

National Library
Government of India
Kolkata

Policy of Gifts and Exchanges

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Gifts and Exchanges at the National Library

National Library, Kolkata, is a depository library and the largest library in India. Since its inception in 1948, when the Imperial Library, Change of Name Act was passed turning the Imperial Library to the National Library, the library has acquired, processed, preserved and made resources freely available to readers. National Library acquires books, newspapers and serials in all Indian languages and many foreign languages, maps, manuscripts, Indian and foreign official documents, microforms and electronic resources.

The gift and exchange policy in the library is based on the aims and objectives of the National Library laid down in the 1969 Report of the Review Committee chaired by Justice V. S. Jha:

- i) Collect all printed material concerning the country wherever it is published and also acquire a photographic record of such material that is not available with the country; and
- ii) act as a centre for international book exchange and international loan.

Gifts have been a major source of acquisition for the library from its initial years. Gifts often consist of specialized collections, built up over a long period by a discerning reader or collector, and hence are likely to complement the library's holdings. Some of the richest collections, such as the Asutosh Collection, Sayyid Sadruddin of Buhar Collection, Jadunath Sarkar Collection, the Tej Bahadur Sapru Letters, Vaiyapuri Pillai Collection, Ramdas Sen Collection, Baridbaran Mukhopadhyay Collection, K. M. Zakariya Collection, Abdur Rahim Collection and Hidayat Husain Collection were acquired through generous donations. The Asutosh Collection alone contains some 86,000 items, donated by the family of Sir Asutosh Mukhopadhyay (1864-1924), mathematician, jurist and Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University.

Another important source of collection-building has been exchanges of copies with other libraries of the world. Since 1963, bilateral cultural agreements, including exchange of

publications and personnel, have helped the acquisition of foreign books and periodicals. Permanent exchange of duplicate books, newspapers, serials, printed documents, microforms and electronic resources operates on the basis of barter with partner libraries, governments, international organizations, research institutions, academies, art galleries, museums etc.

The pre-eminence and vitality of the National Library depend on its ability to provide materials in many different languages and, increasingly, different media. Purchase can only be one source of obtaining such materials, necessarily restricted by budget allocations. National Library welcomes offers of gifts and exchanges, since these provide good opportunities for enriching the collections of the library.

Gift Definition

A gift is defined as library materials offered by a known person or persons, corporation, institution or agency that the National Library may choose to accept or reject. These exclude all Indian publications deposited under the Delivery of Books and Newspapers (Public Libraries) Act, 1954, and all materials sent for promotional and public relations purposes.

National Library and the Donor

Members of the library staff are expected to respect the donors' expectations, and treat them as privileged users and prospective benefactors. The library staff would assist the donor through the procedures, and in processing the materials. All gifts to the National Library would be acknowledged.

Gift Offers

Gifts involve a few stages before they can be made accessible to users. The library needs to look at the donor's wishes, examine the nature of the gift, and ascertain its potential cost and benefit to the library.

All gift offers are coordinated through the Gift and Exchange division. When a gift requires library expenditure in receiving, transporting, postage, expensive processing, book plating etc., an examination of the collection will be conducted prior to spending resources or accepting unusual responsibilities.

Unrestricted Gifts

Unrestricted gifts are gifts made without conditions, i.e. the library has no obligation to add the material to the collection or process it in any particular manner. An unrestricted gift offer, even when unsolicited, may be made by writing to the Gift and Exchange division of the library. The library requires a list of titles, including such data as author and year of publication, from the donor. The library will check the list against its own stocks and indicates to the donor the items it is willing to receive. The donor needs to sign a written statement of consent so that the redundant titles may be disposed of through exchange or some other appropriate manner that the library chooses. The gift of materials will then be acknowledged, and be handled by procedures followed by the Gift and Exchange division.

Restricted Gifts

A restricted gift is one to which the donor has added conditions (such as creation of an inventory, book plating, restricted access etc.) which limit the libraries' options of disposition or processing. All restricted gifts have to be reviewed by the Gift and Exchange division prior to being accepted. Any gift requiring unusual processing will be accepted only after consultation with the relevant processing and technical service division. Under no circumstance shall the library commit itself to transporting gifts or to unusual processing of gifts prior to a review. Restricted gifts have to be examined prior to acceptance, although the National Library welcomes gifts of all kinds.

Adding Gifts to the Collections

All gifts will be added to the collection through the Gift and Exchange division. The Gift and Exchange division will maintain a file of agreements governing gifts added to the collection. The processing of the gifted publications is to be done by the processing divisions for the respective languages.

Gift Reviews

Gift reviews will ascertain a) the cost-benefit involved in accepting a gift which requires expenditure or special processing; b) the extent to which the gift will strengthen the collection; c) the possibility of duplication of material already in the library; d) the value of the gifts to potential users; e) the current availability of the gifts in the market; f) if the price of purchase, if the material is available in the market, would be lower than that of accepting the gift; g) the conditions laid down (such as book plating, special inventory etc.) by the donor; h) the physical condition of the material (by a member of the library staff trained in conservation); i) estimated worth of the gift in the market; j) the possible ways of disposing of the part of the gift not to be added to the collection. The aim of the review to balance the benefits of the gift to the library's cost in acquiring it. Reviews should be followed by a report to the officer in charge of the Gift and Exchange division.

Gift Acceptance and Rejection

Gifts deemed acceptable will be handled by the Gift and Exchange division, following library procedures for shipping, postage, car rental etc. for non-local gifts. The gifts are then to be processed by the relevant processing divisions.

Gift Rejection

If the gift offered is deemed unacceptable, the Gift and Exchange division will inform the donor. If conditions are deemed unacceptable, the division will inform the donor of the terms on which the gifts might be accepted.

Estimated Gift Values, Acknowledgements, and Gift Records

Determining the gift's value for tax reporting as might be required by the law is the donor's responsibility. The library might, on request, assist the donor in locating an appraiser. Appraisal fees, the preparation of reproductions for gifts of art work etc. are the donor's responsibility.

The acknowledgement of a gift provides the donor and the library with a record of the gift made. It documents the agreement that the donor's terms, if any, will be honoured. It provides one of the bases for gathering data on collections. It also provides the donor with the proof that the gift has been made for charitable purposes. Restricted gifts may require more individualized acknowledgement.

Exchange Definition

Exchange refers to the process by which books or other library materials such as manuscripts, periodicals, maps, prints, photographs, electronic resources etc. are exchanged between the National Library and another library, institution or organization. It also refers to the exchange of library personnel with the partner library.

Objective

The idea behind the exchange of publications and professionals is that

- i) there may be a system of building a collection of foreign publications in the library without incurring expenditure in foreign currency; and
- ii) avenues may be created for library professionals to exchange their experience and expertise with their peers in other institutions and regions of the world.

Exchange of Publications

The exchange of publications is to be governed by bilateral cultural exchange agreements. Both sides will exchange a list of publications on offer and might submit a demand list. The custom followed is barter of item against item regardless of its cost. However, an account is to be maintained of the cost of the materials received and supplied. The items placed on the demand list by the exchange partner may be provided from duplicate stock, purchase or any other means deemed fit. The decision for accepting exchange offers and the benefits of offering items in return, or for procuring demanded items in any other way, will rest on reviews carried out by the Gift and Exchange division. The Gift and Exchange division will have the responsibility of carrying out the exchange procedures and maintaining records.

Exchange of Personnel

Exchange of personnel is to be governed by bilateral and multilateral cultural agreements. The exchange is aimed at sharing professional experience, encouraging staff development, promoting interaction with peer groups abroad, and enhancing better understanding of the library practices followed elsewhere in the world. As a matter of general policy, members on the verge of superannuation will not be recommended for exchange programmes. Precise criteria (including the latter) of eligibility of staff nominated for exchange will be governed by the rules set down by the Ministry of Culture and the Government of India. Records and procedures concerning exchange of personnel are to be handled by the Gifts and Exchange division.