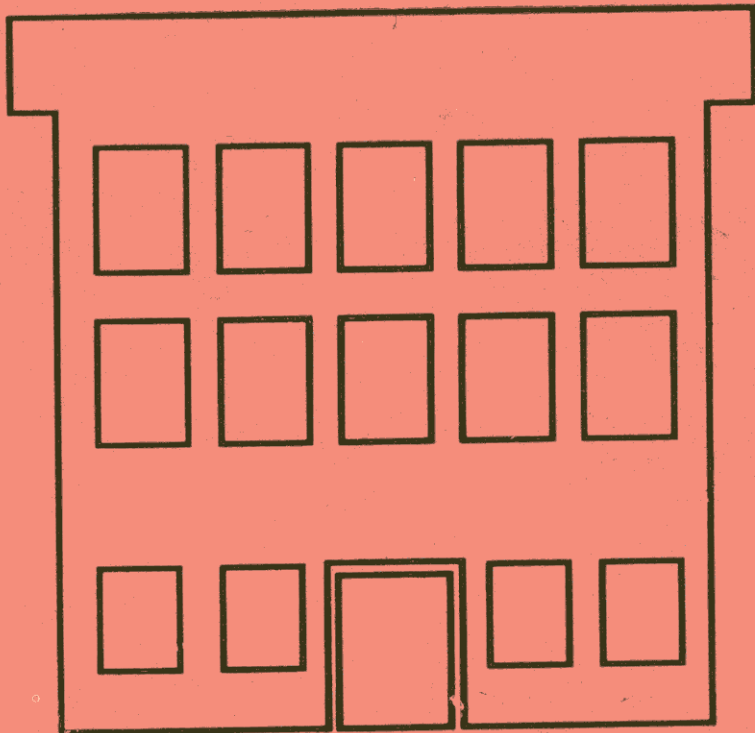


# COLLEGE LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT



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## **An Unique Document on College Library Development**

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It is heartening to note that the Government of Kerala took lead in many respects, and in the field of libraries also by appointing an Expert Committee on College Libraries with Shri. V.P. Joy, Director of Collegiate Education, as convener of the Committee. The Committee has been appointed in April 1993 to examine the functioning of college libraries and to suggest suitable measures for their improved functioning. The Committee was also to examine and report the financial implications of its proposals. This Expert Committee invited many renowned librarians and Library Science teachers to obtain their valuable suggestions as outside experts, and after deliberations submitted its Report to the Government of Kerala on January 1, 1994.

The Committee has well chosen to make its recommendations on each of the three main aspects of the terms of reference, viz., general improvement of college libraries; procedural improvement; and improvement of technical aspects. The present paper gives this author's observations on each of the three main aspects of college libraries on which the Expert Committee has made its recommendations for consideration of the Government of Kerala.

### **1. General Improvement**

The Joy Committee has rightly identified and enumerated the hindrances in the way of fulfilling the objectives of the college libraries in our country. The suggestions made by the

Committee with regard to linking the class room teaching with the library; building up of a basic collection of general as well as reference materials; making the library environment inviting and cosy; creating library awareness; and providing quality service by the library staff are very progressive.

It may be pointed out that Joy Committee has not specified the minimum book collection in numerical terms as recommended by the UGC Library Committee or other bodies. It may not be out of place to suggest that about thousand titles of reference and information sources, and about forty thousand to fifty thousand volumes of text books, standard treatises and supporting reading material should be acquired in a college library within a reasonable period, say three years. Regarding physical environment in the library not only functional and inviting items of furniture are required but the interior of the library should also be decorated with flower vases/pots, suggestive but short slogans, meaningful quotations, colourful posters, etc. about which also the Committee could have given some hints.

In order to increase awareness among the users of college libraries some methods and techniques have been suggested by the Committee. These, if followed by the college librarians, will go a long way in the promotion of library service. However, a few more may be added to the existing array of them, like library marketing of information products and services; and use of computer graphics for this purpose.

A notable recommendation that has been made regarding the library services to be provided is that the college library should provide not only short-range and long-range reference services, but also the modern services like Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), and Current Awareness Services (CAS). Even many committees headed by library professionals have not stressed this very important aspect.

## **2. Procedural Improvement**

Joy Committee has very correctly identified that the techniques and methods, rules and procedure that are being

followed in college libraries at the moment are obsolete and defective. These include the old systems of issue and return of books using registers, book selection and purchase without set objectives and old methods of organisation and management of libraries.

Joy Committee feeling the pulse of the time and understanding the possibilities offered by information technology, pointed out the need to use the latest computerised systems of issue and return (ie, circulation of books) using the available popular softwares like LIBRIS, LIBSYS, and others.

The Committee suggests that library budget estimates must be prepared by the librarian annually so that an account of the available grants could possibly be taken and equitable distribution of funds with a given ratio of 50:35:15 for reference books, standard treatises, and text books could be made. This can prevent the unprincipled utilization of book funds at year end for obsolete materials and text books that hinders qualitative development of collections. It may, however, be pointed out that the sources of library grants have not been identified by the Joy Committee which may lead to uncertain situations on this account.

It has recommended the use of procedures required for scientific and need-based book selection and acquisition in a college library. These recommendations are likely to be well taken by the professional librarians as well as teachers as it will make the procedure scientific, and book selection will be a regular process, rather than the usual hasty utilization of funds at year end. The flowchart made for this purpose by the committee is an appreciable effort. However, the orders for books should be placed by the Librarian and not by the Principal. The Principal should give his final approval of books to be purchased, and not place the orders by himself.

The recommendation regarding the organisation and management of college library have also been made in general terms, but there is need to work out further details on scientific lines. The committee could have given a model design of the college library system with its sub systems of library services.

By following the modern scientific principles of management in the library and information field, information services can be streamlined. A good amount of literature is now available to provide the necessary guidelines for improving the sub-systems.

### **3. Technical Aspects**

The Joy Committee on College Libraries has made many recommendations for the improvement of technical aspects of libraries, library services, library staff, their qualifications, status, staff pattern, classification and cataloguing of material, departmental libraries, etc.

It is pleasing to note that the Committee considers it desirable to give the college librarians, academic status (non-vacation) and bring 'librarians' also under the definition of 'teacher'. But this is only a desire expressed by the Committee, and not a recommendation as such. While making recommendations, it has said that the college librarian should be given status and rank as recommended by the UGC subject to satisfying the qualification and other conditions prescribed by the UGC. This Committee should have clearly recommended the 'teacher' status for the librarian, and that too vacation, and not non-vacation.

The recommendation that the "college librarian should be given full membership in College Council and other relevant committees constituted by the college" is welcome because librarian's participation in such bodies will acquaint her/him with latest trends in the college so that adequate and necessary information support could be provided by him/her to the teaching/learning process.

In order to understand the objectives of college, and to interact effectively with teachers and the Principal, the librarian must possess equally high academic qualifications like them with additional first level degree (ie, Bachelor's degree) in Library and Information Science. The Joy Committee has done a good thing by highlighting the need for a qualified

librarian as prescribed by the UGC. Appointment of librarian with high academic and professional qualifications will go a long way in providing efficient library and information services to teachers and students, as also raising the standard of the college library and status of librarian.

Joy Committee has made a praiseworthy recommendation regarding the grading system of librarian and other staff. It has recommended that a college librarian with high academic/professional qualifications as prescribed by the UGC, should only be appointed at the time of establishment of college so that he could develop the library on scientific lines and steer it to a modern resource centre where all methods, procedures, technique, and services are modernised. Similarly, the other staff to be provided to the Librarian, such as Assistant Librarian, Library Assistant, and Semi-Professionals should also possess high academic and professional qualifications to enable them to interact effectively with both students and teachers.

The recommendation made regarding the staff pattern in colleges is in two parts for two categories of colleges. Those colleges getting UGC assistance are recommended to have college librarians with UGC qualifications, pay scales, and service conditions. But the Committee has not recommended the same pay scales for those colleges not getting the UGC assistance. This differential treatment, however, is not good for the overall health of college libraries. In the interest of the high quality library and information services, and the CAS, SDI services required in the teaching-learning process, librarians of all colleges, irrespective of their sources of grants should be given UGC scales and should possess UGC qualifications.

It is important to have staff in the college library to remove dirt and dust regularly for the long life of books and for maintaining healthy environment. The formula evolved by this Expert Committee for staff strength is considered to be a more rational one for it is based on the number of users rather than number of books and issue statistics. The formulae should be implemented.

The committee has desired that as cataloguing/indexing of library documents is essential for the full utility of the book collection college should acquire a computer software like the CDS/ISIS. It is available free of cost from the NISSAT office. Using this the backlog of work in colleges can be cleared quickly. The Committee has further suggested a hike in library fee which is to be used for acquiring new machines, materials, introducing new services and has given suggestion for generating new sources of found for the college library in view of the recession and rising prices. These recommendations, if implemented honestly, will definitely help college libraries to garner additional funds which can be used for acquiring computers, constructing new building, recruiting staff, etc.

It has been very well recommended by the Joy Committee that the library services in all colleges should be centralised, and departmental libraries should be abolished in view of academic and administrative efficiency, as also for the full utility of books purchased. This is a welcome recommendation from this Expert Committee. However, the suggestion made by it that some 250 to 500 books should be sent to the Department does not go parallel with the recommendation of centralised services. It is therefore suggested that the second part of this recommendation may be dropped, and all books and services, for their maximum use, should be given from the central library only.

#### **4. Other Aspects**

The recommendation regarding the stock taking to be conducted once in every three years by a committee consisting of teachers and library professionals, should be welcomed by the college librarians.

Writing off the loss of three volumes per thousand books issued/consulted in a year in the library is also a welcome recommendation as this loss will be written off on the recommendation of the Library Advisory Committee of the college concerned, and the librarian will not be held responsible to bear the brunt.

The committee considers it desirable to computerise the college libraries in order to utilise the information services. The mutilated, damaged and obsolete books should also be disposed of as per the recommendation made by the Committee. This method will pave the way for stacking new books, and not unnecessarily making the library a place of dumping every wanted/unwanted book.

The recommendation regarding widening the scope of the term 'book' to document which include all non-book materials as well as non-print materials such as CD-ROM, floppy diskettes, cassettes, films, slides, globes, maps, charts, posters, and the like is a revolutionary step because most of the modern sources of information are now being made available in these formats. Even central governments and science and technology universities have failed to consider this matter.

The committee consider it desirable to computerise the college libraries in order to utilise the information services offered by new information technology and networks like INFLIBNET, and other information systems. The Committee could have prescribed some standards in this regard.

The recommendation regarding the improvement of professional education and acquiring new techniques and skills desirable for handling new information technology gadgets, etc. and also the provision for continuing education for librarians as given to teachers are welcome and timely.

## **5. A Welcome Document**

After going through the pages of the Report of the Joy Committee on college libraries, it may safely be concluded that it is a welcome document as it has identified all hindrances for efficiency of libraries, recommended all that is essential for improving the college libraries in Kerala, and also in the country as a whole. I have no hesitation in saying that the Joy Committee Report if implemented with all honesty on the part of the Government of Kerala, will contribute much to vitalise college library services, and thus contribute to raising standard



of college education. It can make Kerala a model to be followed by other states for college library development.

The only missing link in Joy Committee Report is that the Committee somehow has missed to make recommendation regarding the sources of funds to be received by the college libraries. It has neither recommended any formula for recurring nor for non-recurring grants. Some specific recommendation, should have been made on the aspect of library grants also.

### **References**

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