

Transparent Book Procurement Policy 2024

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1. Book Procurement Policy

As per the announcement made by the Hon'ble Chief Minister and the announcement made by the Hon'ble Minister for School Education in the Legislative Assembly, a Committee constituted to study the issue of transparent procurement of books for Public Libraries has submitted its recommendations to the Government.

2. Nature of book procurement

Each book represents a distinct piece of intellectual property. As a product falls under intellectual property, a company holds a monopoly on the ownership of a book. Consequently, the transparent tender procedure adopted in the Government's procurement process could not be applied to book procurement. Section 16(b) of the Tamil Nadu Transparency in Tenders Act, 1998, exempts the procurement of goods exclusively sold by a single manufacturer from the tender process.

3. Applying for Book Selection

I) According to the current procedure, advertisements are published in newspapers for applying for book selection. Applications are solicited annually or biennially, depending on the financial status of the Library Authorities.

II) Since publishers are granted a limited timeframe to apply for book procurement, they are compelled to release new editions periodically. This practice should be avoided.

III) Books published after the application period have to wait until the next round of book procurement.

IV) To address these practical issues, a website for library book procurement should be created. All books published should have the opportunity to apply online throughout the year.

V) All applied books will be reviewed, and only those surpassing the minimum eligibility rating will proceed to negotiations for a reduced sale price.

VI) To avoid unserious applications and ensure careful evaluation of books, an application fee must be paid for each submitted application.

VII) Each applying book should have an ISBN.

VIII) For online evaluation, 20-25 pages of the books should be uploaded to the website in either epub or pdf format.

IX) A specified number of printed books should be submitted for direct reading, book evaluation, and verification of metadata.

X) According to the The delivery of Books (Public Libraries) Act, 1954, books must be sent to Connemara Public Library, one of the national libraries, and to other national libraries.

XI) Additionally, a copy of all published books should be sent to State Libraries such as Anna Centenary Library in Chennai and Kalaingar Centenary Library in Madurai for archival purposes.

4. Book Selection Procedure

The current book selection process relies entirely on the judgement of the members comprising the Selection Committee. Assessments of a particular book may vary from person to person. Determining whether a book is the best should result in an objective decision rather than an individual one. To achieve this, the committee's recommendations should be consolidated using a point scoring system based on the evaluations provided by its members.

5. Reconstitution of Book Selection Committee

I) A book should be reviewed by more than one subject expert rather than just one person. The members of the selection committee must possess expertise in the relevant field. To choose fiction and general books, a committee comprising distinguished critics, readers, academicians, and scholars should be established. The Director of Public Libraries should form this committee with the approval from the Government.

II) If committee members have authored any books, they should abstain from participating in the book selection process. Instead, these texts should be assessed by other experts, critics, academics, readers, or different committee members.

III) The members of the Book Selection Committee are required to rotate annually. A member who has served on the committee in one year cannot be part of the Book Selection Committee for the subsequent two years.

6. Needs of the Readers

The current book selection system lacks a mechanism for taking into account the preferences of readers. Currently, all book selections are made based on recommendations from an expert committee. It is crucial to establish a provision for this expert committee to understand the preferences of the readers. If there is a disparity between the recommendations of experts and the demands of readers, the utilization of acquired books in libraries may decline. Additionally, various types of libraries, including District Central Library, Full-Time Branch Library, Branch Library, Village Library, and Part-Time Library, are operational. These libraries cater to different reader needs, and selecting a uniform set of books for all library levels will not adequately address the diverse requirements of readers.

7. Reader's participation in book selection

I) Considering only the opinions of experts without taking into account the perspectives of the ultimate readers is not conducive to effective library use. It is crucial to consider the needs and preferences of library users when selecting books.

II) To emphasize the importance of readers' needs in the book selection process, it is recommended to involve a selected group of librarians and library readers circles in the book selection process. These individuals should represent various types of libraries, including Village Libraries, Branch Libraries, Full-Time Branch Libraries, District Central Libraries, and State-Level Libraries. Establishing a website where readers can assess books is necessary. Additionally, the librarians and readers involved in book evaluation should be rotated annually to ensure a diverse and comprehensive understanding of library users' preferences.

8. Selection List

I) The book selection list should be organized based on the cumulative assessment points provided by the Selection Committee, Librarians, and Readers' Circles.

II) The list for placing library orders should be prioritized according to the rating list.

III) Once chosen, books will remain on the list for a maximum of two years. After this period, the books must be removed from the list in chronological order through computerized processes.

IV) After two years, the removed books will be transferred to a dedicated database for archiving. Librarians have the option to request any book from the archived list.

9. Period of Book Procurement

Currently, books are acquired either annually or biennially, taking into account the financial status of the Local Library Authorities. The procurement of books should align with the publication schedule, ensuring that books released each year are obtained for the libraries within the same year. Since competitive examinations books are updated regularly, it is imperative that these books are promptly made available in libraries to facilitate exam preparation. Consequently, it is recommended that book procurement be conducted on a quarterly basis rather than the current practice of once a year or every two years.

10. No. of copies to be procured

Public libraries have acquired between 500 and 1000 copies of books. Given that there are over 4500 libraries throughout the state, the current book procurement falls short of meeting the needs of all libraries. Consequently, it is recommended that libraries have the flexibility to determine the number of copies they wish to procure based on their individual requirements and the availability of funds. To facilitate this process, a dedicated website should be created and it should facilitate each library to communicate their book requirements.

11. Financial Outlay for Purchase of book

I) According to Government Order (Ms) No.1138, School Education Department, dated 23.06.1980, 25% of the revenue generated from the library cess must be utilized for the procurement of books, periodicals, newspapers, and other reading materials.

II) The expenditure on books in a financial year should not surpass the specified limit.

III) It is imperative that purchase orders are not issued based on the assumption of receiving library cess which is to be collected in future.

IV) The Director of Public Libraries is responsible for allocating funds in the annual budget, adhering to the book procurement budget limit and utilizing the available library cess.

V) The allocated amount must be distributed among various types of libraries, including District Central Library, Full-Time Branch Library, Branch Library, Village Library, Part-Time Library, and Mobile Library.

VI) Different types of libraries have varied preferences in book usage. Some libraries lean towards more competitive exam oriented books, while fiction books are extensively used in others.

VII) The books procured for libraries can be classified as follows

1. Fiction
2. Non fiction
3. Competitive examination books
4. Children's Books
5. Academic textbooks
6. Documentation Editions
7. Government Publications

8. Translated books

9. Foreign Books

VIII) The Director of Public Libraries must annually conduct a survey on book usage and determine the percentage of the total allocation for book procurement for each category.

IX) Periodic fund allocations should be made for National and State-level special libraries such as Connemara Public Library, Anna Centenary Library, and Kalaighar Centenary Library.

X) The allocated amount for each library in a given year will be distributed quarterly on the website for the issuance of purchase orders.

XI) Facilitation of online book selection with the assigned budget should be implemented.

XII) Orders received from various libraries will be compiled, and online orders will be placed to each publisher.

12. Quality Testing of Books

I) Once a book is applied online for book selection, the required number of printed copies for book evaluation must be submitted.

II) The submitted printed copies of books will undergo verification to ensure compliance with the standards outlined in the application registered on the website. If there are discrepancies between the details in the printed copy of the book and the information entered on the website, the applications for such books will be returned to the online applicant. The book will undergo evaluation only after the applicant has corrected the provided information.

III) Books printed on low-quality paper will be rejected during the quality testing stage, and the applicant will be informed of the details online.

IV) The paper quality, print quality, and binding quality of the books submitted for evaluation will be scrutinized by comparing them with the quality of the books sent to

libraries. If the quality of the books sent to libraries is substandard, the procurement order will be cancelled entirely. Unethical applicants or publishers in such cases will be barred from participating in book procurement for a period of three years.

13. Setting appropriate price for the books

I) The pricing of books undergoes changes for various reasons. Multiple components contribute to book pricing, including paper cost, printing expenses, binding, book volumes, design, dispatch costs, author royalties, translation expenses, and publisher's profit.

II) Currently, book prices are determined solely based on the number of pages printed, neglecting factors like paper quality, black and white or color printing, drawings, book design, and book content. Consequently, high-quality books do not receive fair compensation. This inadequacy requires correction.

III) Each publisher adheres to a distinct pricing policy, making it challenging to establish a standardized price. To address this issue, the prices of books from various publishers will be aggregated, leading to the creation of a Book Price Index for each book category. Samples of different book categories as given below will be gathered from the market, and a price index will be prepared based on these samples.

1. Fiction
2. Non fiction
3. Competitive examination books
4. Children's Books
5. Academic textbooks
6. Documentation Editions
7. Government Publications
8. Translated books

9. Foreign Books

IV) The components of Price Index Number include the expenses incurred in the production of books.

- i) Paper Quality (GSM)
- ii) Cover Page Quality (GSM)
- iii) Paper Price
- iv) Printing charge
- v) Print Color (Mono color/ Multicolor)
- vi) Card Printing (Board/Wrapper Printing)
- vii) Binding charge
- viii) Pre-Press work
- ix) Royalty for the author
- x) Translation Expenditure
- xi) Publisher's profit margin

V) The standard price per page for each genre of book shall be determined, and a list of price indexes will be compiled.

VI) Books falling within the specified Price Index Number range will have a fixed discount rate determined based on the average price per page. The acceptable price for such books will then be communicated to the publisher/applicant.

VII) It is advisable to refrain from procuring books priced above the set price limit in the Price Index Number.

VIII) Annually, a committee will be formed to select samples from different categories for the calculation of the Price Index. This committee is appointed by the Director of Public Libraries, and samples are collected from the open market every January.

IX) Computer software assisted calculations will be developed for determining the Price Index and establishing the price range.

14. Book Procurement Negotiation Procedure

I) Procurement negotiations for books must be conducted online, with prices determined based on the price index for each book in the selected book list. The negotiated price, along with any applicable discount rate, must be communicated to the applicant or publisher.

II) The publisher or applicant has the option to negotiate the procurement price by either accepting or rejecting an online discount rate request, or proposing a different discount rate. The Procurement Price Negotiation Committee, chaired by the Director of Public Libraries, will oversee these negotiations.

III) Discounts obtained through procurement price negotiations should be evaluated by comparing them to discount rates offered for similar books within the same category.

IV) The entire book procurement process must be conducted online, with no direct negotiations permitted.

15. Allocation of Funds to Libraries

I) The library cess should be assessed each year, and a portion of 20% to 25% should be set aside specifically for procurement of books.

II) The maximum allowance for book procurement using the library cess is 25% of the total revenue collected from the library cess in a given fiscal year. Since it's not feasible to determine the current fiscal year's library cess revenue, the revenue from the previous fiscal year should be considered as an estimated credit.

III) Allocation for book purchases should be designated for various categories of libraries each year. These categories include:

- 1) District Central Libraries
- 2) Full-time branch libraries

- 3) Branch Libraries
- 4) Village libraries
- 5) Part-time libraries
- 6) Mobile Libraries

IV) Connemara Public Library, the State Central Library and State Special Libraries such as Anna Centenary Library and Kalaignar Centenary Library should receive dedicated annual funds for acquiring books.

V) Director of Public Libraries should allocate funds for procurement of books while drafting the annual budget for the Local Library Authorities.

VI) Allocating funds for book procurement should be done with consideration for the available shelves and space in the libraries. Additionally, when allocating funds for book purchases, fund provision for purchasing bookshelves should also be considered.

VII) Libraries facing shortages of book shelves should also be allocated funds for procuring book shelves while allocating funds for procurement of books.

VIII) Not all libraries possess the same inventory of books, and some have limited storage space. Taking these factors into account, the Director of Public Libraries may adjust the allocation percentages based on reader usage. However, in such reallocations, the maximum allocation for book procurement should not exceed the 25% limit.

16. Requirements for getting books in libraries

I) All the books listed in the selection will be distributed to all libraries via the dedicated website.

II) Libraries don't immediately acquire newly published books, leading to reduced reader interest. It's crucial to procure books needed for students preparing for competitive exams regularly. Competitive examination aspirants are negatively impacted when books are procured only once a year or every two years.

III) Each year's allocated funds will be divided into quarterly portions and disbursed according to the following categories.

1. Fiction
2. Non fiction
3. Competitive examination books
4. Children's Books
5. Academic textbooks
6. Documentation Editions
7. Government Publications
8. Translated books
9. Foreign Books

IV) A specific amount of funds will be designated for each category. The Readers Circle, Competitive Examination aspirants, and Librarian of each library will collaboratively choose the necessary books for their respective libraries online using this allocated amount.

V) When selecting books, the needs of various reader categories such as women, children, general readers, senior citizens, and competitive examination students must be taken into account.

VI) A Readers Circle meeting should convene quarterly to pass a resolution approving the selected book list and publish it on the website.

VII) The book selection process should conclude by the end of each quarter, specifically by June 30, September 30, December 31, and March 31, when indent submissions are due.

VIII) If libraries fail to utilize their quarterly book allocation fully, the computer software will automatically select books with the highest ratings from the selection list in each category.

IX) If the expenditure amount is less than the allocated amount for procurement, the residual amount will be returned to the state fund.

17. Sending Books to Libraries

I. The book requirement list will be compiled upon receiving online requests, and the procurement order will be sent to the respective publisher or applicant every quarter.

II. The books for procurement orders issued in every quarter must be printed and delivered to the libraries within the prescribed time limit.

III. Currently, book vendors deliver books to District Central Libraries. Collections are organized library wise at the District Central Libraries, Central Accession Numbers are assigned to the books in the District Central Library, the books are classified and sent to the libraries.

IV. Due to this practice, the books are backlogged in the district central libraries and sent to the libraries with delay. This should be avoided.

V. Alternatively, sending the books directly to the libraries or to the nearest libraries will reduce the delay.

VI. To mitigate delays, partnerships with logistics companies, similar to those used by online retailers, should be explored. Market-specific arrangements should be examined, and suitable companies identified.

VII. Central Access Number assignment and book classification by District Central Libraries will be done through the website.

18. Payment for book procurement bill

I) There has been a delay in releasing the procurement bill once the books are dispatched to the District Central Libraries. In the past, books have been procured exceeding the available funds, leading to prolonged outstanding payments for book

purchases. This poses financial challenges for book publishers and sellers. Hence, prior to issuing the purchase order, funds should be transferred to a designated Escrow account in the bank and made readily available.

II) Librarians are required to inspect and identify any defects in book production within 10 days of receiving them at the libraries. Books with printing errors, those made with lower paper quality, or those with binding issues should be returned. Any discrepancy in the number of copies received should also be reported.

III) If books are not returned within 10 days, the payment will be released to the seller from the Escrow account, assuming no defects in book quality. This measure aims to expedite the payment process for book purchases.

IV) To facilitate this process, an escrow account should be created in the bank running the appropriate software.

19. Measures to ensure transparency

I) It is essential to keep the publisher or applicant informed regularly through online communication during the book procurement process.

II) Library-wise list of books selected by readers should be published on the website every year.

20. Measures to prevent bias

I) Avoiding personal biases in the book review

The book recommendations from an evaluator consistently providing either high or low ratings, and the book recommendation from an evaluator offering high or low ratings without ample justification will be referred to an Additional Evaluator for assessment. The revised average of these estimates will be considered.

II) Avoiding personal bias in book selection

When selecting books for a library by its Readers Circle, priority should be given to a variety of authors rather than focusing solely on the works of one writer. To ensure this diversity, a computer software will be developed to restrict the selection of a minimum number of authors' books.

21. Nationalized Books

I) Nationalized Books are being published by various publishing houses, often with varying prices for the same title. Obtaining these books can pose practical challenges. It's crucial to develop procurement procedures that address these issues effectively.

II) Procurement of nationalized books from Government Institutions is mandated, particularly when they're published by Government Undertakings. In cases where multiple government agencies release editions of the same book with differing prices, preference should be given to the edition offered at a lower price by government institutions.

III) If a Nationalized book is not published by any government institution, private publishers may be considered. If editions of the same book are published at different prices, paper quality and price index of the books may be considered for purchase during book procurement negotiations.

22. Special Cases

Books that have won the Nobel Prize, recipients of the Booker Prize, winners of the Sahitya Akademi Award, widely-read online bestsellers, scholarly publications from government and research institutions, and rare documents should find a place in libraries. These publications are not typically considered through the standard book selection process. Hence, they should be nominated as special cases for inclusion on the book procurement website. Applications registered through nomination mode are exempted from assessment fee.

1. Documentation Editions
2. Government Publications
3. Best sellers in online market portals
4. Award winning titles

A committee needs to be established for choosing the nominated books. The books recommended by this committee should then be uploaded onto the website. The Director of Public Libraries will appoint this committee.

23. Unfair Practices

I) In the past, it has come to light that some publishers and booksellers have indulged in some of the following malpractices.

1. Selling the book by changing the title only
2. Sale of books by changing the name of the author
3. Printing and selling books without obtaining copyright
4. Printing of poor quality paper
5. Providing Xerox books
6. Submitting the books by changing its publication year
7. Publishing the same book as two books under different titles
8. Filling page by page by photos
9. Filling pages by increased font size

II) If the publishers or book sellers are found to be involved in the above malpractices, due explanation will be sought and if the illegal activity is proved, they will be banned from participating in book procurement for 5 years. If the same person indulges in similar irregularities for the second time, he will be permanently barred from participating in book procurement.

24. Weeding out old books

I) Due to lack of space to store new books in libraries, books are kept in bundles in some places.

II) The acquisition of new books, coupled with the removal of outdated ones, not only resolves the space constraint but also revitalizes the library's appearance.

III) Libraries must periodically weed out books that, despite being part of the collection, remain dormant and are seldom utilized.

IV) No rare books should be removed from libraries while removing books. Very important books that have been out of print for a long time are then identified and reported as rare books. Those books should be preserved in libraries.

V) District Library Officers, Inspectors, and Stock Verification Officers are tasked with conducting regular inspections of libraries and approve the list for removal of books. Quarterly reports detailing the weeded out books are to be forwarded to the Directorate of Public Libraries.

25. Selection of Periodicals

I) The procedure for selection of periodicals should be developed in the book procurement website.

II) Periodicals can be classified as follows:

- i) General
- ii) Women
- iii) Youth and Sports
- iv) Competitive Examination
- v) Health
- vi) Economy
- vii) Entertainment
- viii) Literature
- ix) Children
- x) Spirituality

III) Every year, libraries should allocate funds for the acquisition of periodicals. Libraries may select periodicals within the specified budget, following the same procedures used for selecting books. All the procedures mentioned for selection of books are applicable for selection of periodicals.

IV) Only periodicals registered with the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) should be procured.

V) The list of selected periodicals will be valid for two years.

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