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Library Ethics In Bangladesh

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DUE to moral degradation in general, library service has also been affected with the virus of corruption and mismanagement.

In the fifties and sixties, the profession of Librarianship was treated honourable. Those who were associated with the then East Pakistan Librarianship were all highly qualified and came from respectable families. Even after independence the same trend prevailed. But after a few years the scene changed with the change of time. Now, corruption has crept into library service also.

Nowadays, library personnel that include librarians, documentalists, information officers and library trainers are not always recruited on the basis of merit and experience, sometimes they are recruited on the basis of backing from big bosses. Many of those who are really talented and dedicated are left behind. This is the cause of degradation of the library service in the country.

Not all library workers now take their job seriously. If somebody visits a library, big or small, he/she may

find the library staff absent and even if somebody is found there, he/she may be busy with unproductive work and very few seem to take much care of the users of the library. This situation has been created due to non accountability of government servants to the public.

The library, nay the education/cultural sector as a whole, was once free from corruption. But now some of these who are in charge of purchase make a deal with suppliers. Even old and outdated books/documents may be purchased for material benefit of the persons concerned. The technique of book purchase is not known to all, corrupt elements take advantage of this; they know how to over-invoice the price. The price is not generally printed on the face of the book, rather it is printed in the catalogue.

Library by nature is a public place — except those meant for classified readers for security reasons. The dealings of library personnel with their clients should be soft, moder-

ate, amicable and friendly, but in practice, it is not being followed in many cases. Those working with government departments are not trained in the art of dealing with the public.

Libraries, like hospitals, should be kept neat and clean. The place should be well-ventilated and well-lit so that the readers may feel comfortable and not uneasy to use them.

According to UNESCO manual, each and every book, journal, document should be fumigated, and furniture and equipment should be cleaned to avoid health hazards. The whole process requires the ability and sincerity of purpose on the part of library managers/administrators.

Library is a place where all — black and white, rich and poor, high and low — may visit and use it. Library is a mirror of society, barometer of national development. Librarianship is not a job only, it is a noble profession. It requires the services of missionary men and women.