

STOCK VERIFICATION

In old times, the books in library were meant for preservation, not for the use of readers. So the chances of loss of books were negligible. With the advancement of libraries, the libraries have become a source of dissemination of information. The circulation of books has become the central activity of the library functioning. As the five laws of library science implies the open access system in libraries, so in open access system the probability of book losses becomes more comparative to close access system. Thus Stock verification becomes necessary to avoid the inevitable loss of the books.

Stock verification means physical checking and verification of the stock in record to trace out the missing, misplaced or not returned books. It is also denoted by synonym terms such as Stock taking, Stock checking, Stock inspection and Inventory taking. It refers to process of checking as to what is in stock in relation to what there was. As the fifth law of Library Science 'Library is a Growing Organism' implies that with the passage of time, the library collection increases, thus it becomes necessary to take account of the growing library stock to maintain its up-to-datedness.

It is very important task of library that should be conducted annually. This work is mainly conducted during vacation to maintain its continuity. For the smooth uniformly functioning of this process, the issuing of books is suspended for some period and even the issued books are called back by the library staff. Books found missing should be written off by the competent authority. In foreign countries the book loss generated by stock verification reports is written off and librarian is not held responsible for that. As regards loss, in Indian libraries earlier the librarians were held responsible for the loss and they were asked to pay for it. But later on, the Ministry of Education, University authorities and Library authorities suggested and implemented for a loss of three books per thousand of the library stock to be considered as the normal loss that can be written off.

METHODS OF STOCK TAKING

1. MANUAL STOCK TAKING
2. AUTOMATED STOCK TAKING

MANUAL STOCK TAKING

Libraries traditionally perform the periodic stock verification by adopting any one of the following methods.

1. **Stock Verification by Accession Register-** This is the simplest method in which one person calls the particulars of the book along with accession number and the other one

crosses the particular accession number in the accession register. Finally a list of untraced books is prepared to find out the missing books. In the end, the list of books is cross verified from the issued records, binding section and further final list of untraceable books is put up to the authorities to write off.

2. **Stock Verification using A Separate Register with Accession Numbers-** Accession register can be disfigured during the process of repetitive stock taking. To avoid this, usually a duplicate accession register specifying the accession numbers and years of stock taking is prepared for stock taking. The specimen copy of accession register with accession numbers is given below:

Accession Number	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Remarks
11000							
11001							
11002							
11003							

In this method, one person calls the accession number and the other member marks in the relevant year column paralar to the verified accession number. In the end, the untraceable books are cross verified from the issued records, binding section and further final list of untraceable books is made to write off these books.

3. **Stock Verification using Loose Sheets with Accession Numbers-**Other simple method of stock taking is by using loose sheets containing accession numbers in sequence from first number to last accession entry of the stock register. The specimen copy of loose sheet is given below:

1.	6.	11.	-	-
2.	7.	12.	-	-
3.	8.	13.	-	-
4.	9.	14.	-	-
5.	10.	15.	-	15000

After tallying the accession numbers of the books on the shelves, accession numbers in the lists are crossed out and the untraced items are checked with the charging tray and binding section. Finally the list of untraced and damaged books is prepared to write off the lost books.

4. **Stock Verification by Numerical Counting-**In this method of stock taking mere counting of the books on shelves, issued books and already written off books is done. Finally the

total additive of these books is deducted from the total number of books stocked in the accession register to get the rough idea for the loss. This system is preferred to save the wastage of time and efforts of the library staff.

5. **Sample Stock Verification**-Through this method only a few selected sections of books which are in regular use are verified and on that basis the estimated loss is predicted by the library staff. This system is also adopted to save the wastage of time and efforts of the library staff.

ADVANTAGES OF STOCK VERIFICATION

1. It is helpful to reveal loss of books.
2. It is also helpful in stock rectification as the misplaced books are arranged in their actual place back.
3. It helps to know the popularity or demand of the specific set of collection which is on regular use and have more chances to get lost.
4. It enables the regular maintenance of the stock to be get it free from dirt and insects. The old and worn out books are sorted to get repaired.
5. It provides opportunity to the library staff to acquaint well with the library holding to serve well their readers.
6. It also points out the functioning of the library staff. The losses beyond nominal and set standards of write off range are to be checked, thus it enables library authorities and librarian to ascertain remedies to avoid some serious losses in future.

DISADVANTAGES OF STOCK VERIFICATION

1. Manual stock verification procedures are sometimes considered as mere wastage of money, efforts and time as it is long and time consuming process involving library staff.
2. It also interrupts the regular working of library.
3. During the Stock verification process, readers are instructed to deposit the issued books back to library and it can interrupt their rhythm of reading. It can also annoy some of the readers to become a regular member of library.
4. Sometimes the physical checking serves no purpose as the lost book was no more require by the readers. Thus, the manual system of stock verification is considered the sheer wastage of time and efforts of the library staff, as these efforts can be utilized to provide better library services to users.

The manual methods of stock taking are time consuming, cumbersome and defective as these are done manually. So to avoid such shortcomings, stock verification methods of numerical counting and sample stock verification are suggested. The shortcut methods

of manual stock taking such as sample stock taking or stock taking by numbering can serve the purpose well to estimate the library functioning and book loss occurred annually.

However in automated system, Stockverification becomes easy and less time consuming for the physical verification of the library stock.

AUTOMATED STOCK TAKING

The Information technology has enabled automation of various housekeeping operations of library including stock verification. The automated stock verification procedures are conducted by employing Bar Code and RFID technology in automated library environment. In big libraries, stock verification becomes a tedious and time consuming job. The use of Barcode and RFID technology make the stock verification procedure easy and speedy.

Stock Verification by Barcode Technology -Barcode technology plays an important role automating the functions of the library, especially theStock Verification. Its application increases the speed and accuracy in operations. A bar code consists of a series of parallel, adjacent bars and spaces. The barcode label actually acts as a unique control number, which is associated with a record (accession number)giving appropriate details of individual books. A bar code reader scans the barcode labels i.e. accession number of the books speedily. Once the data capturing in the form of scanning of all barcode labels is complete, the report is generated by library software in short span of time. Barcode technology is reliable, easy to use, less time consuming in comparative to manual stock taking procedures. It is also inexpensive and affordable by small libraries in comparison to RFID technology.

Stock Verification by RFID Technology – RFID is the latest technology that can be employed for stock taking. Radio frequency Identification is a term that is used to describe a system that transmits the identity in the form of a unique serial number in the form of accession number of any book wirelessly in a tag using radio waves. These tags are affixed to the books either in the inside or hard bound in them. A comprehensive RFID system has three components: (1) RFID tags that are electronically programmed with unique information i.e. accession numbers (2) Readers or sensors to read the RFID tags (3) A server on which the software that interfaces with the automated library system is loaded. In stock verification through RFID, library routine work is not interrupted. With RFID, It is easy to scan through volume of books on the shelves without pulling these out. This is unique feature of RFID over the Barcode system. It saves the time as well as the labour of the library staff. It reduces the processing time. It produces foolproof stock verification report with reduced human intervention and processing time. However, RFID is a very expensive technology. So this technology is not widely used by most of the libraries.

References

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