

Library Co-operation For Better Education

—Kazi Md. Abdul Hai

EDUCATION means transmission of knowledge; it was developed as a system resulting from continuous reorganisation and integration of activities and experiences. Education is not only a personal need but is also a social necessity. Its aim should be the welfare of the nation and the humanity at large. In a modern state a citizen has the right to receive education up to a certain level free of cost, but the imparting of higher education is not the sole responsibility of the government. Higher education is costly and also limited to those few who are blessed with extraordinary merit. Generally it is imparted in the university, a non-profit organisation mostly financed by the government.

The university, the highest seat of learning, maintains a library to aid, sustain and augment learning and research. The aim of the library is to "preserve knowledge so that none is lost, organise knowledge so that none is wasted, and make knowledge available so that no one need be deprived".

As the scope of education and research is expanding in multidimensional disciplines and as there are some universities in Bangladesh, each devoted to the expansion of knowledge, there is the possibility

of duplication of expenditure resulting in the duplication of non-text and research materials. These mainly consist of books and journals the production of which has increased tremendously in recent years abroad and the library has to acquire them to meet the research need. Furthermore the cost of reading materials has increased multifold on the one hand and the exchange rate of Dollar/Pound in relation to Taka on the other. A book that could be purchased at Taka 197.50 in 1966 needs now about Taka 1400/- For this reason the book budget has increased in every university. For example, the BUET was supposed to spend about Taka 3200.000/- in 1982-1983.

In Britain library co-operation was introduced in 1930. It included special libraries and university libraries. In America the objectives university library co-operation is fulfilled through the Farmington Plan. Library co-operation is found also in many other countries. Harrison, K.C. in his "First Steps in Librarianship" said, "one of the first concerns of those many new independent countries which are embarking upon library development should certainly be to plan schemes of library co-operation. Co-operation is an integrated national library service but it

can work properly when there is a master plan behind it."

In the light of the above saying and as the national economy demands minimising of loss and maximising of gain, it is appropriate to introduce library co-operation even at university level to minimise the education expenditure, and avoid unnecessary duplication of research materials in Bangladesh. It is, therefore, necessary to form a co-operative body say, "Library resource utilization committee", to determine the common need and formulate the rules of co-operation to be followed by the co-operating universities. Let us assume that the co-operation should start first on regional basis. Say, the Dhaka University and the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology being closely located and each offering post-graduate courses leading to Ph.D. have ample opportunity to join in the co-operation. The following may be the infrastructures of library co-operation: (1) The arrangement for inter-library loan card is to be made to enable the reader to have an access to any reading material anywhere in either library. (2) A union catalogue of the holdings in particular fields of both the libraries has to be maintained. (3) Arrangement for co-operative book selection and processing should be there. (4) Repro-

graphic services should be made available to either library. (5) With special agreement computer service may also be made available to either university in case one has no computer.

If the above mentioned universities enter into an agreement of co-operation their users may also use the previously acquired books and journals many of which are lying unused in both libraries. Many of them were received as gift from different organisations and individuals. So, no choice of need could be made. Moreover the unused books in the shelves whether open or closed thus become the property of insects. The books on tertiary information are occasionally weeded, and unused and outdated books are generally included in them. It is, therefore, necessary to formulate a uniform weeding policy to donate the weeded books to colleges and schools for their use. This is in vogue in America and Britain.

In conclusion it is desirable that the idea expressed here shall be further expanded and scrutinised by the relevant authorities and personnel as library co-operation is one of the prerequisite to good planning of national education. Sooner such co-operative facilities are made available, better it may be to attain national progress in this regard.