

**Use of Books in Jadavpur University: An
Evaluative Study to Find Out Suitable
Collection Development Policy**

*Synopsis submitted in partial fulfilment for the award leading to the
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By

Debashish Mukherjee

Supervisor

Professor Dr. Udayan Bhattacharya

Department of Library and Information Science

Jadavpur University

Department of Library and Information Science

Jadavpur University, Kolkata -700032

West Bengal. India

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Introduction: In the context of library management, collection evaluation is an essential, ongoing process aimed at ensuring that library resources effectively align with their stated objectives—whether academic, instructional, recreational, or community-oriented. This evaluative practice relies on both collection-centred and use-centred techniques to assess the size, depth, and actual utilization of the collection. Collection-centred methods, such as bibliographic comparison, shelf list analysis, and statistical review, allow libraries to benchmark their holdings against established standards. Use-centred approaches, including circulation studies and in-house use surveys, provide insight into patron behaviour, information access patterns, and unmet user needs. Together, these tools help identify collection strengths, gaps, and evolving demands. Moreover, a clearly articulated collection development policy, informed by these assessments, ensures coherent acquisition strategies and facilitates inter-institutional collaboration through shared resource models. By incorporating empirical data into decision-making, libraries can enhance resource alignment, budget allocation, and strategic planning, thereby maintaining relevance and institutional responsiveness.

In the evolving landscape of higher education, university libraries play a pivotal role in supporting academic excellence, research advancement, and lifelong learning. Central to this mission is the development and maintenance of a robust and relevant collection of resources that meet the diverse and dynamic needs of students, faculty, and researchers. To achieve this, a systematic and evidence-based Collection Development Policy (CDP) is essential. A CDP serves as a strategic framework guiding the selection, acquisition, evaluation, and weeding of library materials in alignment with institutional goals and user demands.

An effective approach to collection development and management must be grounded in a thorough evaluation of the library's existing holdings, identifying both strengths and gaps, while assessing how well they align with the needs of

current and prospective users. While professional judgment plays a crucial role in this process, reliance on a blend of collection-focused and user-centered assessment methods can help minimize subjectivity.

Collection-based metrics encompass factors such as the size, growth rate, and overall quality of the holdings, benchmarked against established external standards. Meanwhile, user-centered evaluation examines the collection's usability, employing methods such as user surveys, accessibility and availability assessments, and circulation data analysis to gauge its effectiveness in serving academic and research needs.

The role of a university library is integral to supporting academic programs by providing access to relevant learning and research resources. As academic demands evolve, the library's collection must be continually assessed and updated. A Collection Development Policy (CDP) serves as a strategic document to guide the acquisition, evaluation, and weeding of materials. This thesis investigates the actual use of books in the university library to inform the development of a user-centric and data-driven CDP

This thesis focuses on the evaluation of book usage as a critical method for informing and constructing an effective Collection Development Policy for Jadavpur university library. By analysing patterns of book use—such as frequency of circulation, subject relevance, authorship, edition, year of publication, and place of publication—libraries can make informed decisions about which resources to retain, replace, or acquire. This evaluative approach not only ensures optimal use of limited budgets and space but also enhances the overall user experience by aligning the collection more closely with actual academic needs.

Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader discourse on library management and policy-making by demonstrating how empirical evaluation of book usage can lead to more responsive and sustainable collection strategies in academic libraries.

Statement of Problem:

The effectiveness of a university library largely depends on how well its collection meets the academic and research needs of its users. Jadavpur University, being a premier institution, requires a carefully curated collection of books that supports its diverse educational programs and research activities. However, without a clear understanding of how the existing books are being utilized, it is challenging to develop an optimal collection development policy. This study aims to evaluate the use of books in Jadavpur University library to identify gaps, patterns, and user preferences. The findings will provide valuable insights to formulate a suitable and dynamic collection development policy that ensures resource optimization and maximizes user satisfaction.

Research Questions

- Is there any documented Collection Development Policy Jadavpur University have? What are the current gaps in the library's Collection Development Policy, and how can a comprehensive policy be formulated and implemented?
- How well does the existing collection align with the curriculum and departmental visions?
- What are the usage patterns of books based on bibliographic elements such as authorship, year of publication, edition, place of publication, and price?
- Which books or subject areas are underutilized, and which are in high demand within the library's collection?

- How is the current budget allocation affecting the acquisition of books?
- How frequently should collection usage be evaluated to inform acquisition and retention decisions?

Objectives of the Study

- To evaluate the usage of books in selected academic departments.
- To analyse book usage patterns based on key bibliographic elements such as authorship, year of publication, edition, place of publisher, and price.
- To identify underutilized and high-demand documents of specific subject areas.
- To identify CEI (Cost Effective Index) and Cost benefit analysis of selected subject area.
- To recommend guidelines for constructing a Collection Development Policy grounded in empirical data.

Purpose / Aims of the Research:

The research topic, **"Use of Books in Jadavpur University: An Evaluative Study to Find Out Suitable Collection Development Policy,"** aims to analyze how books are used by students, faculty, researchers, and other users to evaluate the effectiveness of the current library collection. By examining usage patterns and identifying gaps, the study provides empirical evidence to develop a collection development policy that better aligns with the academic and research needs of the university community. This helps optimize resource allocation, ensuring funds are directed toward acquiring and maintaining relevant materials, ultimately enhancing user satisfaction and supporting academic success.

Additionally, the research supports strategic long-term planning and contributes valuable insights to library science by promoting a user-centered, evidence-based approach to collection development.

This study benefits the nation by contributing to the improvement of academic libraries, which are crucial centers for knowledge, research, and education. By developing a more effective, evidence-based collection development policy at Jadavpur University—a prominent educational institution—the research helps ensure that students and researchers have access to relevant, high-quality resources that support learning and innovation. This, in turn, fosters a more skilled and knowledgeable workforce, promotes academic excellence, and drives research that can address national challenges. Ultimately, strengthening university libraries enhances the overall quality of higher education in the country, contributing to social and economic development at the national level.

Limitations:

Jadavpur University stands as one of India's premier institutions of higher education, comprising four major faculties: Arts, Engineering, Science, and Interdisciplinary Studies, Law, and Management. Under its academic umbrella, the university encompasses 36 departments, 22 schools, and 46 centres for study. Its extensive library holdings 693,905 volumes of books are distributed across various departments, schools, and centres, spanning the main campuses at Jadavpur and Salt Lake, as well as the central library facilities.

The present study focuses on the holdings of seven departments: Bengali, Economics, and History from the Faculty of Arts; Civil Engineering and Mechanical Engineering from the Faculty of Engineering and Technology; and Mathematics and Physics from the Faculty of Science. The analysis is based solely on the usage data of underused physical books. The scope of collection development and book usage spans the period from 24 December 1955 to 31

March 2023. Additionally, the financial analysis—covering expenditures on printed books, e-books, and journals—is confined to the period between 2017 and 2023.

Methodology

The study employs a qualitative, document-based approach, drawing on a range of administrative records including accession registers, circulation statistics, and catalogue data spanning several decades.

- **Department Selection:** Departments with the highest volume of holdings were identified through an analysis of the university’s accession registers and catalogue databases. Seven departments were ultimately selected: three from the Faculty of Arts (Bengali, Economics, and History—representing Language, Humanities, and Social Sciences respectively), two from the Faculty of Science (Mathematics and Physics), and two from the Faculty of Engineering and Technology (Civil Engineering and Mechanical Engineering).
- **Collection of Circulation Data:** Physical verification of stacks was carried out for each selected subject area. Date slips affixed to individual books were examined to trace historical usage patterns.
- **Analysis of Usage Records:** A review of circulation data, gate pass logs, and user records from the Reading Room and Reference Section was undertaken to capture broader usage trends within the university library system.
- **Identification of Low-Usage Materials:** Books identified as underused, unused, or misplaced were documented as part of a systematic evaluation of collection efficiency.

- **Supplementary Sources:** Additional contextual information was gathered from administrative files, annual reports, archival resources, relevant literature, and interviews with library personnel. The researcher's personal observations and professional experience further enriched the qualitative data.
- **Data Processing and Presentation:** Data were organized and analyzed using MS Office tools, and findings were presented in both tabular and graphical formats.

The methodological framework is designed to yield a nuanced understanding of historical and current usage trends. The insights derived aim to inform the development of a collection development policy that is empirically grounded, user-responsive, and future-ready.

Style of Reference:

The APA (American Psychological Association) citation style is one of many different citation styles. Guide lines of APA 6th editions, 2009 followed here for citation of print and non-print materials in the text and for making list of references.

Chaptarisation:

Chapter 1: Introduction Establishes the study's context within Jadavpur University's academic and library framework. Presents aims, questions, methods, scope, and limitations.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature Synthesizes 151 scholarly sources on book usage and collection development, identifying trends, models, and research gaps.

Chapter 3: Library and Higher Education Explores India's higher education evolution, emphasizing the foundational role of academic libraries in institutional progress.

Chapter 4: Collection Development Policy Evaluates selection strategies and policy alignment with academic needs. Discusses preservation, funding constraints, and shifting user demands.

Chapter 5: Growth and Development of Collection Traces the library's historical expansion and assesses current holdings against research and teaching requirements.

Chapter 6: Use of Books Analyses circulation data to gauge how well the collection supports academic constituencies.

Chapter 7: Weeding Details deselection processes and criteria. Explores stakeholder involvement and preservation challenges.

Chapter 8: Funding and Budget Reviews library financing from varied sources, analysing budget planning and its implications on service quality.

Chapter 9: Data Interpretation and Analysis Provides statistical insights through graphical and tabular representation, contextualized by study objectives.

Chapter 10: Findings and Conclusion Summarizes discoveries and offers actionable recommendations for policy and practice.

Chapter 11: Bibliography A curated and systematic listing of all cited references for academic integrity and further research.

Distribution of Books Across Departments at Jadavpur University

As of the reporting period, Jadavpur University's total book holdings are distributed across various faculties and centres. The Central Library houses the majority of the collection.

Table 1 Distribution of Books by Department or Faculty

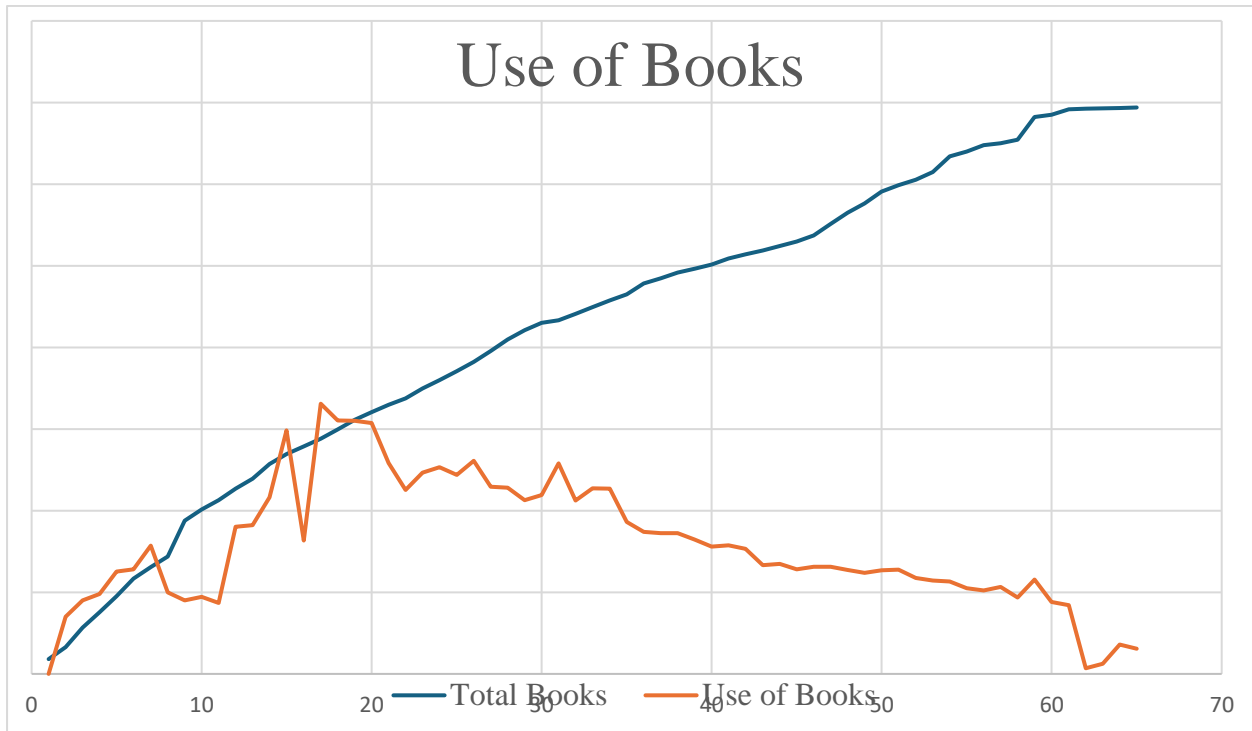
Department/Faculty	Number of Books	Percentage of Total Books	Number of Departments
Central Library	366,658	52.88%	-
Salt Lake – Library Generals	8,380	1.21%	-
Arts Faculty	128,651	18.56%	13
Science Faculty	37,530	5.41%	6
Engineering Faculty	131,908	19.03%	16
ISLM	15,770	2.27%	22
Centre for Studies	4,445	0.64%	49
Total	693,342	100%	108

The Central Library accounts for more than half (52.88%) of the total books at the university, indicating its role as the primary repository. Among the faculties, Engineering and Arts hold significant shares at 19.03% and 18.56%, respectively. Although Centres for Studies comprise the highest number of Centres for advanced studies and research (n = 49), they represent less than 1% of the collection, which suggests specialized or limited scope holdings.

Book Usage Analysis

Jadavpur University Library experienced steady growth in book acquisitions from 18,077 in 1955 to 693,909 in 2024, averaging 9,796 books annually. Despite this expansion, circulation peaked in the 1970s and fell drastically—over 90% by 2024—indicating misalignment between stock and usage. Usage percentages

declined from over 120% in the 1950s to under 5% recently, reflecting shifting academic behaviour, the rise of digital resources, and COVID-19 disruptions. Key statistics reveal high fluctuation in engagement, with a standard deviation of 35%. The analysis calls for data-driven collection strategies and digital transformation to realign library resources with user needs and academic relevance.



Book Usage Analysis by Subject Area

This dataset reflects the distribution and relative underutilization of books across selected academic subjects within the Arts, Engineering, and Science faculties of Jadavpur University. The data highlights areas with notable differences between total holdings and detected unused or less-used volumes.

Table 2 Book Holdings and Underutilization by Subject

Subject	Faculty	Number of Books	Unused / Less-Used Books	% Underutilized
Bengali	Arts	24,875	1,366	5.49%
Economics	Arts	8,630	548	6.35%
History	Arts	11,132	924	8.30%
Civil Engineering	Engineering	13,988	57	0.41%
Mechanical Engineering	Engineering	15,409	257	1.67%
Mathematics	Science	17,593	714	4.06%
Physics	Science	6,936	389	5.61%

Subjects under the Arts faculty show a higher proportion of unused or minimally used books, especially History (8.30%) and Economics (6.35%), Bengali (5.49%) suggesting potential gaps in curricular integration or shifting academic preferences. Engineering subjects such as Civil Engineering (0.41%) , Mechanical Engineering (1.67%), report minimal underutilization, indicating effective alignment between resources and usage. Meanwhile, Science subjects like Mathematics (4.06%) and Physics (5.61%) reflect moderate underutilization. These findings may inform strategic decisions about collection management, digitization, or targeted outreach to faculty and students.

Major Findings

Need for a Comprehensive Collection Development Policy – The absence of a formally structured Collection Development Policy limits strategic resource allocation and acquisition efficiency.

Alignment with Academic Vision and Curriculum – The relevance of library collections improves when selection is closely integrated with departmental goals and curriculum updates.

Demand-Driven Acquisition – Faculty-selected books exhibit higher usage, indicating the necessity of involving academic stakeholders in collection development.

Preference for Updated Editions – Later editions of books are more frequently used, underscoring the importance of acquiring newer editions over outdated ones.

Systematic Weeding of Low-Use and Irreparable/ unrecoverable Materials – Removing mutilated (irreparable/ unrecoverable materials), underutilized or obsolete titles enhances collection relevance and frees up space for high-demand resources.

Promotion Strategies for Newer Books – Insufficient awareness contributes to lower usage of books acquired post-2010, highlighting the need for better promotional efforts.

Interdisciplinary Selection Approach – Broader academic relevance is observed when departments beyond Bengali studies participate in book selection.

Optimized Budget Allocation – Mid-priced books (₹200–₹500) show better usage efficiency, suggesting a targeted budget strategy for acquisitions.

Guidelines for Gifted Books – A formal policy is required to ensure that donated materials align with academic priorities and library usage patterns.

Strengthening Faculty-Library Collaboration – Regular interaction between library staff and faculty improves selection and deselection processes.

Improving Access and User Education – Better cataloguing, subject guides, and orientation programs can enhance resource visibility and utilization.

Institutionalizing Periodic Collection Evaluations – Regular assessments ensure that library holdings remain responsive to evolving academic needs.

Dedicated Budget Provision for Books – A clear allocation within the university budget is necessary to sustain academic resource availability.

Conclusion

The analysis of book usage at Jadavpur University Library reveals that academic alignment, content relevance, and user-centred selection are the primary factors influencing effective resource utilization. Despite a substantial collection, many titles remain underused, particularly in disciplines such as Bengali, Economics, and Mathematics. Conversely, areas like Civil and Mechanical Engineering demonstrate that when collections align with current curricula and research needs, usage improves significantly.

Patterns across authorship, publication date, edition, and cost further underscore the importance of strategic, data-driven collection development. Books selected by academic departments and those with recent, revised content consistently show higher engagement, while indiscriminate acquisitions—regardless of cost—often fail to meet user expectations.

To enhance the library's academic value and cost-efficiency, a dynamic, evidence-based collection development policy is essential. Such a policy should integrate regular usage analysis, faculty involvement, and a balanced investment in both

foundational and current resources. Ultimately, by aligning acquisitions with the evolving needs of its academic community, Jadavpur University Library can ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness in supporting learning and research.

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