8.1 INTRODUCTION

Serials control is the process for acquiring periodicals/journals involving selection, order and procurement using any approximate subscription mode. It also includes the formulation of selection policy, evaluation, preparation for binding and weeding, recording and other allied operations. It needs careful handling because of the nature and size of the collection and involvement of a large-scale budget.

This Unit deals with automated serials control and management system starting with how to automate various functions of a serials system, how to select appropriate software package for your library, what kind of services you can generate out of the system exploiting the serials data already inputted.

8.2 FEATURES OF SERIALS CONTROL SYSTEM

The functions of serials control in a library are:

- Selection
- Acquisition
- Receipt and control
- Reminders for missing issues
- Circulation and routing
- Renewal of subscription
- Claiming
- Binding
- Reports
- Search
- Indexing articles
- Interface with union list and union catalogue

- **Selection**

The library has overall responsibility for the development of collection vis-a-vis management of budget allocation. The librarian selects and orders serials to support the need of their particular disciplines and research keeping in mind the impact of internet based resources (Electronic Journals, fill-text web services like DIALOG, Science Direct Services, etc.), services offered by national network like INFLIBNET, Metro Library Networks like DELNET, Bonnet, etc. The librarian has also to take decision about the ownership of electronic journals or access right.

Generally the constraints that operate on selectors are budgetary ones, but other aspects such as, relevance of materials to the collections, currency, price, availability of materials in other sister library and so an may also apply.

The identification of periodicals likely to be purchased by the library for the current year is usually done by the library committee. When the decision has been made about what to subscribe and why, the librarian must give attention to the problems of obtaining the periodicals– he believes he needs.

Basically, there are several means of supply of periodicals to a library:

- By purchase from a local vendor
- By purchase directly from the publishers of the periodicals
- By the gift or exchange of publications with publishers, libraries or other organizations
- By taking up membership of learned society or professional body which is the publisher of the required materials.
- By selecting authorized vendors for electronic journals, e-journals, CD-ROM databases.

Most libraries operate their acquisition programmes for their periodicals using a combination of a number of these methods.

- **Acquisition**

Many integrated library software packages or stand alone serial systems are available in the market. The procedure adopted by many packages discussed in this Unit are more or less same. You are advised to consult the user manual of the concerned software package used in your library for more details.

Before starting the actual work of the automated serial system in a computer, the following databases are generally created in advance for smooth operation of system.

- **Master Files**

There may be a number of master files, which are used in automated serials system, Some files, like members, vendors, budget, department, are common which are used in circulation, acquisition and cataloguing systems. These files contain the data about journal, vendor, publisher, department/organization, binding specifications, currency, subject and letters. It is important that all files should be prepared and validated before starting using the module.

- **Journal** : It contains details about the journals.

  Vendor : It contains details of the vendors who supply documents in the library, such as Vendor code, name, phone, fax, address, e-mail address.

- **Publisher** : It contains details of the publisher such as publisher code, name, phone, fax, e-mail address, address.

- **Department/Organisation** : It contains details of the institutes/department for whom the library is procuring materials. Such as code, name, phone, fax, address e-mail address.

- **Binding Specifications** : It contains various types of binding specifications required for journals once the volume is complete.

- **Currency** : It contains conversion rates for various currencies used in price files at the time of indent input and invoice receipt. The details to be included are currency, name of currency, conversion rate, last updated on. It is advisable that this master is updated before use.

- **Subject** : In this master, subject - its class numbers are entered. They are useful while preparing and printing list of additions.

- **Letters** : This master file stores pre-designed contents of various letters (used in acquisition module). Each letter normally consists of the followings fields:

    Letter number
    - ▫ Letter title
    Contents
    - ▪ Signatory
    - • Copy to
    Enclosure heading
    Enclosure contents

The following letters are normally provided for the purpose :

- Unapproved journals
- Approved journals
- Reminder for missing issue
- Reminder for non-supply
- Claim letter
- Duplicate received letter to vendor
- Sanction for contingent bill
- Supply orders for vendor
- Supply orders for publisher
- Supply orders for membership
- Supply orders for exchange
- Supply orders for gratis
- Reminder for missing issue (copy to publisher)
- Reminder for non-supply (copy to publisher)
- Reminder for non-receipt of invoice
- Contingent bill
- Budget approval
- Journal approval

- **Journal Database**

    The details of journals being subscribed in the library may look like.

Journals				
Journal Lits		Language		Physical Medium
TSSN	Coden	Frequency	Start Year in Lib	Start Volume
Title			Class Number	Issue/bound Volume
Short Title			Notes on Bibliographical Relationship	
Variant Title			Subject	
Spine Title			Set of title	
Publisher			Binding Specification	
		New	Save Delete	Close

Example of Journal Worksheet from Suchika

In fact data for all the fields are filled up in Journal Master file.

- **Vendor Database**

Similarly, Vendor Database may contain the record consisting of:

How to enter vendor record, vendor code, vendor name, address, E-mail, telephone, specialization/dealers, performance.

- **Publisher Database**

The record in Publisher database may contain, publisher code, publisher name, address, E-mail, telephone, specialization/dealers in publishers, performance.

- **Currency Database**

In Currency Database, the details such as currency code, currency name, conversion rate.

Similarly other databases such as **Department/Organisation , Subject, Binding Specifications** are created.

Transactions

All the transactions, e.g. subscription, approvals, supply orders and their cancellation, Kardex, document receipt, payment details, binding, accessioning and article indexing are carried out using above files. The following transactions are done in a serials control system:

- Subscription,
- Approvals,
- Supply orders,
- Cancellation of supply orders,
- Kardex,
- Document receipt,
- Payment details,
- Binding,
- Accessioning and
- Article indexing