TRAINING OF TEACHERS
OF LIBRARY SCIENCE

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Gives a programme for accelerated training of teachers of library science to meet the immediate needs of library projects provided in the Second Five Year Plan.

1 ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions are made:

11 The objective of the provision of Rs 10,00,000 for the training of librarians in the Second Five Year Plan is to produce an adequate number of librarians for employment in the library scheme of the Second Five Year Plan, providing a sum of 170,00,000 rupees for the establishment of library service in the districts of the country.

12 The courses to be given to prospective librarians in this scheme will be ad hoc and will be quite independent of and without prejudice to the normal Diploma Courses in Library Science as post graduate one-year courses in about ten universities.

13 The proposed courses will be accelerated ones to meet an emergency.

14 The proposed courses will be conducted by full-timed teachers.

15 The full-timed teachers should know both the contents of library science and the principles of teaching the subject.

16 At present, the country has few persons with this double qualification.

17 The first step in implementing the project for training librarians should be to produce the necessary number of teachers.

18 This can be done either (i) by giving an accelerated course in library science and practice to trained teachers with teaching experience, or (ii) by giving an accelerated course in applied teaching to librarians with diploma in library science.

2 FACTUAL DATA

21 To man the library service to be provided with as much money as Rs 170,00,000, at least 90 librarians should be trained for each of the constituent states during each of the years of the Planning Period still unexpired.

22 This will require at least 30 trained librarian-teachers, to man the library schools, which will have to be distributed among the constituent states.

23 The number of librarians in the country to-day with Diploma in Library Science is too small even to man the existing libraries.

24 The number of Departmental, and Business Libraries is increasing every year calling for fresh diploma-holders, over and
above the normal annual requirements for filling up vacancies due to efflux of time in the long-standing university and other libraries.

25 To add to this, a scheme is being brought into force to have full-timed teachers of library science for the normal diploma courses in some of the universities.

26 There is thus much of unplanned, and perhaps too ambitious, drift in this matter. Such a drift is bound to lead to enormous wastage. As the saying goes, one should not choke oneself with what is far more than what one can chew.

27 In these circumstances, the preliminary preparation of teachers of library science can hardly be thought of in terms of an accelerated course in teaching methods to librarians with diploma in library science.

28 Perhaps, a more practicable course is to give an accelerated course in library science to persons who are already practising as trained teachers in schools.

3 COURSE IN LIBRARY SCIENCE FOR TRAINED TEACHERS

31 A few years ago, a State Government deputed a few teachers to take the Diploma Course in Library Science in the University of Delhi. It so turned out that some of the teachers so deputed were too old to take the contents of a new discipline like library science with comfort or profit.

32 This experience gives the warning that the teachers selected for the accelerated course in library science to be fitted as teachers of library science, should normally be in the age-group 25 to 35 - preferably nearer 25.

33 Being in early adulthood, if they are selected properly, it should be possible to complete an intensive course in library science for them in about six months. I have had previous experience to assert that this should be possible.

34 Moreover, even as the contents of library science are being put across to them, the method of teaching the subject to others can be demonstrated both by precept and example.

35 While 20 will be a comfortable strength to a class of this kind, we may attempt to take 30 in view of the emergency being faced.

36 In this rapid course to train teachers, who are to train the librarians needed in the Second Five Year Plan, certain items in the syllabus for the normal university diploma course in library science, may be altogether omitted and certain other items may be done briefly.

37 The scope and the content of the course is indicated by the following books: -(i) Library manual, (1951) in English or its Hindi version Granthalaya-prakriya (1951); (ii) Library organisation in India (1956, ed 2) - Oxford University Press; and (iii) Five Laws of library science (1957, ed 2).

38 The third of the above books is for a general over-all orientation for the teachers' course as well as for the later course for the librarians. Similarly with the other two books, the first having a slant over public library service and the second adapted to the needs of librarians in school and college libraries. The details for library extension work are all taken care of by the third book.

4 COURSE IN TEACHING TECHNIQUE TO LIBRARIANS WITH DIPLOMA

41 The alternative is to give an accelerated course in the teaching of library science to selected librarians with a diploma in library science.

42 It will be possible to conduct this course intensively and complete it in about three months.

43 Of course, the success of such an intensive short course will depend on the careful selection of proper candidates.

44 But, as already shown in section 2, it will not be possible or even wise to divert any of the all-too-small number of trained librarians for full-timed work as teachers of library science. During the last ten years, I have had the sad experience of the thwarting of work in library after library, by the few trained librarians moving from library to library, lured by advertisements for the different government departments, in an unco-ordinated manner, quite oblivious of the fact that the ritual of an advertisement would not create trained men. It is unwise to intensify such a thwarting of work in existing libraries by drawing away its librarians to the work of full-timed teaching.
5 SELF-DELUSION TO BE AVOIDED

51 Driven to a corner and actuated to do something splashy without devoting thought to what alone can be of lasting good to the country, and in the anxiety to absorb the money already voted, one will be driven back to a perpetuation of the faulty and make-believe method of employing practising librarians as part-timed, out-of-office-hours, teachers of library science.

52 The continuance of this unfortunate practice in the university diploma courses is proving to be ruinous to the very purpose.

53 History must be read with care in this matter. The pioneering years of three decades ago met with a scepticism and coldness in regard to the library, the library profession, and still more to training for librarians. In those difficult days, our society did throw forth, as any other society in a phase of awakening would have done, a few pioneering librarians with exceptional missionary zeal, who did both the running of libraries and the teaching of library students with some success.

54 But without heed to the psychology of pioneership which can only last for a short duration and perhaps prompted by a sense of prestige to some extent, university after university began to establish diploma courses in library science with part-timed, out-of-office-hours teachers of library science. This began in the forties. This corrupted the standard little by little. As visiting lecturer and examiner in these universities, I had been sadly watching the progressive degeneracy.

55 We now seem to be heading towards a crisis. Already, complaints are coming from employers about the ineffectiveness of the products of such courses. Contempt is being brought to the library schools and even to the library profession in general.

56 I should therefore like that the vast sum of Rs 10,00,000 provided for the training of librarians should not be frittered away. As the result of the work can only be of a deferred nature, great care should be exercised to take a penetrating forward view in the matter. Statesmanship should keep clear of the self-delusion involved in the perpetuation of the faulty method of over-worked part-timed teachers or in the hasty setting up of some organisation or other in order to appropriate the money, without going into all the factors involved, with due circumspection.