LIBRARY GRANT TO INDIAN UNIVERSITIES

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR THE UGC

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1 TIME FACTOR

11 Introduction

There can be no doubt that the intention is that the library grant should be used to buy the largest number of books in actual or anticipated demand, and that the books should be promptly brought into active use by readers. The administrative elements covering the giving of the grant should be so defined that the timetable for the absorption of the grant does not militate against this primary purpose of the grant. To arrive at the right timetable and administrative elements, I begin with a picture of what all has to be done in a library to absorb the grant.

12 Weekly Rhythm

It is a matter of long-established experience that the work behind the screen in a library should proceed with a weekly rhythm. In particular, book-selection, book-purchase, book-reception, technical treatment of books, and their release for use by readers are best organised on a weekly basis. Our chief market for books are now in London and New York. On account of the prevailing exchange difficulties, even books in the European languages other than English have to be bought in these markets. This is likely to continue for one more generation. The national bibliographies and other book lists are now published on a weekly basis. And these are the primary source for book-selection. This fits with the weekly rhythm of work in libraries.

0 INTRODUCTION

The University Grants Commission (UGC) have been giving substantial grants to Indian Universities for building up their library collections. It is very gratifying to note that UGC has got a liberal policy towards the University Libraries. However in the utilization of the grants there are some administrative difficulties. Maximum benefit is not obtained due to a failure to grasp the problem as a whole. The factors involved are analysed and suggestions are made to UGC.
121 Book-Purchase Chain

The preliminary book-selection list initiated by the library in week 1 will get scrutinised by subject-specialists in week 2. Though antiquated and purposeless, each list has now to get the sanction of the Executive in many of the Universities. So long as this practice continues, the list started in week 1 will receive sanction of the Executive in week 3. The order will leave the library in week 4. It will reach London or New York as the case may be in week 5, if it goes direct and in week 6 if it goes via a local book-seller. For definiteness let us pursue the first alternative. The supply will reach the library in week 12 from London and in week 16 from New York. The books arriving in week 12 will be collated and passed on to the technical section for classification and cataloguing in week 13. They will be further prepared for use in the maintenance section in prepared for use in the maintenance section in week 14. They will be released for use of the readers in week 15. Thus a complete book-purchase-chain will normally take 15 weeks for completion. It must be remembered that book-selection will start every week in the year and books too will consequently arrive in the library every week in the year. Thus every section will be kept continuously busy all through the year. This is necessary for efficient management.

13 Right Time-Table

To enable the first of the 52 instalments of payment in a year to be done in the very first week of the financial year - the first week of April - the book-selection of the corresponding book-purchase-chain should have begun at the beginning of the preceding December. The chain initiated by the book-selection done in the last week of November will bring the supply of books ending with the last instalment of payment at the end of March. Book-purchase should be thus spread evenly throughout all the 52 weeks of a year. Therefore, for book-purchase purpose, the library year should begin in December, so that the last payment for the financial year can be made at the end of the financial year.

131 Actual Experience Over Years

This time-table with the modification that the book order took three weeks to reach London and five weeks to reach New York, was giving good results in the Madras University Library from 1926, till World War II destroyed all the rhythms and threw the library out of the gear. This time-table secured the prompt purchase of currently published books in close correlation to the work in progress in the several departments of a university.

14 Wrong Time-Table

The wrong time-table is to spend the entire grant in one or just a few instalments. This means the adoption of one or only just a few book-purchase-chains in a year. This leads to hectic book-selection for a few consecutive weeks in the year, turning practically all the staff on to this work. Ironically enough, this hectic work to absorb the book-grant results in the suspension of the service given to readers. Every link in the book-purchase-chain has to be lived through for long weeks in this same hectic way. Thus book-selection and purchase etc. are made at the cost of service, the very purpose of the grant, purchase etc. This pathological condition can be seen in several university libraries.

141 Inevitable Malpractice

Even something worse happens. To absorb, say Rs. 50,000, the book-selection will need at least 5 weeks with all the staff working on it. If the grant is announced only after September as it often happens, the books do not arrive in time for the bills to be regularly paid within the financial year after the books are physically verified. This leads to the unfortunate but inevitable malpractice of getting advance bills without the supply and passing them on as make-believe vouchers for receiving the grant and formally satisfying the audit. Of course, this involves false certification by the librarian. There are cases when librarians had to leave their jobs for reasons of conscientious objection.

142 Chain Left Incomplete

Once the grant is drawn without supply, a pseudo-satisfaction of work bravely done makes
one sit back for a while. A mood of exhaustion comes thereafter. With the result the book-purchase-chain is left incomplete without attention to the links corresponding to the classification, cataloguing, and release of the books for the use of readers. Bundles of new books being piled up for several months seems to have now become common in several libraries. There can be no more serious flouting of the Laws of Library Science than this. Another practice is to purchase several copies of the books locally available without consideration of what is really needed for the work in progress in the several departments of the University. This converts the allotment and absorption of grants to a mere ritual. It is a waste of public money.

15 The Remedy

The UGC should take steps to arrest these unfortunate results. The following are recommendations to the UGC on this matter:

151 The UGC should inform the universities about the probable amount of grant during a financial year not later than the preceding November. It should be possible to estimate the probable amount at least to 50% of the amount expected. This will be quite easy if the grant is allotted on a five year basis.

152 The UGC should transfer the annual grant to the University libraries at the very beginning of the financial year. If the annual grant is transferred in instalments, the first instalment should be transferred early in April.

153 If there is any insuperable difficulty in announcing the probable grant four months in advance of the financial year, the procedure should be to decide the amount of grant on the basis of the expenditure in the preceding year.

154 The university libraries should be allowed to hold over the unspent balance of the grants for expenditure during the next financial year. It should be possible for audit to prevent any abuse of this provision and see that the money is fully spent eventually for the purpose for which it was granted.

16 An Example from Experience

When the Madras Government sanctioned a non-recurring grant to the Madras University Library, in 1926, permission was sought and granted to spread the appropriation over a period of five years. This helped a wise and beneficial use of the money. The recurring annual grant of Rs 65,000 made in the same year was exempted from being surrendered to the extent not appropriated within the financial year. This arrangement enabled the library not only to keep on to the weekly rhythm of the book-purchase-chain without in any way interfering with service to readers, but also to spend the money on really needed books and with every satisfaction to the audit. There was never any adverse audit remark during all the years. So also the UGC can devise the necessary safeguards through audit against any possible abuse that may arise in this elastic and long-drawn-out time-table.

2 PERSONNEL

21 Introduction

Most of the university libraries in India are understaffed. It is barely sufficient to handle a small annual in-take of books and periodicals, which the miserly library budget used to allow. Apart from the staff working behind the screen to purchase and prepare books for use, the Library provides a counter staff to look after the circulation, issue and return of books. Only a small full-timed staff of one or two is provided for direct service to readers in the selection of relevant reading materials. It is this staff that does the most vital work in a library. It is designated Reference Staff.

211 Effect of Additional Grant

Whenever a library gets an extra grant, it is now totally set apart for the purchase of books and periodicals. Whether this is the fault of the university authorities or is a consequence of the conditions attached to the grant is immaterial. The extra work to be done behind the screen to spend this sum results in the withdrawal of the reference staff from service to readers. This is the unfortunate immediate result of the grants now being made by the UGC. There is every ground to believe that this is not being brought to the notice of the UGC. This memorandum is therefore turned on the staff necessary to utilise the
grants properly without prejudice to the service proper to readers.

22 Staff Formula

Between 1945 and 1955, several libraries in the country asked for advice on the strength of staff to be provided. This led me to construct a staff-formula giving the staff required in terms of the quantity of the various items of work to be done in a library. This formula has been tested in other countries also and found to give a reliable method of determining the strength of staff impersonally, uninfluenced by any prejudice or emotion. The full staff-formula has been published in my "Library development plan: Thirty-year programme for India with draft library bill for the Union and the constituent states, 1950, (Delhi University Publications, Library science series, 2)."

221 Staff Formula For The Book-Purchase-Chain

Here is an extract from that formula for the staff needed to complete a book-purchase-chain of work consisting of book-selection, book-ordering, book-reception, accessioning and payment of bills, classification, and cataloguing, and the physical preparation of books before release to the use of readers and absorption into the live collection of the library. It does not cover the maintenance staff, or the reference staff, or the circulation staff or the supervisory staff.

\[
\frac{NA}{6000} + \frac{NA}{2000} + \frac{NP}{500} = \frac{4NA + 12NP}{6000} = \frac{NA + 3NP}{1500}
\]

where

- \(NA\) = Number of volumes accessioned in a year
- \(NP\) = Number of periodical publications taken

23 Application of Staff Formula

Let us now apply the above extract from the staff formula to a university library. In such a library, book-fund may have normally to be divided between books and periodicals in the ratio of 4:1. Thus, if the book-fund is Rs 1,00,000, books will absorb Rs 80,000. Today, the average cost of a book as well as the average subscriptions to periodicals may be taken to be each Rs 20. Thus, a book fund of Rs 1,00,000 is equivalent to an intake of 4,000 books and 1,000 periodical publications. Substituting the values of \(NA\) and \(NP\) in the formula, we get the following results for the staff required for absorbing a sum of Rs 1,00,000 granted for the purchase of reading material.

231 Allocation of Grant Between Staff and Reading Materials

We may take the average annual cost of one professionally qualified librarian including leave salary and provident fund, to be Rs 3,400. Then the amount to be set apart for the employment of the staff necessary to utilise a grant of Rs 1,00,000 is Rs 20,000 in round figures. Thus, to ensure that the grant given to a university library is spent usefully without prejudice to concurrent service to readers and with prompt release of the books purchased for use by readers, the following recommendation is made:

232 Recommendation to UGC

The UGC should allow a university library to spend one-fifth of its grant on the staff needed to complete the book-purchase-chain including book-selection, book-order, book-reception and payment of bills, classification, cataloguing, and the physical preparation of books before release for the use of readers and absorption into the live collection of the library.

24 The Present Plight

Perhaps, the universities themselves have failed to bring this need to the UGC. Perhaps the university libraries themselves felt snowed down by this sudden increase in the book-fund and the in-take of books and periodicals and had failed to rationalise the problem. Whatever, the cause, the present plight is far from happy. As already stated, the effect of the
grant, without earmarking one-fifth of it for the extra staff needed to utilise it, is the withdrawal of the reference staff from service to readers. Another sad effect is that the only link in the book-purchase-chain that are completed usually are those of a haphazard book-selection, placing orders for books and passing the bills. These links are forcibly completed under the pressure of the financial and account rules attached to the grant. There is no pressure whatever from any quarter to enforce the completion of the chain by classification, cataloguing, and absorption of the book into the live stock of the library so as to become available for readers. Often, the bills are passed even before the books are received. When the books arrive later, they are left for a long, long time in bundles. Hardly anybody even notices it, the book-purchase-chain being thus left incomplete.

25 Appeal to UGC

What is the benefit of making grants to a library receiving grants under these conditions? The users of the library are unable to sense the wastage involved. In fact, they have been all along accustomed to a miserly provision of books and periodicals. When they are denied even the usual attention and service they are told that all the staff have been turned on the work of getting books. This induces in them the mood of compliance with the withdrawal of service. But, the public seldom has the memory to follow up such points and protest if the promised new books do not reach them. There may be perhaps a few powerful readers who lodge a protest. Then, in self-defence, a clever librarian picks out and releases just those books as are wanted by them and tides over the difficulty. This is a realistic picture of the situation. There is no getting away from the fact that to spend every extra sum of money on the purchase and service of books, there must be proportionate addition to staff. I plead with the UGC to recognise this hard fact and give effect to the recommendation given in section 232.

3 FINANCE

31 Introduction

Who should provide the funds for a university library? Is it the student population, or the State Government, or the Union Government? The answer cannot be the same in all countries. Nor can it be the same in any country at all times. It will vary with the prevailing tax-pattern of the country on the one hand, and on the social outlook on the value of university education and research on the other. Both of these factors change from country to country and from time to time.

32 Social Outlook on University Education and Research

With regard to the social outlook on the value of university education and research, there is a strong trend towards a consensus of opinion all the world over. This itself is the result of a trend towards a socialistic pattern of education to meet the growing pressure of democracy and population. In this trend, the view is that the value of university education and research is more dominant in respect of the community in general than in respect of the individual subject to them. This is examined in detail in chapter 1 of my "Library development plan: Thirty-year programme for India with draft library bills for the Union and the constituent states, 1950, (University of Delhi, Library science series, 2, )". As a result of this trend, in some countries, the entire cost of university education in general and of university libraries in particular is met from public funds. In other countries, the students are obliged to pay a fee. But, this is only a token affair. For, 90% of the cost of university education and the entire cost of university library are met from public funds. The Madras University Library approximated to this standard by about 1926. This was due to a pleasant accident which brought the Chief Minister of the State and the university librarian together on a platform. An annual grant of Rs 68,000 to the university library was a pleasant outcome of this accident. This grant was made statutory three years later. Since then, the annual grant to the library has been steadily increasing, with the increase in number of departments of study and research.

33 Effect of the Tax Pattern

The very fact that the Union Government has begun to give grant to the universities is the
effect of a change in tax pattern. At present the Union Government collects the greatest part of revenue. This naturally depletes the tax that can be collected by the constituent states. In normal times, however, the Union Government cannot find use for all the money that it collects. It therefore gives back a good portion of it to the constituent states. Happily, one of the forms of giving back is that of a direct grant to the university. Even more happily, the UGC has found it proper to give back a substantial sum in the form of grants to university libraries.

34 Method of Proportion
A Wrong Precedent

I learn, however, that the UGC grant to a university library follows the Victorian pattern of grant-in-aid codes. In this pattern, the grant-in-aid to an educational body can only be in a fixed proportion to the money that the recipient provides it from its own funds. Now, a university library has no source of income of its own. Nor has a university any independent source from which it can pay the university library. Therefore, the only other source, the income from which can be shown by a university library as its own, is the State Government. Thus, the quantum of the UGC grant to a university library is determined by what the State Government is prepared to give to that library. But, the university library is several removes from the State Government. The latter is too preoccupied with so many problems to sense the consequences of the starvation of the university library. Therefore the party that has to put down its own quota first in order to bring out an adequate grant from the UGC is in reality a third party that has the least chance to be sensitive to the deferred reserve of a poor library grant from the UGC. From the point of view of a university library, the State is certainly a third party who is not immediately or visibly affected by a reduction in the total grant going to a university library as a result of its own default. As the saying goes, it is only the toad underneath the harrow that knows where the pin-point goes. Basing the UGC grant on the method of proportion defeats its own purpose. It is futile. It must be given up.

35 Per Capita Approach

A more realistic and equitable approach to the quantum of UGC grant to a university library is the Per Capita Approach. In the pre-war period, world experience showed that the annual appropriation for the book-fund of a university library corresponded to Rs. 15 per student and Rs. 200 per teacher or research fellow. Also the annual expenditure of all other kinds, including the cost of the administrative staff and the reference staff for service, was roughly equal to the expenditure on books and periodicals. For example, the total annual budget for the library of a university with 10,000 students and 500 teachers and research fellows should be Rs. 500,000, of which Rs. 250,000 would be spent on books and periodicals. Perhaps, these figures will have to be amended in view of the inflation since World War II.

36 Apportionment between the Union and State Governments

Thus, the financial needs of a university library can be determined objectively. That money should be given to the university library in order that the return on the money spent on the university as a whole may be adequate. Again this money should be found only by the Governments of the Union and of the State. Between the UGC and the State Government, it must be decided in what proportion the library finance should be shared between themselves. This proportion will depend on taxing powers of the Union Government and the State Government. Perhaps, the State Government may pay one-fifth of the requirements of a university library and the UGC the remaining four-fifths for the time being. The capital expenditure of a university library also may have to be found similarly. But it nullifies the intention, based on social value, to provide each university library with adequate finance to serve the students, teachers and research fellows with all the needed literature, if the UGC would pay its share only if the Government pays its own share or vice versa. The following proposals are therefore commended for consideration and adoption:

361 The library grant to a university should be determined according to an agreed per capita formula.

362 The entire library finance of a university library should be provided by the UGC and the State Government.
363 The UGC and the State Government should determine from time to time the proportion in which their respective grants to a university library should be.

364 The UGC and the State Governments should have a gentleman's agreement that each will actually pay its own share of the library grant.

365 The UGC should not withdraw or lower its grant to a university library because the State Government fails in its obligation, and vice versa.

366 The library grant in any year should be based on the statistical data of the preceding year.

37 Functional Approach

The annual finance necessary for a university library can also be determined by the Functional Approach. This will take into account the number of faculties and the number and nature of the departments of study and research in the university. The result is not usually very different from that of the per capita approach. A detailed discussion of both these methods will be found in my "Library development plan for the Allahabad University, 1947." This book has been fully reproduced as an appendix in the Justice Mootham Report on the reorganisation of the Allahabad University published in 1954.

4 LIBRARY MAN POWER

41 Introduction

It is a good augury that the UGC has seriously taken up the development of university libraries, as an essential aid to advanced studies and research, so essential for industrial advancement and increasing social well-being in our country. But neither money alone nor books alone can bring about the desired results. These are necessary but not sufficient. Another necessary factor is the library man-power, to build a balanced collection of books and periodicals in the light of the actual and anticipated demand, to classify and catalogue them in a helpful way, and to give prompt, pinpointed and exhaustive documentation service to students in close correlation to their work in the respective faculties.

42 Inadequacy of the Present Library Man-Power

The question of man-power has not yet received attention. All our 30 and odd university libraries taken together will require about 300 well-trained professionals and 60 leaders with personality and drive, apart from 300 semi-professionals and clerical staff. Against the 360 of the first two categories we do not now have even 100 persons. This amounts to near-famine in professionally qualified library man-power.

43 Special School for Accelerated Course

This inadequacy of library man-power leads to a serious leakage, which prevents the good intentions of the UGC being translated into effective action and service, which can reach and benefit the students and teachers in the universities in full measure. An appeal goes to the UGC that this leakage should be stopped as quickly as possible. One method of stopping the leakage is to provide for a special accelerated course in library science to train about 250 persons for university library work, within the next two or three years. It is best to make this accelerated course independent of the present normal courses in the universities.

44 Part-time Diversion of Present Man-Power

There is another matter about the existing library man-power to which the attention of the UGC may be invited. Two or three of the top-men in the university libraries which give a course in library science are made to give part of their time to teaching in that school. This also leads to a haphazard way in absorbing the library grant. This system of making the library staff part timed teachers of library science is an inheritance from the past. I myself may be accused of having started this practice in 1928. The continuance of this unfortunate practice is proving to be ruinous both to the
efficiency of the university libraries and to the schools of library science. History must be read with care in this matter; the pioneering years of three decades ago found 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. 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, during the last 15 years, university after university began to establish diploma courses in library science with part-time teachers. This corrupted the standard both of teaching and of library work little by little. As visiting lecturer and examiner in some of these universities, I have been sadly watching the progressive degeneracy. We now seem to be heading towards a crisis. Therefore urge on the UGC to examine this matter and provide for full-time teachers in the schools of library science so that the library staff can devote their full attention to the library work proper. This is necessary to stop the leakage in the absorption of the library grants.

45 Recommendations

At the same time, it is not wise or even possible to divert any of the all-too-small number of trained librarians to full-time work as teachers of library science. Therefore, the programme for creating more librarians should be properly phased. The following recommendations are commended for consideration:

451 For a period of two or three years, the UGC should arrange for a temporary school of library science to produce in an accelerated manner about 250 post-graduate diploma holders in library science to supply man-power to the existing university libraries so that the benefit of the library grants may reach the students and teachers without leakage. This school may also aim at providing for the training of about 30 more persons who can become full-time teachers of library science in the existing library schools in the university.

452 The university in which the temporary school is located will have to be selected without interfering with the existing schools with part-time teachers.

453 The UGC should include in its policy the gradual replacement of part-time teachers by full-time teachers in the diploma courses in library science being conducted in the universities.

5 RESEARCH IN LIBRARY SCIENCE

51 A New Social Phenomenon

The current renaissance in our country is naturally producing an effervescence of activities in the educational, industrial, and governmental spheres. These spheres hold the key to the development in every other sphere. Work in these three spheres has now reached huge dimensions. It has to face many unprecedented situations. It can no longer be based solely on the innate flair of a few exceptional top-men. On the other hand, it has to be based on continuous systematic research. Research is thus coupled today directly with the continuous flow of current work. Moreover, it has to be done by a team. This team has to include a number of persons removed somewhat from the position of the man of genius in the intellectual scale. Therefore, need has arisen to train in methods of research many persons low down in the first quartile of the intellectual scale. This is a new phenomenon in the world of today in general, and in New India in particular.

52 Greater Attention to Library Science

Research in the universities as well as in the industrial houses and the governmental establishments by a team of workers most of whom are neither self-centres of illumination nor self-helpers, has to be fed by efficient library service. In response to this new development, the UGC has begun to devote thought to the improvement of university libraries and to make grants to them. The industrial houses and the governmental establishments also have begun to devote thought to their own libraries and to provide large sums of money for them.
Another social necessity in a democracy is the establishment and maintenance of a nationwide public library system. This is also provided with a considerable sum of money. Thus, a large slice of public money is now being necessarily diverted to the libraries.

53 Instruments of Global Development

When so much money is turned on to libraries, special care should be taken to see that library service reaches the persons concerned not only without obstruction of any sort, but also in a more-aggressive and at the same time pleasant and acceptable manner. This means intimate personal service to top-management, persuasive service to the pedestrians making up the ranks and the file and the men at the bench, dissemination service to the general public, or provision of harmless, elevating, leisure-time occupation for everybody. This extended and universal use of the library as an instrument of global social development is a phenomenon taking shape only today. It needs the forging of new lines of organisation for the library system of the country as a whole and new library techniques for making library service to each and every reader efficient and pin-pointed.

54 Research in Library Science

The continuous development of the lines of library organisation and of the library techniques themselves has to be based on research of its own. In our own lifetime the problems of library service have entered the spiral of scientific method and have formed a fit field for systematic research. Indeed, a library science has emerged with its own normative principles. It is acknowledged all over the world that India has played a pioneering role in helping the emergence of library science. The Fundamental Laws of library science were formulated in India about 25 years ago. Practically, every branch of library science has been examined and continues to be examined in the light of the fundamental laws. The foundation for the Depth-Classification needed for efficient library service is being laid in India, in the light of the first self-perpetuating, analytico-synthetic scheme of classification called Colon Classification, which was itself created in India about thirty years ago. India is thus quite competent to cultivate the field of library science for its own benefit and incidentally for the benefit also of the world at large. From the point of view of the UGC, this field should be continually cultivated by research in order that all the past sums of money, spent on library systems in the country, can give an adequate return.

55 All India Institute of Library Science

No agency other than the UGC is likely to have the vision to sense the long-range effects of the research and also have the courage to spend money on research projects of deferred return. As an insurance against the dissipation or non-fructification of its own grants to university libraries and the private and public provision of money for all other kinds of libraries, the UGC should exercise its farsight and provide for advanced studies and research in library science. Perhaps, for some years to come, one such institute will prove sufficient for the whole country.

56 Location of the Institute

Naturally, an institute of the kind should be located in one of our universities. That university should be chosen that has a tradition in the matter and also the nucleus for an advanced institute of that kind. One suggestion is the University of Madras. For, during the current year, an endowment has been made to that University for the Sarada-Ranganathan Chair of Library Science. The Laws of Library Science were formulated in that university. The Colon Classification was created there. The Chain Procedure for cataloguing, now being practised in many countries of the world was also discovered in that university. Thus, it has the necessary tradition and the nucleus for receiving the All India Institute for Advanced Studies and Research in Library Science.

57 Recommendations

The recommendations to the UGC is therefore as follows:
RANGANATHAN

The UGC may strengthen the chair in library science in the University of Madras, by giving an annual grant for the maintenance of one reader, two lecturers, four research fellows, and a few students in the Madras Degree Course in Library Science.

It is estimated that an annual grant of Rs 50,000 may prove sufficient for the purpose. In view of the all-India nature of this project, it is in the fitness of things that this grant comes from the UGC in preference to the State Government.