Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Study

The basic functions of a library are collection, organization, dissemination and storage of information. Of these, “collection” occupies the vital position and plays a significant role as it effects to a considerable extends the other three functions of the library. A representative collection adequate in term of both quality and quantity nurtured constantly may only lead to reach the goal of a dynamic collection. Hence, acquisition of documents in a library is a continuous process inviting proper attention from various angles towards optimizing the aspirations of the community of users.

Collection development is not a single activity rather a group of activities. University libraries have to develop a well balanced document collection to meet the needs of present as well as the future requirements of users. It is possible only when the acquisition policies are planned in proper perspective and executed in the best spirit of the objectives laid down in the policy. The term collection development has been evolved to emphasize response to user’s demands. To meet the demands, librarians have evolved theories of collection development, which imply a more, active role in managing collections of libraries and indicate change in the scope of the concept in response especially in changing environment. The process of collection development therefore covers components like market analysis, collection development policies, document selection, acquisition, weeding or de-selection and evaluation of collection. Hence, the term “collection development” depicts systematic planning and rational building of a collection in a cost effective way by assessing user’s needs, evaluating the
effectiveness of present collection, determining selection policy, coordinated selection of items, weeding and storing parts of the collection and planning for resource sharing. Making a required document available to a user cannot be put off to a later date on the pretext of non-availability of funds. Documents required by the University libraries should be obtained well in time. Continuity in subscription to journals and also other forms of information resources is essential for academic and research activities.

Library collection means the holding of study materials. As such, library collection embraces its umbrella all reading materials meant for the community of users for a given library system. In the context of proliferation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) or simply Information Technology (IT) the whole range of library collections predominant in a modern University library may broadly be categorised into two viz. Print collection and Non-Print or Electronic collection. The second one is very often referred to as Electronic resources as well. Predominant types of print documents are: books, periodicals and serials, research report, govt publication, annual review, academic thesis & dissertation, conference proceedings, patents, standard & specification, pamphlets, trade literature, maps, atlases and globes, paintings, illustrations, photographs, rare books and manuscripts (The manuscripts, however, has clubbed under the print documents based on the very criteria of documentary form on which the knowledge is engraved on). Likewise, the electronic resources comprise microfilms, microfiches, slides, audio cassettes, computerizes databases, CD-ROM, DVD, e-journals, e-books, e-thesis, and websites, etc.

Today, the research activities are considered very important and therefore the role of University library is not merely confined to acquiring and preserving the reading materials but for dissemination of knowledge effectively. In the University education
the University library is considered as the nerve centre. No University can develop without a well equipped library. Therefore, the library occupies the prominent position among the several departments to fulfil the objectives of the University. The University library has to organize and direct its activities to satisfy the needs of its clienteles. The University library has to develop the collection in keeping in view fulfilling the objectives of the University and target of the users. The collection of library must re-evaluate time to time so that it can make it more effective. Books only can provide the fundamental primary information. The research scholar of the present day requires latest information in the field of their specialization of research; therefore it is very essential to acquire latest relevant periodicals, proceeding, reports, transaction, etc. Periodicals are more important than books so far as latest information is concerned. The University libraries cannot afford to research work without the periodicals. Now a days in advanced countries the collection of libraries are transferred to microforms in place of paper documents (e.g. CD DVD). As a result the large numbers of materials can be stored in a small space.

The collection of a modern University library is not confined to print documents but add e-resources with their existing collection mainly due to easy accessibility of e-resources and increasing cost of print documents. The transformation from print documents towards the magnetic, optical and virtual formats gave rise to concept of an electronic library.

The advents of information technology have vastly influenced the concept of collection development and have brought changes in collection, storage and dissemination of information. Factor like budgetary constraints, information explosion, rising cost of publication, users requirements and other related factor as well as development of
internet, e-mail, CD-ROM, electronic publishing digital libraries etc. have compelled
the librarian & libraries to change the style and approach of their functioning.

Modern University libraries provide a large array of services using IT. Almost all
traditional services i.e., Lending, Reprographic, Reference, CAS, Abstracting &
Indexing, has been transformed to IT platform. The application of IT in day today
works of library the work of library staff become easy, pleasurable and interesting.

The users of traditional libraries have spent more time for searching the required
documents or information and they have to depend on the library staff. In the age of IT,
the computers are being used for day today housekeeping activity of the library. It also
helps the save the time of the readers as well as library staff and avoid duplication of
work and extending the library service effective and smooth.

There is a great impact of IT on collection development. The trends of collection
development of printed documents are decreasing and accessing of electronic
information resource is increasing. Apropos to the context under discussion, it is felt
pertinent to have a close and in depth look into the different issues confronting the
collection development in the libraries particularly in the University libraries and hence
the University library system has been chosen for this study as the researcher is working
in a University library for last twenty two years in different capacities. It is envisaged
that this study will be able to portray all possible dimensions related to collection
development in the University libraries and trough light towards drafting proper
roadmap in this context.
1.2 Need of the Study

The inflationary trend in publication prices is a problem both for librarians and publishers. The increase in the cost of publications is characterized by various factors such as inflation in the cost of paper, labour cost, and cost of other stationary materials. Other factors such as increasing quality and quantity of the documents, complexity of subject leading to change in readership and shift from individual subscription to institutional subscription have been attributed to the rising cost of publications. The skyrocketing and uncontrolled escalation of price of publication, increasing financial constraints due to shrinking and inelastic library budget along with the information explosion has put in libraries all over the world in general and developing countries that too India in particular in a very difficult situation.

In addition to the above, the concept of “collection development” has changed and it has to be viewed in the light of recent changes and new developments in the field of information technology. Recent advances in science & technology in general and development in the field of information technology in particular have vastly influenced the concept of collection development and have brought in sweeping changes in information collection, storage and dissemination. The libraries in developing countries such as India are yet to transform themselves into a new era in comparison to its counterparts in the developed countries in the west. A good number of academic libraries in India continue to acquire, store and disseminate information largely through traditional practices. Printed books and journals still form core of such library collections. Most of the IT driven facilities such as Internet, Fax, E-mail etc., are yet to make a mark on traditional information storage and dissemination. The libraries, the publishing industry and the distribution industry (vendors) constitute triangle with a
great deal of interaction and interdependence among themselves. It is therefore important to examine the effect of the developments of IT as mentioned above particularly on changing the overall work culture in the libraries in general and the relationship with the collection development in particular.

Cooperative collection development, which in some sense is the ultimate activity of this new functional field of librarianships, has proved difficult to implement and to sustain. It is clear, both in theory and practice that no single library can collect the entire and exploding record of knowledge; and, as usually varies studies show, no library really needs to do so to satisfy most of its user’s needs. A reasonable approach would be to coordinate collection development locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally to maximize local use of library collection and broad coverage of all field of knowledge.

It is hoped, this study is going to visualize the special significances on collection development, management and dissemination of information in the University libraries under the scope of the study.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Keeping in mind the problems with library collection development and recognising the influence of IT in the field, the present research problem is conceived under the area “Impact of Information Technology on the Collection Development in University Libraries of Assam: A Study”

The major problems of collection development in the library may be summarised as

- Wide diversity in the publication pattern of the scholarly resources. This is further related to shifting of the physical form of publication via print and
electronic publication. Accordingly, the accessibility to the scholarly contents is very closely tagged with the changed parallelism of the publication pattern;

- There is obvious positive correlation between the introduction of newer courses in the Universities and social demands for academic pursuit to newer areas;
- Study and research are in continuous process inviting collection development with knowledge development;
- Rapid growth of Information Technology devices and their use in library and information science towards accommodating the library system;
- Systematic storage, organisation and facilitating seamless access to the resources housed by a University library in the changed information environment both in the content of documentary form and accessibilities of the users inviting significant challenges before the University libraries.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The present trends of collection development and introduction of information technology in library operation & services and its impact in collection development of the University libraries of Assam will be taken care of this study.

It is found that there are sixteen Universities (including one Indian Institute of Technology and one National Institute of Technology) existed in Assam either under state or central government funding (Table 1.1).
Table 1.1: Universities of Assam (According to the year of establishment)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name of the University</th>
<th>Established</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Gauhati University, Guwahati</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>State Govt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>State Govt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>State Govt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Assam University, Silchar</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Central Govt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Tezpur University, Tezpur</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Central Govt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, Guwahati</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>State Govt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Bodoland University, Kokrajhar</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>State Govt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences, Guwahati</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>State Govt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>National Law University and Judicial Academy, Assam, Guwahati</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>State Govt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Assam Science and Technology University, Guwahati</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>State Govt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Assam Rajiv Gandhi University of Cooperative Management, Sivasagar</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>State Govt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Cotton College State University, Guwahati</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>State Govt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit and Ancient Studies University, Nalbari</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>State Govt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Women University, Jorhat</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>State Govt.</td>
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</table>

These Universities were established in different time covering a specific geographical area in the case of affiliated Universities. However, as this study area is focused on collection development, the newly established Universities are not considered for the study as their collection developments are still at the initial stage.
Among these Universities the researcher has concentrated the study among three State government and four Central government Universities in Assam as presented in Table 1.2.

**Table 1.2: Universities of Assam under study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
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<td>Gauhati University, Guwahati</td>
<td>State Govt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati</td>
<td>Central Govt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Tezpur University</td>
<td>Central Govt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1.5 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are:

- To know the types of University library collection in Assam.
- To examine the expenditure for collection development in the University libraries of Assam.
- To find out the factors affecting collection development in the University libraries of Assam.
- To study the selection criteria, acquisition process and weeding out of documents in the University libraries of Assam.
- To examine the used of information technology (IT) in collection development of the University libraries of Assam.
1.6 Hypotheses

Hypothesis makes the research more specific and to the point which leads towards the destination. In this study the following hypotheses have been formulated:

**H$_1$:** With the application of Information Technology devices in University libraries of Assam the collection growth rate of printed documents are decreasing.

**H$_2$:** Even though students form the major category of users, they are not part of the book selection process in the University libraries of Assam.

1.7 Methodology

This study was initiated with literature search on various subfields of collection development including collection development for print and non-print materials, collaborative collection development, etc. Macro and micro literature in printed form as well as in digital form in both online and offline are searched to get the overview of the existing work done in the field of collection development.

Questionnaire, interview and observation techniques are used for collection of primary data for the study. The researcher got the opportunity of interview with the Librarian, Deputy Librarian and Assistant Librarian (Acquisition section in charge) and also received the questionnaire duly filled up. The data so collected through questionnaire, observation and interview techniques have been analysed by using proper statistical methods and other qualitative techniques and interpreted in the light of the objectives stated already.
1.8 Chapter Plan

The entire study is presented in six chapters. A brief outline of each chapter is given below.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The topic of the research has been introduced in the first chapter wherein the need of the study, statement of the problem, scope and limitation, objectives, hypotheses, methodology used, and chapter plans with a brief description have been discussed about.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter gives an appraisal of the relevant literature with the study. Literature search includes the available updated development of various concepts. Both micro and macro literature appeared in printed and digital form are included here. The documents have been arranged first according to the concept and then arranged within each concept chronologically. Those concepts identified are- Collection Development, Information Technology, E-Resources, Digital Library, Internet and Consortia.

Chapter 3: Collection Development in Libraries: the present trends

Different aspects of collection development in libraries have been discussed in this chapter. The discussion includes brief description of classification of library collection, resource generation, selection of library resources, guideline to be adopted, criteria and tools for selection, acquisition policy, function of acquisition, strategies, problems, evaluation, weeding out of library materials, etc.
Chapter 4: Information Technology use in Collection Development in Libraries

The impact of IT on collection development has been elaborated in this chapter. The chapter includes IT application on collection development, its impact, resource sharing, networking, consortia and digital collection development.

Chapter 5: Collection Development in University Libraries of Assam: based on Survey

A brief description of University library system, functions of University library, University education of Assam, University libraries of Assam, data collection of Universities under studies, analysis of data and present the result.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

At the end of the study conclusion is forwarded by way of summary, recommendation and conclusion. The objectives cited are being reflected in this chapter with the result of the study made. It also includes certain recommendations with reference to the study and puts forward the conclusion along with suggestions for further research.

At the end of the work References are included followed by the annexure. APA (American Psychological Association) 6th edition citation style is followed.