

# Analyses of Weeding/Disposal of Information Resources from University Libraries of Rajasthan, India

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## Abstract

Information is a vital resource and valuable input for societal development. It is the well-accepted generalization that a country which is rich in information is also rich in the socio-economic spheres. The library is considered as a traditionally slow and passive organization, which provides documents and services on demand. However, it was hard to believe in the past that weeding (disposal) of the traditional forms would be a challenge in modern perspectives. The present investigation is an attempt to assess the weeding policies in the university libraries of Rajasthan (India) and the challenges associated with it. The questionnaire and interview-based assessment of selected ten university libraries of Rajasthan in ICT age was carried out. In the present age of information, the weeding policy needs to be planned with the onset of collection development policy of any academic library. Further, the sustainable weeding policy could encourage the users to procure the traditional forms for reuse which otherwise create the solid waste. This is the right time to discuss solid waste management in academic libraries.

**Keywords:** Academic libraries; Collection development; Solid waste; Weeding (disposal) policy

## Introduction

Education aims, among other things, to impart knowledge and make good citizens. Libraries are the repositories of knowledge and form an integral part of this process. Academic libraries are considered to be the nerve centers of academic institutions and must support teaching, research, and other academic programmes [1]. The conditions of academic libraries are same throughout the globe; however, Indian libraries are constrained to provide maximum information with limited resources [2].

The global changes particularly the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have an impact on the functioning of academic libraries. The developments in ICT have changed the users' expectation from the academic libraries in many ways. In the Information Age of modern period manually it is difficult for the library professionals to cater and satisfy the information requirements of all the users. Therefore, it is essential to make use of the modern information technologies which provide accurate, expeditious and exhaustive information at the right time to the right person, from right source. Thus, a mechanism to build a collection, and provide services to the end users has shown great changes from the recent past practices of selecting, collecting, organizing, preserving, and conserving materials for the easy accessibility.

Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science Chalcraft [3] says "Library collection is the sum total of Library materials-books, manuscripts, serials, Government documents, pamphlets, catalogs, reports, recordings, microfilm reels, microcards, and microfiche, punched cards, computer tapes etc. – that make up the holdings of a particular library".

Report of library committee of the University Grants Commission speaking on the need for weeding out says; "Many works lose their value within one generation, say in twenty-five years. By that time, their thought-content of same may even turn out to be wrong. In a service library, no useful purpose is served by retaining such pedestrian books and providing self-space for them after they have become obsolete. The proper course is to weed out" [4].

The question arises, what should be weeded out? As defined earlier

weeding is an important activity of an academic library in a view to maintaining their collection up to date by the removal of obsolete, damaged, and unused books and other materials from the stacks. The collection of any university library in modern times comprise of monographs, text-books, theses/dissertations, books, reference books, journals or magazines, serial publications etc. in print, microform or in the form of electronic disks (e.g. CD-ROM or DVDs) or online as individual titles or databases.

Rajasthan, the largest state of India, has seventy-four universities which include a single central, seventeen state, eight deemed, rest private universities [1]. The information is a crucial resource for the society and alike other academic libraries of the world, it is inevitable for the academic libraries in Rajasthan to adopt new technology enforcing weeding mechanism. The present investigation evaluates selected university library in Rajasthan and the weeding (disposal of Information resources) mechanism and related activities to overcome associated challenges.

## Materials and Methods

The interview-based survey was undertaken for the selected academic libraries in Rajasthan in the year 2017. The existing records were updated from the direct sources and the secondary sources in form of Annual Reports of the concerned academic libraries [1].

A programmed questionnaire was designed and sent to twenty-one libraries of State/Deemed universities of Rajasthan with the primary objective of data collection. These universities have well-established libraries with good financial and information resources and are

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**Received** October 04, 2017; **Accepted** October 20, 2017; **Published** October 27, 2017

**Citation:** Kashyap VS, Mehra SP (2017) Analyses of Weeding/Disposal of Information Resources from University Libraries of Rajasthan, India. Int J Waste Resour 7: 307. doi: [10.4172/2252-5211.1000307](https://doi.org/10.4172/2252-5211.1000307)

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serving the community since 1942 till date, whereas private university concept came in the year 2009 in Rajasthan. Ten university libraries responded with a complete set of data, therefore, selected for analysis and interpretation.

### Data analysis and interpretations

Table 1 presents the percentage of the response received from the libraries from the state of Rajasthan. Table 2 is the presentation of the updated information resources available in the libraries. The data points that 80% library poses a good number of print books. 30% Libraries have a large number of back volumes. BITS Pilani have subscription of more than 500 current journals in Library, therefore the number of the back volumes was 95 thousand. Various newspapers and magazines are also subscribed in these libraries. Besides these, a number of thesis and dissertations are also available in the library by the researchers for their research. Non-book materials are also available in maximum library collections.

Data in Table 3 defines the opinion of LIS professionals towards weeding, i.e., disposal of unused/ outdated and similar information resources in the libraries of Universities selected for the study. 66.67% librarians were aware of disposal policy of academic libraries. When asked about the implementation of the policy only 25% Libraries gave the positive response. More than 50% Librarians responded that weeding of information resources is not necessary in ICT age. The reason is maximum information is born digital and is available in the electronic/digitized form. Books containing earlier information may or may not be available in electronic/digital format. Therefore these resources may be kept in the library.

Table 4 defines about the responses against the solid waste produced from day to day activities in the university libraries. The opinion of LIS professionals is defined in Table 4. The questions were asked to know about the solid waste produced in the university libraries in routine activities. Maximum respondents agreed that different sections produce solid waste in the form as presented in Table 5. All the professionals agreed that implementation of ICT in libraries can reduce the solid waste in the libraries.

### Results and Discussion

Dr. Ranganathan wished that libraries and information institutions should function as partners with specialists in all intellectual pursuits, economic and social developmental activities, all-round higher productivity, ultimately in every activity that enhances the quality of life [5]. The form of a library is changing significantly and rapidly. A new type of library and information systems keep evolving; to quote Ranganathan's Fifth Law of Library Science i.e., "Library is a Growing Organism" [6]. Academic libraries are the nerve centers of academic institutions and must support teaching, research, and other academic programs. The situation in academic libraries of India is the same as that of academic libraries in the world over; still, Indian university libraries are providing maximum information with limited resources [7]. Chauhan [8] stated that libraries are the storehouse of knowledge and information. Modern-day libraries

Status of University	Total No. of questionnaires sent	Responses not considered*	Responses considered	Percentage
State	14	07	07	50.00
Deemed	07	02	05	71.42
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>57.14</b>

\*The data was irrelevant or incomplete

**Table 1:** Responses of the university libraries in Rajasthan.

have become complicated with the advent of CDs, floppies, hard disks, and other audio-video gadgets used in sound and picture books. Day by day the administration and management of libraries is becoming difficult and demand a special effort on the management of libraries.

The holdings and collection in the library may be in print form and other such as records, videos, photographs, electronic books and journals, database online resources etc. Traditional library systems are geared to the identification and retrieval of these artifacts- a particular book/ title/ journal issue, video recording, etc. But ICT can convert all these types of information carrying artifacts into digital data for the purposes of storage (e.g., Optical disc), processing (e.g., computing) and transmission (e.g., data communication networks) [9].

Implementation of ICT applications shall be helpful in reducing solid waste in libraries which need procurement of information resources available in e-format; RSS feed, Ask the Librarian, SDI /CSA services; electronic document delivery services can stop wastage of paper.

Continued library growth enlarges their "ecological footprint". Unless both operational costs and environmental waste are reduced in the long term, the continuous expansion of collections and services could reduce access to information to a limited number of people [10]. Creating or adopting already developed university campus indicators could assess the economic, environmental, and social performance of libraries, producing budget savings and the environmental impact. These indicators should provide data on:

- The amount of water used annually by an average University library.
- The amount of solid and hazardous waste generated annually by an average University library.
- Cost reduction effected by reducing energy, water, and paper use.

University Libraries	Books	Journals		Theses/ Dissertations/ Project Reports	Audio and Video Cassettes Microforms, CD-ROMs etc.
		Current Volumes	Back Volumes		
RUJ, Jaipur	5,74,648	276	63,823	17,028 +17,443 reports	4,976 Abu collections
JNVU, Jodhpur	2,75,583	175	8,200	6,250	579
MLSU, Udaipur	3,92,449	237	29,519	10,351	786
MDSU, Ajmer	1,40,558	175	2,700	1,445	632
SKAU, Jobner	47918	34	<b>6679</b>	<b>1916</b>	<b>121</b>
BITS, Pilani	4,58,261	538	95,000	1,561	1,250
BVB, Niwai	2,80,757	713	13,781	2,000	2,500
JRNvu, Udaipur	3,35,200	125	15,000	560	50
JVBI, Ladnu	75,623	234	6,300	120	-
MNIT, Jaipur	1,68,980	648	12,000	1512	1,035 A/V+ 670 CD-ROMs + 650 database
MPUAT, Udaipur	71,500	09	-	-	1055
MGSU, Bikaner	210503	14	-	-	62

**Table 2:** Collections in library.

Opinion of Respondents	Responses Received			
	Yes	%	No	%
Are you aware of weeding/disposal policy of academic libraries	7	66.67	5	33.33
Are you implementing weeding policy in your library	3	25	7	58.33
Do you think weeding/disposal of Information resources is necessary in ICT age	6	50	6	50

**Table 3:** Opinion of the respondents on weeding.

Opinion of Respondents	Responses Received			
	Yes	%	No	%
Whether different sections of Library use maximum stationery for its day to day work	9	75	3	25
Whether library routine works produce solid waste	8	66.67	4	33.33
Does Acquisition section produces maximum waste	7	58.33	5	41.67
Does Technical section has maximum solid waste	8	66.67	4	33.33
Does circulation activity in library produces solid waste	8	66.67	4	33.33
Does Periodical section have maximum resources which are outdated	12	100	0	0
In your opinion application of ICT in Libraries can reduce the solid waste	12	100	0	0
Does online services can be helpful in reducing waste in library	12	100	0	0

**Table 4:** Opinion on solid waste (SW) produced in university libraries.

S. No.	Activities of different sections in University Libraries	Type of solid waste produced
1	Acquisition section	Packaging boxes, plastic ropes, packaging tapes, printed papers
2	Technical section	Worn out documents, unused /outdated documents due date slips, ink, pasting glue bottles
3	Circulation Section	Fine slips, charging and discharging registers, pen, ink, others
4	Periodical Section	Newspapers, magazines, serial publication,
5	Administrative Section	Feedback forms , requisition forms, suggestions forms and others
6	Reprography Section	Wrong photocopied papers, cartridge ink wastage etc.

**Table 5:** Type of solid waste (SW) produced from different sections of university libraries.

- Percentage of daily library shipments received that end up in garbage bins.
- Percentage of publisher catalogs produced on recycled paper.
- Quantity of computer paper used per library employee and user.
- The amount of energy used per staff member and user.
- Use of environmentally friendly inks, cleaners, and recycled paper.
- Paper and equipment recycling rates.
- Level of printing fees and other taxes imposed upon the users (Are these methods in line with the library's mission of free and open access to information?).

- “Ecological footprint” of the average academic library.

When asked for recently, in view of the latest ICT applications in libraries, National Knowledge Commission issued guidelines in 2007 [11] to the libraries regarding for collection development, monitoring or evaluation of collection and services as follows:

- All libraries must maintain a well-rounded core collection, including reference material to satisfy the regular needs of its user community. These may be supplemented through networks, and e-resources, to achieve better qualitative and quantitative standards.
- Library collections are dynamic resources and there should be, therefore, constant renewal of materials to ensure that the collection remains relevant to the user communities.
- Except in the case of national repositories, the weeding out of books should be a regular process. Each library should evolve a weeding out policy, approved by the competent authority.
- The criteria for categorizing libraries in government and public libraries and grading of librarians should be reviewed keeping in mind factors such as size of collection, immediacy index (ratio of current books to total books), users, services and access to electronic resources.

Further, the commission made a recommendation to collect statistics on 12 topics for monitoring and evaluation of library collection, which includes Number of books withdrawn from collection per year.

The libraries and information centers are facing unprecedented resource building problems in the recent times. On one side, there is severe fiscal resource crunch while the prices of information sources and services are escalating exponentially. Management of solid waste in Libraries is an important issue in ICT age. Every moment new ideas are generated and due to a sudden increase in knowledge, publications are in millions. This explosion has lead new areas of knowledge and the earlier ideas and thoughts are becoming outdated. Regular procurement of updated information in print format has created space problem for LIS professionals in University Libraries in Rajasthan. At this stage, the libraries are serving the community with the help of ICT. To cope up with the shortage of physical space and updating information, it is necessary to dispose/ weed out some of the documents which are damaged due to continuous usage or new, subsequent editions are printed with updated information. In the modern era, documents may be weeded out after transferring the information contained in them into electronic or digital form.

The outcome of the present investigation could be useful for the LIS Professionals to develop a sustainable strategy in the ICT age especially in drafting a suitable policy for weeding/ disposal of unused, outdated and worn out information resources. The sustainable ideas for furthering the long-term research in this field are the needs of the time.

## Conclusion

Sustainable strategies need to be integrated into a platform for guiding future decisions about collections, the infrastructure of library buildings, and the scale of preservation, digitalization, equipment, products, and library networking service efforts. Such decisions need to take into account not only the cost of collection, equipment, and labor but also the cost of generated waste measured by the size of the “ecological footprint” resulting from library operations and services.

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