TRAINING FOR LIBRARIANSHIP

Shows the need for diversification of training for workers in the spheres of public, academic and business libraries. Gives a curriculum for a rapid three-months' course for Semi-professionals, a one-year post-graduate B.Lib.Sc. course for Professionals, and a further one-year M.Lib.Sc. course or preferably doctorate course for Leaders.

1 LIBRARY PROFESSION

The modern library profession has been evolving for nearly a century. Even in India, it has been evolving for nearly a quarter of a century. And yet, a clear picture of the library profession and of the training needed for it has not yet taken shape.

11 View of the General Public

The general public does not see anything in the work of librarians, which calls for special training. One of the leaders of our country asked me, "What is there in librarianship to justify your writing nearly fifty books on it? I hear of your having organised a course for the Master's Degree in Library Science and of your having persuaded a university to institute a Doctorate Degree in your subject. It means that you try to glorify mere common sense as a fit subject for such degrees." For the common man, a librarian is any person earning his livelihood by working in a library. For many, the thirty posts in the Madras University Library are indistinguishable. For example, there was an unskilled cleaner in the library. His name was Abdur Razak. Most of his mail had the address "Abdur Razak, Librarian, Madras University Library"!

12 View of the Officialdom

For those occupying long-established official positions, library staff consists of lower division and upper division clerks at the bottom, and of superintendents and inspectors at the top. India's officialdom has not yet abandoned this view of the library profession. This view determines, in the minds of those in power, the function of those working in a library. The library staff is ruthlessly interchanged with its own clerical and administrative staff by the host-body, be it a municipal office, a government department, or the office of the Registrar of a University. A stenographer in the Ministry of Education is transferred as University Librarian. A deputy inspector of elementary schools is transferred as Special Officer for Libraries. The Assistant Registrar of a University is made University Librarian. In this view, there is no need for any special training for librarianship.
**13 View of the Library Profession Itself**

The library profession no doubt concedes the need for special training. But many of the chief librarians in India are not strong enough to insist on it. In some universities, government departments and research institutes, untrained persons are even now permanently appointed to library posts. Till a few years ago, familiarity with several languages was the only qualification prescribed for librarian's posts. All along, I have had to protest against this. Fortunately this primitive view has now been nearly abandoned. But the profession itself is having primitive or old-fashioned views on the content of the course of training.

**2 CURRICULUM**

**21 Pure Curriculum**

When the Madras Library Association started a School of Librarianship thirty years ago, the curriculum prescribed consisted only of professional subjects. When the University of Madras took over this School, such a curriculum was continued.

**22 Weeds in the Curriculum**

When the Banaras Hindu University instituted a course in Librarianship twenty-five years ago, it showed a tendency to deviate from this purity. But it accepted proper advice and avoided that tendency. On the other hand, the University of Bombay allowed the course to be smothered by weeds of many kinds. Its curriculum was loaded with so-called General Knowledge, History of Literature, and Cultural History including some antiquarian cram-information about the art of writing, book-production, and libraries in ancient and medieval times. When I took my training in the London School thirty-four years ago, History of the Novel, two modern languages, and Palaeography were obligatory. I was told that I could skip them, if I did not care for the University Diploma. I exercised this option. This enabled me to concentrate on the professional part of the curriculum only. This has been of immense use to me in later life.

**23 Monolithic Curriculum**

The library profession is still largely wedded to a monolithic curriculum for the entire profession. There has been resistance to the diversification of the course of training. For example, we have had the historic blunder of compelling the newly emerging documentation wing of the profession to submit itself to the entire curriculum originally designed for the public library wing. It had led to a split in the profession. This split has reached even the international level. It is now so difficult to heal the harm done.

**3 DESIGN OF TRAINING COURSE**

The training course should be designed in correlation to the kinds of library service that the nation needs. Broadly speaking, we can now isolate three kinds of service:

1. Service to the generalist reader, which lies largely in the sphere of the public library system;
2. Service to pupils, students, and teachers, which lies in the sphere of the academic library system;
3. Service to the world of commerce, industries, and governmental departments, which lies largely in the sphere of the business library system.

**31 Common Area**

There is an area common to the training needed for each of these three spheres of service. The curriculum for this common area will have to be:

1. The normative principles of the Laws of Library Science. A proper presentation of these laws will induce in the trainees a healthy library outlook. It will further give a bird's eye view of the high-ways and bye-ways in the total field of study;
2. Library administration, with emphasis on the routine common to all libraries in respect of book-selection, book-acquisition, management of periodicals, circulation of reading materials, and maintenance work including the mending and binding of reading materials; elementary account of library building, fittings, furniture, lighting, and maintenance.
3 Library classification, with emphasis on the appreciation of classified arrangement of reading materials, interpretation of call numbers, thinking in terms of facet analysis and class numbers in literature search, and the what, the why, and the how of library classification in general terms;

4 Library catalogue, with emphasis on facility in using a catalogue, the kinds of entries with their respective functions, the sections of each kind of entry, the physical form of the catalogue, and the evolution of the catalogue; and

5 Reference service as the summum bonum of library service, technique of ready reference service, familiarity with reference materials of a general nature, technique of long-range reference service, familiarity with general bibliographies, psychology of reference service, and familiarity with the stages of preparation, actual service, and consolidation of the experience gained during actual service; forms of public relation and library publicity.

32 Special Area for Public Library Service

The extra area to be covered in the training of those aspiring for leadership in public library service should include

1 History of modern public library system in the mother country and in one or two other typical countries;

2 Library legislation with emphasis on factors for legislation, sources for library finance, and library policy;

3 Library structure of the mother country, with the differentia between urban library service and rural library service.

33 Special Area for Academic Library Service

The extra area to be covered in the training of those intended for service in academic libraries should include

1 Familiarity with the courses of studies offered by the host-institution;

2 Correlation of library service to classroom work, with emphasis on preparatory and follow up study;

3 Child and adolescent psychology from the angle of reading and use of library;

4 Training pupils and students in correct reading method, notes-taking, and other related matters; and

5 Formation, maintenance, and rationing of service of test-book collection.

34 Special Area for Business Library Service

The extra area to be covered in the training for service in business libraries should include:

1 Intensive bibliographical knowledge, with emphasis on specialised reference books, ad hoc bibliographies, and abstracting and indexing periodicals in some prescribed areas of the universe of knowledge;

2 Documentation work with emphasis on nascent micro-thought, including depth-classification, and advanced chain-procedure for the formation of class index entries and feature-headings;

3 Methods of literature-search and the building of selective special bibliography in correlation to the problems engaging the attention of the host-body from time to time;

4 Special features of circulation work in the limited context of the host-body;

5 Documentation service including the procurement of documents not available in the library, the preparation of precis, and the organisation and service of the research memora and reports being produced by the host-body, so as to conserve research-potential; and

6 Specialised material, equipment and processes needed in business libraries.

4 GRADES OF LIBRARY MAN-POWER

To get a view of the organisation of training for librarianship, we should examine the grades of librarians needed to man a national
library system. We shall for definiteness work out the number needed in each grade for the Indian library system. We may recognise four grades of workers. Of these one grade will consist of accountants, clerical workers, messengers, drivers of librachines, gardeners, and watchman. These do not require any training in librarianship. Those needing such training fall into the three groups — Semi-Professionals, Professionals, and Leaders. Let us next estimate the number of persons required in each grade. This estimate should be based on the number of libraries needed to serve all the citizens. In my Library development plan (1951) I have made an estimate of the number of libraries and library manpower ultimately required for India. These figures were based on the Census of 1941 and the political map of India as it was in 1951. Some correction will therefore be necessary in these figures. So corrected the number of persons to be trained in librarianship may be tabulated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Total Strength</th>
<th>Average number to be trained per year by 1980</th>
<th>Total Strength</th>
<th>Average number to be trained per year for 1980 India</th>
<th>Each State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Professionals</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>220</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

41 Training for Semi-Professionals

The Semi-Professionals will have to work mostly in the circulation and maintenance sections of all libraries and in the libraries of schools. They need to be trained only in the common area described in section 31. My Library manual (1951) has been written just to suit their training. The course should consist of formal lessons for three months and an apprentice course in an approved library for six weeks before and for six weeks after the formal course. The formal lessons should be repeated four times a year in each constituent state and the 150 trainees needed each year in each state should be trained in four batches.

There should be two full-timed teachers. The minimum qualification for admission should be completion of the Higher Secondary Course.

42 Training for Professionals

The professionals will have to work as reference librarians, classifiers and cataloguers, and on book-selection, acquisition of books and periodicals, and in documentation work and service. They need advanced training in the subjects mentioned in section 31 and elementary training in the subjects mentioned in sections 32 to 34. They should take a post-graduate course in a University for one academic year and an apprentice course in an approved library for three months before and three months after the formal course. During the formal course, half of each day should be spent in practical work and the other half in lectures and tutorial work. Every branch should be developed as necessary implications of the Laws of Library Science. There should be a weekly seminar. Each seminar should be preceded by two weeks of preparation by the students on an agreed topic; and the work in the seminar should take the form of discussing a central proposition pertaining to the chosen topic. The course should lead to the B. Lib.Sc. degree. To train the annual quota of 70 professionals in each state, at least two Universities should have a Department of Library Science in each State. To train 35 professionals in a year, a University should have a minimum of two full-timed lecturers.

43 Training for Leaders

The leaders will have to work as National, State, and District Librarians and as Chief Librarians in University and Business Libraries. They should all take in common the three subjects — Universe of knowledge: Development and Structure, Advanced Classification, and Advanced Cataloguing. In addition, each should do to an advanced standard one of the courses indicated in sections 32 to 34. The course should be thrown open only to those who had secured a high place in the B. Lib.Sc. examination, and had earned that degree after the completion of the apprentice course. The course should lead to M. Lib.Sc. examination.
To train the annual quota of 30 leaders for the country as a whole, it may not be necessary for more than two or three universities in the country to offer the course. No university should offer it unless it has one full-timed professor and two full-timed readers in library science in addition to the two lectures needed for the B. Lib. Sc. course, and the professors and the readers are capable of doing, and actually do, research in library science.

5. TEACHERS OF LIBRARIANSHIP

In section 4 and its subdivisions, the need for full-timed teachers of librarianship has been emphasised. To know a subject is necessary, but not sufficient, to be a successful teacher of the subject. Librarianship is no exception to this rule. I have observed in India and in other countries the effect of teaching librarianship by persons not trained as teachers. This makes me assert that teachers of librarianship should undergo training in teaching methods. An economical course will be for a prospective teacher of librarianship to join a Teachers' College. There they should take the course on teaching technique common to all teachers. When the other teachers take specialised courses in the teaching of particular subjects, the prospective teachers of librarianship should take a specialised course in the teaching of librarianship.

51. NUMBER TO BE TRAINED

The number of teachers of librarianship needed in India will be ultimately about 100. Immediately, there may be need for about 30 teachers. These can be trained in one year. At present a few universities are appointing full-timed teachers. This is a commendable step. But, they merely pull out working librarians and thus create a vacuum in libraries. Moreover, these are all young diploma holders with little experience in working a library and in teaching. This transition stage of doubtful value can be avoided if a little rethinking and rational approach is made to the problem instead of simply drifting along. Perhaps, the Government of India may arrange for the opening of temporary section for librarianship in one training college for one or two years, to meet the immediate demand.

6. SEPARATION OF TRAINING FOR SERVICE-STAFF AND TECHNICAL STAFF

We are on the eve of a new development in the training for librarianship. The earlier we recognise it and provide for it, the better it will be. We should separate the courses for the service-staff and for the technical staff. The number of libraries is increasing in every country. Further, the number of books published in each year has nearly doubled in each country within a span of one generation. It is a national waste for each library to classify and catalogue the same book. Centralised classification and cataloguing is possible. In Great Britain, the British National Bibliography is able to supply printed catalogue cards for any book published in recent years or currently published. The cards reach a library within two days of placing an order. It has been shown in my Heading and canons (1955) that a saving of 75% would result if we adopt centralised classification and cataloguing both for foreign books and for the books of the home country. The result of taking advantage of this will be that the service-staff need to know only as much of classification and cataloguing as is prescribed in section 31 paras 3, 4 and 5. Intensive drill in practical classification and cataloguing will be necessary only for the technical staff working in the Technical Wing of the National Central Library, the State Central Libraries, and in the Insdoc Office. This technical staff will bear only a small proportion to the service-staff. Thus it is a waste to give an intensive course in classification and cataloguing to all the persons electing library profession. Of course, the students should elect their field of practice. But this is being done in every other profession. The library profession too will have to fall in line with the other professions in this respect.