

14

Development Of Library Education In Bangladesh

Sultan Uddin Ahmad

EDUCATION is considered an important factor in development. It contributes to the promotion of material resources through development of trained staff and specialised manpower. It is likewise an operation aimed at preparing the individual for active participation in society, that is, as a citizen who can be active at all levels, not merely for production purpose. Society is gradually transformed into modernisation by balanced emphasis both on liberal and specialised education.

Librarianship is concerned in varying degrees with the whole range of human knowledge. However, there is a certain body of knowledge which all professional librarians are assumed to possess, such as administration, planning, selection, procurement, organization, preservation, storing, dissemination and interpretation of the means of human communication.

The credit of establishing the first and formal school for training of librarians goes to Melvil Dewey. In 1887 he was successful in opening the school of library economy at Columbia College. It was transferred to the New York State Library at Albany in 1889 as the New York State Library School.

Great Britain was the first country in the world to establish libraries through legislation-Public Library Act, 1850. To man the public libraries, library education in UK started as an apprenticeship in the libraries. Eventually its Library Association instituted an examination system and to give hallmark to the successful candidates.

Library training in Great Britain, was thus, taken up as one of the functions of the Library Association through apprenticeship. It was only in 1921 that the London School of Librarianship was established.

Library science teaching in India subcontinent dates back to 1910. Formal education in India started from 1941 and the activities of William Alanson Borden, an American Librarian and pupil of Melvil Dewey. Borden spent three years in Buroda, where, in addition to developing libraries throughout the state, he started a library school.

It is significant to note that there was no growth of library education in Bangladesh till early 60's. But many pioneer librarians felt the need. Though the Dhaka University is the oldest University of Bangladesh, established in 1921, it had not undertaken the task of conducting any librarianship training programme during the course of thirty years up to 1951.

The first breakthrough, however

small, in 1952 when the first three-month Certificate Course in Librarianship was instituted at Dhaka University by the Late Mr. Fazle Elahi, the then librarian of the University. But the course was discontinued after a single session.

In 1953, higher training facilities were given to two practising librarians: the late Mr. Abdur Rahman Mirdah, Librarian of Ahsanullah Engineering College, Dhaka, for training in Newzealand and the late Mr. A.F.M. Shamsul Haque, Librarian and Kipper of records, Secretariat Library, Dhaka, for training in Australia. Mr. Ahmad Hussain and Mr. M.S. Khan were sent to U.S.A. and U.K., respectively, in 1951 for training in Library Science. Mr. Ahmad Hussain took his M.S. Degree in Library Science from the University of Columbia.

They returned to Bangladesh in 1955 and 1956, respectively, on completion of their studies at the University of Columbia and School of Librarianship and Archives in the University of London.

The Dhaka University started a three-month certificate course in librarianship known as Fulbright Course, from the session 1955-56. Such four Fulbright Courses were held upto 1958-59 with the help and assistance of the United States Education Foundation.

The East Pakistan Library Association (Now Library Association of Bangladesh) started an undergraduate Certificate Course from 1958. The duration of the course is six months. The Association has so far conducted 49 such courses and produced more than 1000 sub-professionals. The programme of the course is at present governed by the Library Training Institute established by the Government of Bangladesh in the year 1976 under a development plan. The institute is located at the Bangladesh Central Public Library building and managed by the Library Association of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Library Council formerly Pakistan Special Library Association which came into being in 1968 had been conducting a certificate course in Librarianship at undergraduate level since 1972. The duration of the course was six months. The Council conducted 9 such courses during 1972-1979. Thereafter the Council ceased to function and the course stood sus-

pending.

Short Courses: NEAR - National Institute of Education Administration, Extension and Research had been conducting a short course of 2 to 4 weeks duration for secondary school teachers upto 1963. The course has remained suspended since 1983.

The National Book Centre, Bangladesh, has conducted a good number of short courses for ten days for the rural library organizers and workers of Bangladesh. Such a course was also conducted by Jessore Public Library in 1984 with the cooperation of National Book Centre, Bangladesh.

National Institute of Public Administration, NIPA, conducted a course from 24-1-1975 to 12-2-1975 on Library Administration. Two similar courses were also conducted by Civil-Officers Training Academy for one to two weeks in 1982 and 1983.

Teachers Training College: The teacher's training colleges prepare graduate teachers of secondary schools by offering one-year course in Librarianship to those who opt for the subject, from the session 1975-76. Library Science was introduced as an optional subject in the curriculum of Dhaka, Rajshahi, and Khulna Teacher's Training Colleges. Mymensingh (Mens) Teacher's Training College also started teaching Library Science as an optional subject from the session 1981-82.

Dhaka University: Due to the continuous efforts of Mr. M.S. Khan, Librarian of Dhaka University, the post-graduate diploma in Library Science course was introduced in 1959 at the Dhaka University. In 1962-63 academic session post-graduate course in Library Science leading to Masters Degree course at Dhaka University was instituted. The University was convinced about the success of the course and instituted the Department of library science from the session 1964-1965 under the Faculty of Arts. From the Academic session 1975-76 Dhaka University started M.A. Preliminary course and thereby two-year Masters degree programme in Library Science was introduced.

The University of Dhaka renamed the Department of Library Science as the Department of Library and Information Science with the open-

ing of Honours Course in Library and Information Science in 1987-88 and thereby it suspended the diploma course. The Dhaka University also offers the M.Phil and Doctorate Degree in Library and Information Science.

The University offered the Library Association of Bangladesh to introduce diploma course and thus the Association started the post-graduate diploma course in its Library Training Institute from the academic session 1989-90. Dhaka University Authority passed a resolution to introduce Library and Information Science as an elective subject at the graduation level.

Bangladesh Education Commission (1974) recommended for the institution of a full-fledged department of Library Science Education at Rajshahi, Chittagong and Jahangirnagar Universities.

Rajshahi University: The Rajshahi University started Post-Graduate Diploma course in Librarianship from 1991.

Besides these, two or three special training courses on library organisation and management were conducted by the British Council in Bangladesh for the working librarians of colleges and universities. Such technical courses were also conducted by Dr. M.H. Khan for the University cataloguers during 1986-88.

It is estimated that there are about 1000 post-graduate diploma holders, 600 Masters degree holders and 2000 certificate holders in Librarianship from various institutions in Bangladesh. The existing facilities for library education in Bangladesh are not sufficient to meet the increasing need as there has been a great increase in the number of educational institutions and organizations in both public and private sectors and these institutions and organizations depend largely on the use of books and other reading, visual and audio-visual materials. A good number of libraries have already come into existence but many of them lack properly qualified and trained manpower.

Library education and need for qualified manpower for different types of libraries in Bangladesh is a burning issue. To cope with the present situation, it is proposed that the government should come forward with the provision for further expansion of library education and

include manpower development programme in phases in its Five-Year Plan for the development of all types of libraries and librarianship in Bangladesh.