INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE LIBRARIANSHIP

K Setty Umapathy
Graduate School of Library and Information Services
University of Pittsburgh, U.S.A.

Considers the scope and content of International and Comparative studies in librarianship and gives a brief account of the emergence of Comparative Librarianship as a component of Library Science in its own right. Introduces the comparative method as part of research methodology available to library researchers, emphasizes the need for instituting formal courses in this area and proposes a tentative syllabus for a paper at Master's degree level.

An interest or even mere curiosity in other countries, other people and their affairs has been a basic characteristic of man since the very beginning of history. People have ventured to leave their homeland in pursuit of a new home, knowledge, riches, on pilgrimage, military adventure, trade or to satisfy mere curiosity. Many instances of people coming to India or Indians visiting other countries abound in Indian history and are too numerous to mention. However, this limited activity has grown in size and scope along with the march of man and today is on its way to becoming almost universal. Technological, industrial and communications advances have destroyed the traditional barriers of space and time and have brought the nations of the world much nearer. The concept of 'Global Village' is widely accepted today. No country is free from foreign influences. No one is an 'island to himself' anymore. Developing an 'international outlook' and thinking 'comparatively' have become needs of our times. This is reflected in various activities of governments and people in every nation, totalitarian, democratic or whatever. International travel has reached a new milestone. Internationalism has pervaded educational institutions all over the world, in some countries more pronounced than in others. Second World War and the activities of the United Nations have played a very significant role in precipitating this situation. Our children are beginning to be more aware of internationalism than ourselves. This trend is reflected in courses, syllabi and texts of educational institutions everywhere. Academic disciplines at the university level have taken note of these developments and have added an international dimension to their content, structure and methodology.

Librarians have often visited other countries, have observed libraries and have conferred with professional peers in an attempt to exchange views. Librarians such as S.R. Ranganathan, Louis Shores, Melvil Dewey, Harold Lancour and others have always engaged in international and comparative librarianship. Many Indian librarians have visited several countries of the world. Some are educated abroad and some are working in other countries and in international organizations. Some have shared their experiences with librarians in India on a formal and informal basis. Some have written about them in professional journals and occasionally have shared their experiences with readers in the form of a book [1, 2]. A number of foreign librarians, library consultants and library educators, mostly American and British have come to India in recent years under various schemes and have attempted to share their knowledge with their peers in India. UNESCO is active in the library field all over the world and has done some significant things in India including the well known pilot project of Delhi Public Library. The knowledge it gains through its operations is available to all countries. Such things have their place and have enriched librarianship.

However, Comparative Librarianship, as it is emerging today goes far beyond this. It takes us a step further from the idea of 'library talk shop' and provides a scientific method to study comparative library phenomenon. Library Science, being a new science has heavily drawn upon the research methods used by social scientists for library research. The methodologies developed and used by social scientists in Education, Economics, Political Science, Sociology and History are more and
more utilized by researchers in Library Science. So far, librarians have at their disposal six research methods: (1) historical method, (2) survey method, (3) case method, (4) statistical method, (5) experimental method and (6) composite method which is a combination of any or all of the five methods. Comparative method the seventh and the newest research method is the product of Comparative Education and owes its origin to the pioneering work of Marc-Antoine Jullien de Paris (1817), George Z. F. Bereday and others of recent date. Libraries, being so similar to educational institutions in purposes, policies and procedures, it is natural that library researchers have seized the comparative method and have begun applying it to librarianship. It is a procedure which facilitates the study of data concerning two or more comparable library phenomena, collected through any of the methods mentioned above and juxtaposed for the purpose of formulating a logical hypothesis and working towards conclusion.

The four steps of comparative methodology are: (1) Description, (2) Interpretation, (3) Juxtaposition and (4) Simultaneous Comparison. Description presents a systematic statement of information concerning library phenomena in two or more geographical areas. Interpretation involves the analysis of collected data in terms of Social Sciences such as History, Economics, Sociology and Political Science. In Juxtaposition, comparable data is placed side by side for the purpose of formulation of one or more hypothesis. Simultaneous comparison takes the form of an integrated report and includes conclusions. These steps of comparative methodology are graphically represented as follows: [3]

The principle of 'comparison' always operates in whatever we do or think on a conscious or unconscious plane. It is not possible to understand many things in proper perspective unless we look at them comparatively. We compare one object with another, one country with another, present with the past East with West, black with white and so on. In so doing we not only learn about the things compared but also begin to know ourselves better. As professionals, librarians need to know what is happening in different types of

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[Diagram of Comparative Methodology]

1. Description
2. Interpretation
3. Juxtaposition
4. Comparison

(Replace 'pedagogical data' with 'library data')

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libraries around the world, why they are as they are; why they are doing what they are doing, and how they are going about achieving their objectives. This adds to our knowledge, broadens our outlook and lowers barriers of ethnocentrism. Often, it could result in practical, immediate benefits by way of improvements in our own operations and may lead to new lines of thinking. In the words of Foskett 'Communications between nations is vital and librarians stand at key positions in the communication network. If we increase our knowledge of the work of our professional colleagues abroad, if we help them to solve their problems and call on them to help us solving our own, we do more than merely improve our professional skills; we make a genuine contribution to the achievement of peace and happiness for all men across the world. [4]. Comparative studies in Librarianship with its approaches and methodology promises to enrich the corpus of knowledge in Library Science.

Comparative librarianship is not synonymous with International Librarianship although it includes it. Comparative Librarianship includes comparative studies on an international scale as well as studies on an intra-national scale. A study of public library legislation of Karnataka and Andhra or a study of acquisition procedures of the Public Library in Bangalore and the Public Library in Mysore cities or a study of education for librarianship in West Bengal and Rajasthan are all examples of intra-national comparative studies in Librarianship. While a study of the objectives of Indian National Library with those of National Diet Library, Japan or the British Museum in United Kingdom and a study of Book Selection Policies of the Library of Congress in the USA with those of Lenin State Library in the USSR are examples of comparative studies on an international scale.

Comparative Librarianship as a distinct activity and a component of Library Science as an academic discipline is of recent origin; although the application of comparative principle to librarianship was inherent in the activities of scholar librarians in Ashurbanpal's library (668-681 B.C.) or in Alexandrian Library (Third century B.C.) or at 'Dharma Ganja' (Seventh century A.D.) the library of Nalanda University, whenever two or more versions of a text were compared to determine authenticity. Gabriel Naude's 'Advice on

Establishing a Library' (1600-1653) definitely shows a comparative attitude. Edward Edwards's 'Free Town Libraries' (1869) includes materials from France, Germany and America in support of his plea for public libraries in United Kingdom. Wilhelm Munthe's 'American Librarianship from an European Angle' - an attempt at an evaluation of policies and activities of libraries of the USA published in 1939 marks a significant stage in the development of International Comparative Librarianship. Munthe was the first to use the term 'Comparative Library Science' in print. Publications in this area have greatly increased during the last ten years. The appearance of 'A Handbook of Comparative Librarianship' in 1970 by S. Simsova and M. Mackee marks the publication of a manual outlining the research methodology of the field along with a brief scope note of the subject and bibliographies about many countries of the world.

During the years 1956-1960 there was only one entry under the subject heading 'Librarianship, comparative' in Library Science Abstracts, while Library and Information Science Abstracts during the year 1971 had forty-eight entries under the same heading. Library Literature which listed entries under 'Librarianship, International Aspects' since 1958 has begun listing entries under 'Librarianship, comparative' since 1970. This shows a steady growth of the area and its increasing acceptance by the profession. However, Comparative Librarianship is yet to enter any of the Encyclopedias though some of them include as many as ten different subjects under comparative sciences. It is interesting to note that Comparative Education with a history of a century and a half is included only in Chamber's Encyclopedia and does not appear in Oxford English Dictionary which lists Comparative Anatomy and assigns 1765 as the date of its appearance.

COMPARATIVE LIBRARIANSHIP - Definitions

Several people have attempted to define Comparative Librarianship. A look at some will aid us in understanding the subject better. Louis Shores defines Comparative Librarianship as the study and comparison of library theory and practice in all of the different countries of the world for the purpose of broadening and deepening our understanding of
According to Dorothy G. Collings, it is the systematic analysis of library development, practices, or problems as they occur under different circumstances (most usually in different countries), considered in the context of the relevant historical, geographic, political, economic, social, cultural, and other determinant background factors found in the situations under study [6]. Comparative Library Science, according to Richard Krazyt, is that field which analyzes library phenomena through comparative methodology for the proximate purpose of understanding their origin, development, and essence, and for ultimate purpose of deepening the theory of library science and improving the practice of librarianship [7]. Comparative librarianship is useful as a tool for cultural borrowing. It can promote international understanding. It can bring order into our thinking. These aspects are stressed in the definitions with varying degrees of emphasis. A comparative study may deal with the whole field of librarianship in given countries becoming a 'total comparison' or may deal with an aspect of librarianship in two or more countries or may cover a geographic or cross-cultural area and become an 'area study'. It is basically interdisciplinary in nature and the services of social scientists will strengthen an investigation.

COMPARATIVE & INTERNATIONAL LIBRARIANSHIP IN LIBRARY SCHOOLS

Library Schools in the United States of America and else where are quick in realizing the importance of International and Comparative Librarianship and have instituted courses of formal study in the field. Journal of Education for Librarianship in Fall 1962 listed only two instructors in the area of Comparative Librarianship, while the Special edition 1972 of the same journal lists 104 instructors in this area. From two schools in 1962, the USA has come a long way and in 1972 more than fifty Library Schools in the USA and six Schools in Canada are offering courses in International Comparative Librarianship [8]. North Western Polytechnic and University College, London in U.K. are now offering instruction in this area. Advanced Institutes of Librarianship in Moscow, Kharkov and Vilnius in the USSR are providing instruction in international and comparative librarianship. Some Schools like the University of Pittsburgh with a large enrollment of international students (51 during Fall 1972) and a commitment to international comparative librarianship offer more than one course in this area and provide an opportunity to do doctoral research. Pittsburgh is also unique in maintaining an International Library Information Center which provides primary sources from many countries of the world dealing with several aspects of librarianship. Increasing interest in this area is further evidenced in the membership of over 5,00 persons in the International and Comparative Library group of the British Library Association. International Relations Office of the American Library Association is active in the field since a considerable time and publishes a newsletter 'Libraries in International Development.' The publication of UNESCO Bulletin for Libraries in 1947 did much to the growth of International outlook in Librarianship everywhere. Many journals in the field in India as well as abroad have always published material in these areas. The appearance of International Library Review in 1969 has created another significant forum for this field.

COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL LIBRARIANSHIP IN INDIAN SCHOOLS

Library Science is relatively new to enter the community of academic disciplines in institutions of higher education. The first formal school of Library Science in the United States was established by Melvil Dewey in 1887 and is still not a century old. Madras University in India began offering formal education for librarianship at graduate level in 1937. If we consider this as the significant beginning of library education in India it is barely half a century old. Infact, as an academic discipline it is just beginning to be accepted, is gaining ground on the academic soil and has a long way to go. Librarianship in India today is on a firmer ground and is fast growing. India occupies an important place among the developing nations of the world. It is actively cooperating with several countries in developmental efforts and is providing technical know how and personnel. Several of our librarians may follow the example of S.R. Ranganathan, B.S. Kesavan, P.N. Kaul and others in actively working on an international plane. Our young librarians will look beyond the national boundaries for challenging work experiences. We need to be aware of the newer developments in librarianship on a global basis to gain its many benefits. In re-
cognition of these needs and in response to the recent developments in the field, library educators in India should consider instituting courses in International and Comparative Librarianship in our formal programs at least in one or two places in India.

Library Science programs at Bachelor's degree level in India do reflect the spirit of internationalism to some extent. Syllabi in most of the Universities at this level provides for a brief consideration of library movement in U.K. and the USA. They also include the activities of international organizations such as UNESCO, FID and IFLA. This is indeed commendable. However, we should not stop at this point. There is room for systematic improvement at this level. Further, definite attempts to build on this foundation at the Master's level should be made. At the present time no organized attempt to cover this area at the Master's level is visible either in the syllabi followed by the universities or in the syllabus recommended by the U.G.C. Review Committee [9]. A brief course outline in the area is suggested for consideration by library educators and others.

Paper Title: International and Comparative Librarianship

Objectives

To study and analyze librarianship in different regions of the world
To promote international outlook
To promote professional self awareness
To introduce comparative method and to provide an opportunity to write a paper using the method

Outline: A

1. Activities of international organizations such as FID, IFLA and UNESCO
2. International activities of ALA, L.A, ILA, Ministry of Education of GOI and such other bodies
3. Aspects of International co-operation related to librarianship (Includes an overview only)

B

1. Comparative Librarianship: development, definition, purpose

2. Historical, Social, Political, Economic and Cultural factors relevant to librarianship within a country - Analysis of librarianship within a country of the students choice with the approval of the instructor in the light of these factors
3. Methodology of comparative studies in librarianship
4. A study of library history, professional associations, education for librarianship, library literature, financial support for libraries, library legislation, types of libraries, kinds of services, status of librarians in relation to selected countries.

Teaching methods:

Lectures, discussion, case study, films, lectures by visiting librarians and (Team teaching recommended if a school feels ready for such an approach). Students to write a term paper and give a report about librarianship in a selected country.

The course should be subjected to evaluation by the students each time it is taught. It should be offered at the Master's level on an optional basis.

The selection of countries for study and for comparison naturally should take into consideration availability of resources, library and otherwise as well as the interest of individual students. Any school that desires to offer such a course should augment its library resources covering the international aspects of librarianship and should have some plan of acquiring primary sources around the world on a continuous basis. Bibliographies for the use of students in the course should be prepared by instructors from time to time taking into consideration the areas they intend to include or exclude or emphasize.

References


