock verification by more than two people at a time since the loose sheets provide wide flexibility of taking out by multiple persons.

iv) *Shelf List:* When the shelf lists are on cards and the shelf list is up to date and accurate in terms of details and arrangement, then this procedure can be followed for stock verification. It is also essential that in this method, stock verification and stock rectification should be combined into a single process for the ultimate success. In this method also sock verification can be carried out by a number of persons at a time as portions of shelves to be checked can be allocated to different persons.

v) *Numerical Counting of Books:* This involves mere counting of books lying on shelves and those on loan. This number deducted out of total stock based on accession register would lead to number of books lost. On knowing the average cost of a book, one can calculate the cost of all the lost books.

vi) *Sample Stock Verification Method:* In this method, a few sections are chosen on the basis of sampling method (statistics) for stock verification. This gives the figure for annual loss on average basis.

d) Loss of Books: The stock verification is helpful in identifying and determining the loss of books in a library. Loss of books in an open access library is inevitable. The General Finance Rules 2005, The Ministry of Finance, Government of India, No. 194 (ii) (P. 74) envisages that “loss of five volumes per one thousand volumes of books issued / consulted in a year may be taken as reasonable provided such losses are not attributable to dishonesty or negligence. However, loss of a book of a value exceeding Rs. 1,000/- (Rupees One thousand only) and rare books irrespective of value shall invariably be investigated and appropriate action taken”. The authorities should write off such loss of books. In case the loss is higher than the permissible limit then there will be a need to investigate the mater. Causes for higher loss should be determined and steps should be taken to improve the situation.

5.8 EVALUATION AND WEEDING

5.8.1 Evaluation

Library documents are selected by different people over a long period of time. Librarians may vary in their perception of the general principles of the selection. Patrons' interest may change and what was a good collection a decade ago may no longer meet their needs, or the community itself may change, bringing entirely new patrons with very different needs. All these factors demand an evaluation of the total collection.

Collection evaluation is a part of collection development in which the existing collections are measured, analyzed, and judged according to preset criteria for size, relevance, quality, and use. Evaluation methodologies may be categorized by their focus (user-centered versus collection-centered) or by the nature of their findings (objective / quantitative/ statistical versus subjective / qualitative / interpretative).

a) Determining the Worth of the Collection: Various techniques can be used to get some idea of the worth of a collection. Some of them are

i) Bestsellers, and Reviews: Each year the American Library Association produces lists such as Best Books for Young Adults, Notable Children's' Books, and Notable Books for adult collections. Certain ALA divisions cooperate to produce University books for secondary school libraries and university press books for public libraries. Other organizations also produce such lists. With more and more books being published and reaching the bestseller lists, librarians must check these lists against their holdings. How many titles were bought, how many were missed? Did the librarian decide consciously not to buy the missing titles and if so was the decision correct? Do the titles fall outside

the scope of the collection being developed or have the review media being used to make choices failed to alert the librarian as to their value? Another point of consideration is that no library can survive with only standard list of titles on its shelves, since no list can meet the need of diverse patron interest to be found in varying communities.

ii) *User Study:* The librarian should be alert to study groups within the user community, their movement and their changing demands from time to time. The users' need is to be compared with the existing collection. Soliciting opinions on adequacy and quality of local collections from the users and/or experts can also prove effective.

iii) *Interlibrary Loan Request:* Keeping accurate statistics on the number of requests as well as specific titles and subjects requested will provide an insight into the ways where the users' needs are shifting.

iv) *Questions at the Reference Desk:* Requests from patrons will show the relationship between the patrons' interest and the library's collection. When a genuine conflict exists between the two, reevaluation of the collection development policy is called for.

v) *Titles on Reserve*: The title on reserve also provides an insight into a patron's interest. A large number of reserves for a particular tile would alert the librarian to procure more copies of the same title.

vi) *Circulation Statistics:* Here, the circulation of locally held materials is analyzed to forecast distributions of future needs.

vii) *Request Analysis*: In request analysis, the requests for materials that could not be found in local collections are analyzed to determine the weaknesses while the fulfillment of requests from other libraries is analyzed to determine the strength.

viii) Bibliographies: No library has enough staff to use all the specialized bibliographies available for evaluation of a collection. But a wide range of such tools should be owned by libraries for consultation in reader's advisory and reference services.

5.8.2 Weeding

A garden can hardly attain the goals of beauty and elegance withoutthe removal of the earlier plants and the planting and nurturing of the new ones. In the same way, a library should weed the obsolete or unused materials periodically to use its limited space most effectively and for efficient utilization of its new collections. But, titles from old collection need to be weeded only when the library periodically acquires new materials, as something is always better than nothing in the library.

a) Why Weeding is not Practised in Libraries: In a service library, the collection loses its value and significance if the important and valuable documents are mixed up with larger number of outdated and useless documents. Still, weeding is avoided in many libraries because of the following factors

i) Love for Large Numbers: The glory for numbers in libraries is still there. This is mainly because official reports to be submitted by the librarian emphasize on numbers.

ii) No Reading is Obsolete: Many feel that every book, however old it may be, has its own value. What seems superfluous today may contain the essence of our times for the researcher of tomorrow.

iii) Pressure of Work: Library being a dynamic organization, a work pressure will always be on the library professionals. Since weeding implies careful, judicious and justifiable action, which needs time, librarians hesitate to weed out.

iv) Fear of Audit and Clientele Comments: At the time of audit one may face objection that documents for which amounts

were paid are not found in the library. Similarly, the clientele may also comment upon the documents weeded out of the library saying that some very useful documents are also discarded.

The librarians need be discouraged by the above factors. A clear and well planned weeding out policy free from biasness and approved by a committee will clear all hurdles.

b) Weeding Policy: The Council of American Library Association holds the view that in public libraries "annual withdrawals from the collection should average at least 5 percent of the total collection". Sinha Committee Report (1958) holds a similar view in case of Indian Public Libraries in the statement that "a conscious librarian should discard 5 percent of the fiction and 2 percent of the non-fiction every year". According to Ranganathan, many collections lose their relevance in 20 years. After that period such books should not be preserved in the library but should be weeded out and written off.

c) What should be weeded: The following types of collection can be considered for weeding:

i) Obsolete Collection: In science and technology, the developments are so fast that the books published twenty or thirty years ago become outdated. Such books have to be weeded out. The books that are obsolete in content, style or theme also need to be weeded out.

ii) Older Editions: Superseded editions of books might well be eliminated, if the library is not attempting a historical collection of all the editions of a given title. Almanacs and yearbooks may be discarded after 5 years.

Bibliographies and encyclopaeidas are of little use after ten years, though exceptions may be made in specific instances such as the famous eleventh edition of Encyclopedia Britannica.

iii) Unused Collection: The books that are not circulated or consulted by any library patron during the last five years also need to be weeded out.

iv) Mutilated Books: Books that are mutilated because of constant use should be withdrawn. Books that show signs of wear, books which have become dirty, shabby or just plain worn out should also be withdrawn. When the heavily used items or the titles with significant content are selected for weeding due to its physical condition then a new copy if it is still available from the producer or publisher, should be acquired or it should be replaced with a reproduced / Xeroxed copy (digital conversion).

The weeding should be regularly practised in the library. It might be possible for the selectors to consider each new title in relation to the possibility of discarding one already on the shelves. In such cases the weeded collection is replaced with a fresh edition or more contemporary substitute.

d) Space for Weeded Out Books

i) Storage: At least one copy of the weeded books should be transferred from active collection to storage (cooperative or individual), or transferring the title to some network partner. This is for the possible remedies for preventing the permanent loss of the weeded collection. The provision of cooperative storage will make the weeded collection available to the user of any other libraries.

ii) Donation: If the books are in good condition, particularly if they are older editions of reference sources like encyclopedia, handbook, etc, they may be donated to other libraries which are not in a position to go for such costly books.

iii) Sold: The documents which are completely worn out, mutilated and irreparable should be sold just like unpreserved old newspapers.

iv) Destroy: Some collection also needs to be destroyed. Ministry of Finance vide its circular of 7/2/1984 says that "there may be no objection to the librarian disposing of mutilated/damaged/obsolete volumes to the best interest of the library. However, the disposal of such volumes should be made on the recommendations of a three member committee".

e) What should not be weeded: The titles that were in the bestsellers list should not be weeded even if its circulation statistics is not good. The classic books in each subject also should not be weeded out.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

A) Match the Following

a) Books in the library move with	a) Weeded
b) Stock verification	b) Love for large numbers of collection.
c) Weeding Problem	c) Storage
d) Obsolete Collection	d) Missing volumes
e) Weeded Documents go to	e) Shelf list

B) Find out True and False Sentences

a) Loss of three volumes per thousand volumes issued / consulted in a year is to be taken as reasonable.

b) According to Ranganathan, many collections lose its relevance in 20 years.

c) Annual withdrawals from the collection should average at least 5 percent of the total collection.

d) Superseded editions of books should not be weeded.



5.9 LET US SUM UP

If proper care is not taken by the maintenance section in a library, the stock would deteriorate and becomes unserviceable very soon. The maintenance section preserves the most valuable or most-used items in the collection.

In a small library, it is generally possible to carry out stock verification once every year. However, in a larger library, it is neither feasible nor necessary to do stock verification every year. In such cases it should be a continuous process, in which regions of shelves are taken for stock verification and the whole process should be completed in two to three years. Again, the part of the stock which is prone to greater losses can be subjected to stock verification more frequently. During stock verification, regular library services should not be affected as far as possible. The use of shelf list for the purpose provides a method of stock verification, which can be carried out without closing the library.

The library collection in numbers does not tell anything about how the collection relates to the patron needs. Library collections must be continuously evaluated to go with the user needs. The tools or methods that are used in selection of materials for library acquisition can also be used in evaluation of the collection and weeding of the unused collection. The library collection should be evaluated periodically within five to ten years, depending on the stability of staff doing the selection and patron's surveys showing major weaknesses. It should identify what has been missed, what titles in the collection are not relevant to the users and so on. All evaluation techniques are time consuming and costly.

Library materials may be weeded because of a combination of their out-dated content, unnecessary titles, their physical condition (scratched, torn, generally ragged), and their use patterns (declining or directly lost). The weeded titles may be sent to storage.



5.10 FURTHER READING

1) Dhiman, Anil Kumar (2008). *A Handbook of special libraries and librarianship*, New Delhi: Ess Ess.

2) Hyde, James H. (2003). *Library collection management*. New Delhi: Dominant Publishers and Distributors.

3) Krishan Kumar (1987). *Library administration and management*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.



5.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

A) Match the Following

a) Books in the library move with	a) Shelf list.
b) Stock verification	b) Missing volumes.
c) Weeding Problem	c) Love for large numbers of collection.
d) Obsolete Collection	d) Weeded.
e) Weeded Documents go to	e) Storage.

B) Find out True and False Sentences

a) False. b) True. c) True. d) False.



5.12 PROBABLE QUESTIONS

A) Short Answer Type Questions

a) What are the different types of guides found in a library?

b) Write a note on shelf list.

c) What are the steps that are to be taken to maintain the books in the shelves?

d) What type of collection should be weeded in the library?

B) Essay Type Questions

a) Write a descriptive note on binding.

b) What do you mean by stock verification? Describe the need and procedure.

c) Discuss how one has to determine the worth of a library collection.

d) Describe the library weeding activity.

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