

## **JOY COMMITTEE AND QUALITATIVE ASPECTS OF COLLEGE LIBRARIANSHIP**

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In Modern India the importance of library in higher education was emphasized by many educationists and expert committees. The Calcutta University Commission appointed in 1917 by the Government of India under chairmanship of Sir Michael Saddler pointed out that the weakness of the existing higher education system is the extraordinarily unimportant part in it which is played by the library.

University Education Commission (1949) chaired by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Ranganathan Committee (1958) appointed by UGC, and Education Commission (1966) chaired by D.S. Kothari pointed out the same factor and suggested measures for improving the situation. Sen Committee and Mehrotra Committee of UGC examined the matter in detail and gave specific recommendations for attracting and retaining qualified library professionals to maintain quality of information services from College libraries. Even though they have vindicated the hindrances that existed against the need-based development of library and information systems in colleges and put forward suggestions for improving the situation no sincere attempt for reform was initiated. We could not even prepare standards for college libraries which would have served as guidelines for the development of 9000 and more colleges in the country. Another hindrance for reform is that education being a state subject union government can not go beyond giving suggestions. When viewed in this perspective the initiative of Government of Kerala in appointing an Expert Committee on College Libraries in 1993 under the chairmanship of V.P. Joy, IAS, assumes great importance. It is the first of such attempts by any State Government in India. The detailed report of Joy Committee submitted in 1994 covering all facets of college library development has influenced library modernization programmes in many States of India. Various seminars and conferences discussed the report in detail and requested other states also to adopt the recommendations. V.P Joy's

recommendation are based on an understanding of the value of the information resources available in the colleges, the need for extracting their optimum utilization, the role of information professionals in improving the quality of higher education and the nature of the profession.

### **Educational Role**

In the teaching-learning process expected in higher education teachers and librarians have to play roles of equal importance. Both have to actively engage students in using library as a kind of laboratory for learning how to manage their own education.

Teachers should know that library is an extension of the classroom and should make the students use it intelligently in preparation for discussions in class, seminars and other programmes. For this there must be a two-way flow of information between teachers and librarians and both have to contribute.

College Librarians have to provide academic services to teachers and students. It should be the constant endeavor of librarian in a college to widen and update his range of knowledge so that he can extend valuable guidance to teachers as well as students. Librarian although not a formal member of the teaching faculty performs academic functions and sustains and enriches the academic process. Joy Committee considers it essential that college library staff should keep abreast of current developments in every subject and should support teachers and students in their information search. The committee considered it the duty of librarians to promote individual and motivated learning at all levels by selecting, acquiring and making available the information sources required for that.

### **College Librarian**

The functionalism of the college library building and space, the relevance of the collection, the efficiency of its organization, and services depend on the character and ability of the college librarian. The head of the college library should be a successful administrator, a wise counselor in the use of information sources and a force in shaping information policy. These requirements insist; that the college librarian must be a person of imagination and initiative must have a sound understanding of library administration and must know how to relate the use of library to the educational programmes of the college. If he is to be a leader in the

college community, he must be a person of character, integrity and professional idealism.

### **Management Capabilities**

Joy Committee considers that the college librarian should have the qualities of a good administrator. He has to assume a large measure of administrative responsibility, including the supervision of the staff and the proper budgeting and expenditure of library funds. These functions require frequent consultations and close relationships with the Principal, administrative officers and heads of subject departments and the librarian must impress them with his sound judgment and ability to manage the information service matters. He must also hold the confidence of the library staff by his ability to develop a systematic organization of library work, to conduct the many types of transactions involving the administration and faculty and administer budgets and services in a satisfactory manner. To attain even to an approximation of qualities required for these functions the librarian must understand thoroughly the objectives of the library in the particular college programme and the problems and needs of teachers and students.

### **Scholarly Interests**

It is important that College librarian be personally acquainted with his teacher colleagues and with their characteristic methods of operation. Likewise it is important that he be kept minutely posted on the current curricular and administrative policies so that he may have a sharp conception of the special areas in which library support may be helpful. If he is not consulted and kept informed about curricular matters and administrative policy, his help in these matters will, of course be negligible. College Librarian should be qualified and competent for this involvement also.

There is no need that the college librarian should be a scholar in the sense of an eminent specialist or researcher. But he should be familiar with the methods of research, have a through knowledge of information retrieval techniques and be competent to assist teachers and students in their search for information. He should also be widely read and also well informed about the library collection to be able to assist in its qualitative development.

## **Ability to Plan**

In these days of rapid technological developments and frequent self examination of the educational programme the librarian should be able to plan and also convey to his colleges and staff a sense of the direction in which library is moving. The quality of library service is to be maintained in face of limited resources. The new technological developments that offer opportunities for improving the library services should be utilized. The library has to secure resources to move ahead. If the librarian fails in any of these aspects library will be forced to drift along in directions never consciously considered.

## **Qualification**

The above mentioned duties and responsibilities of the college librarian show that his academic qualification should be at par with those of senior teachers. College Librarian is not a store keeper or clerk to attend transactions. He is an information service provider to the academic community. So only simple logic is required to understand that the qualification of any librarian in the college should in no way be lower than the highest level course offered in the college; for the librarians are expected to guide the students attending those courses, in their information search and support them in their learning. Their qualification should be equal to that of the teachers because it is the librarian who is to give teachers the information support required for their teaching and updating of their knowledge. Present day colleges demand higher qualifications of their librarian than formerly. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has stated that libraries should be manned by adequate and well qualified staff. He recommended that at the top of a library there should be a man of the caliber of a Professor who has specialized in library science after having done post graduation in a subject and he should have sufficient experience and capacity for organizing and managing such a department.

The librarian and his staff in the colleges have the responsibility to define and understand the purpose of the library in relation to the aims of the college, to become personally acquainted with their faculty colleagues and to know their teaching methods. They should know what is going on in curriculum matters and should have a clear conception of the specific ways in which library support is

desirable and possible. It is implied that qualification of the librarian should enable them for fulfilling these duties.

Joy Committee considers that college librarianship is a highly complex profession warranting specialized and technical knowledge in personal administration, financial management and different information handling techniques. The successful performance of the college librarian demand a clear understanding of academic objectives, a significant level of academic expertise and working partnership with heads of teaching departments. Proper direction of policies and resources of the college libraries towards needs of teaching learning process demands a chief librarian with high academic qualifications and knowledge of objectives and practices of education. Joy recommended that only those with qualifications and experience prescribed by UGC should be appointed as Chief Librarian in a college.

All that has been said above with respect to the qualification of the chief librarian is in varying degrees applicable to other library staff also. For most students the staff at the circulation or reception desks signifies the library. Hence it is obvious that qualified staff that can understand the subject requirements of students and are of crucial importance in making the college library a real service unit and not just a storage unit. College library staff that supports the chief librarian must be capable of giving the students the kind of assistance they need in order to use the library intelligently and efficiently and they must have a clear idea of what the library is trying to do. This sense of guiding purpose translates itself into the daily operations of the library and determines what activities shall be under taken and how they shall be carried out.

These supporting staff should have a breadth of knowledge and a critical capacity. By their intellectual interests and their skill in human relations they should help to convey the impression that librarians are persons whose opinions are important. It is interesting to find that in many States including Kerala staff not even having a Graduate degree is posted as librarian and supporting professional staff in colleges as per existing staff pattern. Even in post graduate departments which become eligible for a staff to look after its library; the staff pattern allows only for an 'Attender' having no college education to manage the library. If by chance he is literate or has studied up to SSLC it will be luck to that post-graduate department. The grade and status of the librarian are in a few states like Kerala decided by the

number of books the library is having. College Library post being those having UGC scale of pay is considered as promotion posts to appoint senior librarians from government departments without considering the qualification prescribed by UGC for academic library posts. But how can such staff attend the information services required to be provided for the post-graduate students and teachers specializing in a subject.

According to UGC Library Committee the academic qualification of the library staff should be at par with those of the professors, the readers and the lecturers. Apart from general academic qualification of high order, the librarian and his professional staff should also have professional qualification of an equally high order. The committee recommended MLibSc or MA and First Class BLISc as the minimum qualification required for a college library staff.

UGC committees under the chairmanship of Dr. S.N. Sen (1974), and R.C. Mehrotra (1987) recommended qualifications equal to that required for college and university teachers for entry cadre librarians. Joy Committee has also recommended that all library professionals posted in college libraries should have the minimum academic qualification that can give them a broad acquaintance with all subjects taught in the college so that they will be capable of interacting with degree and post graduate students and teachers to support them and guide them in their information search. Joy committee stressed the need for implementing the recommendations of UGC on qualification of college librarians.

### **Academic Status**

Academic statuses to the college librarians mean that the college should regard the professional library staff as members of the instructional staff instead of administrative or clerical staffs. This status may be defined as the formal recognition by an institution's authorities; of librarians as members of the academic staff. The academic status carries with it certain definite obligations also for librarian. The first requirement is for intellectual activity including a keen interest in the academic life in the campus. The librarian must accept responsibility for independent learning, continuous intellectual growth and educational statesmanship. Status also calls for the highest level of professionalism in performance of his duties.

In educationally advanced countries librarians were given full academic status with most of the rights and privileges of faculty members from nineteen twenties. This helped to create high quality information services to students and teachers and contributed to quality improvements in education in those countries. In India first Radhakrishnan Commission (1949) pointed out the need for staff with caliber and qualification of a professor to head the libraries.

Ranganathan Committee (1958) of UGC advised that status and salary scale of the library staff should be the same as that of teaching and research staff. The committee has recommended Reader's scale and status for chief librarians of large colleges and Lecturer's scale for his supporting professional staff and also for the chief librarians of small colleges. Mehrotra Committee (1987) also accepted the academic role of librarians and recommended academic status to them. According to the committee it is undeniable that a librarian, although is not a formal member of the teaching faculty performs academic functions, and sustains and enriches the academic process. While a teacher may have specialized in a particular branch the librarian is required to have a wide overall acquaintance with various disciplines in order to be able to bring the scholars face to face with knowledge in diverse areas. The student contact with the librarian is exhilarating and educative. The librarians' interactions with members of the faculty should be of mutual benefit. The committee expressed the view that the emoluments of the duly qualified librarians should match those of the teachers and that they should have about the same promotional opportunities as have been recommended for the teachers. Based on its recommendations Government of India has implemented parity in matters of scales of pay, career advancement and other aspects between college teachers and college librarians. Qualifications for the posts of college librarians were also fixed in accordance with this.

Very important suggestions in regard to the status of college librarians are contained in Joy Committee report. The committee considered it desirable to give the college librarians, academic status and bring librarian also under the definition of teacher. The committee recommended that the college librarian should be given status and rank as recommended by UGC subject to satisfying the qualification and other conditions prescribed by UGC. The committee recommended full membership for the college librarian in the College Council. The committee also recommended that librarian should function as the secretary of the Library Advisory Committee

constituted in the college to advise and recommend on all matters related to organization and services of the college library. The committee also made various important recommendations to ensure qualitative development of collections, staff formulae to fix number of professional staff, amendment to purchase rules to enable acquisition of electronic publications etc. Implementing the recommendations of Joy Committee Report can give new face to college librarianship and go a long way in improving the quality of higher education in the country.

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