4.1 Acquisition of Periodicals

Periodical work is entirely a problematic area. By nature periodicals are individual, erratic and unpredictable. Their selection, acquisition, check-in, cataloguing and even public service constitutes a difficult assignment. The routines involved are incessant; their price, title, publisher, frequency and scope are subject to change. Periodicals merge or split, get suspended for varying lengths of time.

The acquisition of periodicals is the first step in the management of periodicals. The major components of the acquisition process are acquiring the periodical, check-in claiming, payment and fund accounting. A collection development policy of periodicals is particularly important because they are tougher to select and demand more critically informed selection choices. (Chiqu-Sen, 1995)

The general principles of periodicals selection do not vary much from those governing the selection of books. The factors governing the selection of periodicals rely on:

i. The scope of the library
ii. Demands of the users
iii. Whether the title is easily available elsewhere
iv. Periodicals already taken
v. The financial resources of the library. (Ashraf, 2004)

According to Osborn, periodical selection is an art. Its skilled performance depends primarily on the exercise of trained, informed judgment. He has laid down certain principles and procedures in this regard under mentioned:

i. Checking the monthly issues of New Periodical Titles- classed
subject arrangement promptly and systematically.

ii. Acquire the material which opens up the literature of a subject or a country.

iii. The titles that are analyzed in abstracting and indexing services should be acquired.

iv. Duplication of periodicals should be avoided

v. Special attention should be given to the acquisition of the basic journal or journals in all fields of interest.

vi. A complete set should be maintained instead of a broken set.

vii. Enrich the resources of a locality, region or group of libraries by carrying out a program of cooperative acquisition.

viii. In each area develop a coordinated program for the preservation of local publications.

ix. Build up periodical files on the basis of long runs, not broken sets/files.

x. In research libraries allocate an amount for the purchase of back files of periodicals

The mentioned guiding principles can be of use in the selection of periodicals though actual practice of selection varies from library to library. (Osborn, 1955)

4.2 Selection Aids and Tools

Here are some of the important tools which should be consulted as they are of immense help for acquisition purpose and provide sufficient bibliographic and reference service.


iii. World List of Scientific Periodicals, New York.


vi. *Periodicals Titles Newly Received* (Library of Congress)

vii. *Times Literary Supplement under in current periodicals’ column*

viii. *Aslib Information Guide*


### 4.3 Periodical Acquisition System

Acquisition and ordering is a difficult phase in periodical management. Periodicals may be acquired in the acquisition department. Periodicals acquisition include identifying and verifying the existence of the item, ordering, receiving, checking, paying, renewing, claiming, or canceling as needed.

Periodicals are identified, ordered, received, paid for, catalogued, renewed, claimed, recatalogued after the titles change, and renewed again until they are ceased or cancelled. Budget and curriculum are main factors taken into consideration while acquiring the periodicals publications. Following are the means of acquiring periodicals to libraries:

i. By subscription to publishers of the periodicals who mail copies directly to the libraries.

ii. By dealing with the vendors/agents (standing orders)

iii. By purchasing from a local book shop or news agents

iv. By taking the membership of the learned society or professional body.

v. By gifts

vi. Exchange programmes

vii. Deposits

viii. Bid Contracts

ix. Government Agencies
i. Publishers

Publishers sell their periodicals directly to libraries and most of them also sell their periodicals to subscription services, who then sell them to libraries. Some publishers, such as local newspapers and some small societies, especially regional ones, will not do business with subscription services. Some subscription services won’t go for business with some publishers. Sometimes publishers offer packages of their publications to libraries at a reduced charge that may not be available through subscription agencies/services. Organisations may offer their publications through institutional membership, providing publications that are either not available except through membership or are more expensive to non members. Libraries that order periodicals directly from the publisher must carefully monitor the mail and the information provided inside the periodicals received to ensure that they locate renewal notices and invoices. Not all communication from the publisher are conveniently found or identified. A very few small libraries may not use subscription services in order to save the service charge imposed by the service. This practice is not a cost effective option for large libraries.

ii. Subscription Agents

A subscription service sometimes referred as subscription agency, subscription agent, or a periodical vendor, is a commercial business that processes periodicals order for all types of libraries. Subscription agents provide a variety of services for librarians including placement of new subscriptions, subscription renewal; subscription cancellation, consolidation of periodical orders, customized invoicing, processing claims and providing a variety of specialized customer and computer based services such as online interactive databases. Subscription services maintain detailed records and provide management reports for titles that the library has an order with them.

The advantage of subscription agents is the savings they provide to the library in easing workloads, reducing the number of staff, saving space, and saving equipment. Subscription agents can ensure that the libraries subscription
are automatically rendered, avoiding loop holes in issues. They can invoice the library at the times that are most appropriate for its budget cycle. The major falls drops associated with agents is the charge of service. Subscription agents provide publishers with benefits similar to those received by libraries like efficient consolidation of orders and renewals, handling of global currencies, assistance with claims, knowledge of the library market, and information distribution.

iii. Standing Orders

Periodical can be acquired through standing order which means that the publisher supplies the title automatically as and when the title gets published. As in case of subscriptions, certain publishers deny business their output except through a standing order placed by the library directly with the issuing body. A standing order, once passed remains in source until cancelled or the ordered item ceases publication.

iv. Membership

It is somewhat similar to standing order. In special library field particularly libraries are often part of an organization or firm which is a member or corporate member of learned societies and research associations. The membership subscription usually includes at least one periodical publication free. In such cases librarian should insist that all publication received by the organization as a result of this membership should be deposited in the library. This also applies to those publications which are received by members of the staff of an organization whose individual membership subscription to a learned society, etc, is paid by the organization. (Ashraf, 2004)

v. Gifts

Gifts of periodicals may include scattered issues of titles, complete back files of titles, or donated subscription. Donors may be individuals, organizations, or the publishers of the titles. Libraries must evaluate gifts
carefully, considering the processing charges, preserving and sifting the materials. Libraries should have policies describing the types of materials that will/will not be accepted as gifts. All donations should meet the criteria established in the collection development policies of the Libraries. Gifts of periodicals can save finance since the libraries do not purchase the subscription, however they do require staff time to evaluate, process, preserve and monitor.

vi. Exchange Programs

Acquisition by exchange is a valuable means of acquiring periodical material on regular basis. The exchange of material between two libraries is simple as it requires no payment. Exchange programs usually involve training the publications of an institution for those of another organization. Libraries must identify exchange partners, agree with the potential partners about what titles be exchanged, and monitor the materials to ensure that the program is relatively balanced.

If libraries establish exchange programs with organizations at global level, the acquisition staff may need foreign language skills to handle some correspondence. Libraries should create order and check in records in their integrated library systems for titles received on exchange. The records should include the names of exchange partners and notes on whether missing issues should be claimed.

vii. Depository Programs

Deposits are likewise gifts and exchanges, except the fact that they may not be efficiently the property of the receiving library. Before accepting a depository agreement it is necessary to know the terms and conditions in detail, when it comes to a periodical publication. Libraries establish depository programs in order to acquire materials that cannot be purchased through other methods and means to acquire all materials issued by an institution. (Wilkinson & Lewis, 2005)
viii. **Bid Contracts**

It is yet another way of acquiring periodicals in a library. The aim of bidding is to obtain the best service at the minimal charge, although it is sometimes difficult to maximize both the aspects. Since, at present, a library is not likely to save money on the subscription price by working through an agent, it becomes absolutely essential that the quality of agent’s service be of high standard. The library staff must be very careful in writing performance specifications and in monitoring the performance to identify ineffective subscription agencies to which contracts should not be awarded in future. Bid specification for subscription agent should be a description of types of periodical publications to be acquired, such as whether they are all domestic publications of periodical type, the span of time given to the agent, to place the subscription; frequency and form of billing; and discount service charges. Once failing in full filling the terms of the contract, penalty should be made as per the rules specified.

ix. **Through Government Agencies**

In some countries government has assigned the responsibility of procuring the periodicals to its own agencies to eliminate agents. In India the responsibility was assigned to State Trading Corporation (STC), established in 1956 with the aim to broaden the scope of Indian Exports and to arrange essential imports, STC made entry in the field of book trade in 1974. Government of India had earlier come across that libraries in the country were facing various problems at the hands of private subscription agents who were also missing the valuable foreign exchange provided to them for the import of books and periodicals. Ultimately, responsibility was given to STC to import foreign publications. Being a government undertaking it could not be as efficient as a private agent and secondly it has no experience in book trade. STC no longer provide this service. (Ashraf, 2004)

### 4.4 Steps in Ordering of Periodicals

Before starting of a new financial year, librarian should prepare a list of
periodicals to be subscribed duly approved by the concerned authority. It should be in frame of mind that the total amount of subscription fee does not exceed the allocated fund.

Repeated change of vendors should be curbed. They should be informed well before time that such and such periodicals are to be renewed so that the relevant issues are received without any delay. Simultaneously they should also be informed about the cancellation of journals if any.

The process of ordering periodicals is composed of several steps including verifying the existence, price, and publishers of a title, deciding when and from whom to order the periodical; and creating records of the order.

i. Preorder Preparation

Before ordering periodicals, acquisition librarian must check library records to determine whether the library already owns the requested titles. Before ordering a title the acquisition personnel must verify the title, the publisher, and the price of the periodical as many periodicals bear identical names, some of them change publishers frequently, many times the periodical prices change frequently. Librarians must establish the current prices before ordering titles. In order to verify the bibliographic and pricing information, librarians can consult for the purpose various sources such as Ulrich's International Periodical Directory, The Periodical Directory, or the online databases of periodicals subscription services used by their libraries.

These sources will also provide the ISSN, a unique number identifying each periodicals title. Librarians should provide this number to subscription services when ordering periodicals to minimize any ambiguity over which periodical is being ordered. Librarians should aware publisher when they want the subscription to begin. Some publishers begin sending issues as soon as they receive an order, others await until they receive payment, and still others await until the beginning of the next volume or year.

If a publisher does not begin the subscription with the desired issue, the library may need to send a separate order to the publisher in back issues of
periodicals in order to acquire the desired issue.

ii. Time to Order Materials

Periodicals may be ordered at any time, some libraries place new subscription in the full in order to start receiving issues at the beginning of a year. Some subscription agents and publishers allow libraries to purchase subscription for multiple years but the process frequently lessens the annual subscription costs.

iii. Selecting Subscription Services

The orders are dispatched to the suppliers through mail and fax. These are also placed online through the vendor’s database. Printed orders and email messages must include the complete bibliographic information about the desired items, the libraries purchase order number, any special instructions, and the libraries' shipping and billing addresses. Many large subscription agencies have online databases; libraries may search titles; identify these that are to be ordered and instruct the subscription services to place the orders.

It is advisable to keep two order files, one filed alphabetically by title and the other by order number. The alphabetical file must be kept up to date and should always record the latest form of the title order records being amended as soon as a title is changed.

The numerical file should always record the title as it was when the periodical was first ordered; all subsequent title and should be recorded in the alphabetical file.

Invoice for periodicals are usually not included in the shipment with the issues of periodicals. Subscription periodicals may acknowledge the receipts of orders by email, by messages on their online systems or by print mail.

After items have been identified on ordered, the issues will begin arriving at the libraries. The periodicals use to be opened, identified, received and checked in, the invoices must be verified and paid, and the issues must be physically processed.
iv. Renewals and Cancellations

If the library placed periodicals order through an agent, a checklist of all periodicals handled for the library will normally be received from the supplier once a year. This list should be checked carefully and any collection queries or cancellations should be clearly marked on it before it is returned to the supplier. Some agents supply renewal invoices instead of a checklist, in this case the invoices are checked and passed for payment and credit notes are raised for any subscription that the library may wish to cancel renewal is effected by paying the invoices for required titles. The invoices for titles which are to be cancelled should be returned to the publisher with a cancellation notice.

v. Back issue orders

These can be for specific issues which were received but subsequently lost or defaced or for issues that the library has never owned, or for special issues not supplied as part of the subscription, such as cumulative indexes. Unlike current periodical orders, the library copy of a back issue order should always be filled in the check in record. This ensures that the incoming item is not mismatch for a duplicate, and that, if it is a special issue, it is accessioned as such. After a back issue order has been fulfilled the library copy of the order can be remarked and transferred to the main or non-current order file.

vi. Check-in

The second step in periodicals processing is check in. It is necessary to carefully note or maintain a record that a particular periodical issue has been received. Libraries look for accurate check-in records for the following areas: to ensure that all issues paid for, have been received, to note any missing issues that may not be claimed, to ensure that only complete volumes are sent for binding. Prior to automation, a Kardex file was traditionally used for periodicals check-in, arranged alphabetically. Each entry might hold basic information as title, place of publication, frequency, the vendor, the order type, the date and order was placed, requestor's name in original, routing instructions, binding instructions, payment record, and each number's receipt
vii. Routing of Periodicals

Routing means the assistance given to the users in making available the articles or the periodicals itself on demand. Once an item has been checked in, the system should identify which employees wish to see the title and print a routing slip for each item routing modules should maintain an employee file which interacts with the check-in record.

viii. Claiming

Third step in periodicals processing is claiming when library do not receive issues of periodicals, they claim them, generating reports that are sent, to the subscription services handling the titles or to the publishers of those titles ordered directly from their publishers, asking that the issues be supplied Periodical issues fail to arrive for number of reasons. They may be lost in the post, incorrectly addressed or simply not have been dispatched in the first place. It is possible that a subscription was inadvertently not renewed, or that there was a delay in paying the subscription. The claiming system should be as automatic as possible, ideally based on each days check-in, with arrangements made for reviewing the periodical records at regular intervals. Five factors should be reconsidered prior to placing a claim: the titles publication frequency, the issue's anticipated receipt date, vendors reports; a subscriptions beginning date, and other considerations such as country of origin, method of delivery (air or surface mail), external matters (strikes, political developments, etc). Contemporary society is using e-mail to transmit claims as more and more publishers develop electronic capacity.

ix. Invoices and Payment

Each library bear its own system for handling invoices. The system use will depend on such things as the library's arrangements with its subscription agents and payment practices of its parent institution. All in-voices should be checked against the periodical record before setting, as it is not always possible
to get or refund for items not received or paid for twice. When libraries order new subscriptions, the invoices frequently arrive before the first issue of the periodicals is received. Prepayment is common in periodical publishing industry. Some publishers will not begin sending issues until they receive payment. Acquisition personnel must verify that the invoices are indeed for subscriptions that were ordered by the library, that the invoices are from the sources from which the library ordered the materials, and that the prices are what were expected. Some periodicals increase rapidly in price; if the price is dramatically different from the estimated price, acquisition personnel should consult the selector before authorizing the invoice for payment. Publishers may send multiple renewal notices and invoices. Acquisition personnel should verify that the invoices have not been paid before approving payment. Librarians should aware their subscription services that number of copies of invoices to send and what information to include. Most libraries require that invoice include the service's name, address, and Identification number, the library's ship to and bill to address, the service's account number; the library's purchased order number; the periodical's title, ISSN, and volumes or dates ordered; and the costs and service charges. Some libraries require that the library's fund information be included. Libraries can specify the size of invoices, limiting either the number of items or total amount contained in one invoice. Fund accounting is the final step of periodical processing. It entails keeping track of periodical expenditures as the library progresses the fiscal year. Traditional financial accounting categories for library materials include allocation, encumbrance, expenditure and balance. Many libraries find it handy to keep track of periodical expenditures according to such variables as subject or department; vendor, publishers; time span; country of origin; and expenditure category. (Wilkinson & Lewis, 2005)

4.5 Problems in Periodicals Acquisition

Subscription of periodicals poses several problems for a librarian. There is distinct lack of professional subscription agencies due to which libraries are
at receiving end. Various problems faced by the librarians are briefly under mentioned:

i. **Subscription Procedure**

Generally, most of the libraries subscribe to periodical publications through agents. In case of foreign publishers, publishers appoint their role agents who are appointed for inviting quotations. Librarians found this method to be unsuccessful because the agents who offer lower rates usually do not give standard service. Most of the libraries do not give efficient service. Only those agents who are ensured suitable remuneration provide better services. Most of the libraries do not invite quotations annually and they renew the subscription on the basis of previous year's performance of the agent. However large number of libraries renew their subscription every year which results in the late placing or ordering as also late payment of subscription. It is necessary to reschedule the process to avoid these delays. The other way can be that libraries may consider the placing of standing orders which would assist to avoid delays and to minimize routines.

ii. **Problem of Proliferation and High Cost**

There is an abnormal increase in the number of periodicals due to explosion of scientific research. Their titles have increased rapid pace and their subscription prices have reproduced continued to increases at an alarming speed. A large number of indexing and abstracting periodicals came into existence which is yet more closely to be acquired by each and every library. These trends have raised the frustration level of both librarians and library users. As a result, libraries as well as their users have become more dependent on one another for supplementing the gaps in their collections. The problem pertaining to gaps in holdings can be solved by acquiring all important periodical selection and reference tools and by taking up seriously the publication of more and more periodical indexing and abstracting journals in the country by either a central agency like the NISCAIR or UGC so as to cover all subject fields adequately. Gaps can also be filled in by exchange
programmes amongst the university libraries within the country itself. However, this is possible only when some university library publishes a list of periodical holdings and makes it available to other university libraries.

iii. Inadequate Rules

Periodical handling is pretty much difficult, even for the cataloguers. Rules have been laid down for cataloguing periodicals, amended from time to time, para-rules have been created, and plethora of sub-rules dealing with each idiosyncrasy of the periodicals. But the situation in libraries round the world is almost unchanged. A central agency should be there to lay down the rules so that uniformity should be maintained among the participating libraries.

iv. Identification of Core-Journals

Under the present circumstances, when academic institutions are not in a situation to subscribe all journals they require, it is essential that they subscribe to atleast some core journals related to each discipline of academic and research in an institution. List of core journals based on citation studies are available which need to be updated and issued as prescribed lists.

v. Proper Selection of Journals

Another thorny problem is that of proper selection of journals to be acquired. Unlike books, a title once subscribed continues to flow in subsequent years uninterruptedly. As far as journals of foreign soil are concerned, there are good workable tools as *Ulrich's Guide* kept fairly updated by successive revised and enlarged editions and *Katz's Management for libraries* which probably gives most balanced critical evaluations for the titles included. It would also be highly desirable if annotated guides embracing the best and basic journals published in several subject fields in India are issued, so as to enable new college libraries to go in for them. There should be a clear distinction between those journals which are essential and are used frequently and those which are little used. (Pathak, 1977)
vi. Determination of Actual Use

It has been noticed many times that costly foreign periodicals are subscribed on regular basis but many of them are hardly used due to lack of adequate translation facilities. One way of determining actual use is keeping the journals in closed access and computing their use on the basis of the demand slip received. But this proves a serious hindrance free browsing of latest academic materials appearing in the journals. The process also involves much more additional work for library staff. Use can also be measured on the basis of citations by academic and research staff in their research publications and thesis but this measurement will have to consider a period of say 10 years and not on annual basis.

vii. Refund

A common practice among libraries is to ask for refund the missing issues when lost in transit, etc. But in case complete volumes are not supplied to the libraries, subscription is either adjusted or refunded invariably. It happens when the periodical has ceased its publication when it is behind the publication schedule. In case the library discontinues, if the agents do not like to refund the subscription unless they receive payment from the publishers. In all cases getting the refund is a job demanding regular persuasions from the library, involving a protracted correspondence stretching over a long period.

viii. Loss of Periodicals in Transit

Libraries face the problem of missing issues and incomplete volume of periodicals problem of handling and disposing the duplicate journals cases may be seen when the duplicate issue supplied by the publisher also gets lost in transit. The loss of issues in transit is usually of two reasons: (i) issues are undelivered due to some ones personal interest or lenience of the postman, and (ii) misdelivery due to the carelessness of the postal employees. A large number of journals also get delivered to other addresses and some get lost due to poor packaging by the publishers.
A central mechanism also needs to be developed which can bear the responsibility of exchanging large number of duplicate issues available with the libraries, which can complete large number of volumes.

ix. Consistent Policy for Subscriptions

At National level some guidelines should be formulated, so that no institution start subscribing large number of journals, when finances are available easily, and discontinues them later in times of stringency. Stray volumes of a journal create some frustration among research scholars. Moreover there is sheer wastage of amount spent on subscription of a journal if it is to be discontinued in future.

x. Procurement of Back Files

The cost of back files of periodicals is usually very high and their acquisition is slow and tedious process. Extreme precaution is needed before deciding to acquire back files of a periodical. A many dealers are specialized in the supply of back files of periodicals. Quotations are invited from various dealers orders are to be placed with the one who is willing to supply at the lowest rates and then purchase has to be made. When an order for periodicals is going to be placed, it should also be seen that the rates quoted are for the bound volumes, each complete in all respect with its title page and index. For the periodicals which are infrequently used, inter-library loan facilities from other libraries may be relied upon or alternatively their acquisition in micro form may be considered. It will be still better if the acquisition of back files of periodicals is organized on cooperative basis among local libraries whether to be acquired in original form or in microform. Instead of acquiring complete back sets which are highly priced, it would be in the fitness of things to acquire complete files of indexing / abstracting journals.

xi. Cost of Journals Vs their circulation

After the insertion of electronic media in libraries, resource sharing, and copying facilities have reduced the number of subscribers to academic journals.
Thus, the production cost of the journal is distributed among the remaining subscribers.

xii. Periodical Budgets

The budget is not increasing according as per to the requirements. There is inadequacy of sufficient funds. Even the funds which are made available by UGC etc. to universities are not utilized to full extent due to an acute shortage of foreign exchange. There is abnormal rise in the subscription amount of periodicals during the preceding years. Especially the journals published abroad have raised their annual subscription charges substantially. The acquisition of new journals of inter-disciplinary and specific nature has become essential for an institution to maintain its quality. But while considering grants for acquiring them, the situation becomes acute. Progressively the intake of journals would go on decreasing in number and it would be impossible to acquire the new titles. Current financial trends indicate that the quantum of grants will rise more slowly than the cost of journals. In order to tackle the situation, it would be desirable that libraries in every Indian city should cooperate and compile an issue of Union list of current journals received in all the libraries in that city. This may be done with a view so that less used and costly journals may not be acquired by more than one library in a city. Another way to tackle with this problem may be to persuade the Heads of Institutions to bifurcate the book-grant and show the amounts chosen for journal subscription and for books etc, separately. Once this has been completed, it would highlight clearly the total paucity of grants for journals.

xiii. Improper Binding Facilities

Most of the libraries do not have proper binding facilities. As such the periodicals go on pilling up and these are not utilized adequately. Even now some libraries do not have their own binderies with enough qualified staff, rather they rely upon commercial binders. Moreover, there are no cooperative storage centres for storing the under used periodical publications which is otherwise essential for coping with the ever increasing demand for space for
the purpose. There is no central agency to guide the various organizational activities of university libraries so far as the co-operative acquisition processing, servicing and maintenance of periodicals exchange of publication is concerned. There is lack of essential periodical reference tools including selection tools, complete sets of periodicals, indexes and abstracts up-to-date lists of several holdings union list of periodicals. Regarding binding problem, it may be suggested that though a binding department should be set up in each university library, yet there is no harm it can be organized on cooperative basis. (Mittal, 1965)

CONCLUSION

The exponential growth of periodical literature has immensely enhanced the need to evolve an effective and foolproof periodical control and management system. This need for establishing an impregnable control method becomes all the more necessary due to the prohibitively exorbitant prices of periodical publications. In libraries of IIT Delhi, IIT Kanpur and Delhi University periodical selection is done by the librarian, on the basis of recommendations made by Faculty Members’ and Students’ recommendation. The subscription of periodicals in all three libraries is through local or foreign subscription agents.

The periodical librarian has always to be on his toes guarding against any possible discrepancy leading to the disruption in the system. In order to develop a useful collection, it is essential to formulate a selection policy for the acquisition of periodicals.
REFERENCES


