

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The primary objective of India's national policy on library and information system is

to foster, promote and sustain by all appropriate means the organisation, availability and use of information in all sectors of national activity.¹

The committee formulating the policy has assigned a major role to the library system in the attainment of this objective. It is true that in the 'Information Age', as the present time is described, information will mostly be handled by the computer. But libraries will not be totally eliminated; they will continue to enjoy a place of pride in the society. As Theodore Roszak² puts it, the library will be a link between the public and the computer. He argues :

Library is staffed by men and women who maintain high respect for intellectual values. Because they are also traditional keepers of books, librarians have a healthy sense of the hierarchical relationship between data and idea, facts and knowledge. They know what one goes to a database to find and what one goes to a book to find.

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1. India, Ministry of Human Resource Development. Committee on National Policy on Library and Information System. National Policy on Library and Information System : a presentation. New Delhi, 1986. p 3.
 2. Roszak, Theodore. "Partners for democracy : public libraries and information technology." Wilson Library Bulletin. 60:6 (Feb 1986) 14-17.

Soon³ envisages librarians as professional information specialists who would act as consultants and teachers to even the specialists in any subject on how to obtain the relevant information.

In spite of the advancement of technology and the new forms of documents, the present nature of libraries will nevertheless prevail. It will prevail as long as man loves books. The ultimate record of knowledge will be in the form of books and periodicals, for quite some time to come. Libraries will be the places which are going to house the material, organise it and make it ready for use. It will be only libraries that will have to act as the catalytic agent in the advancement of knowledge for many more years. The paperless society is still far away, if not inconceivable. The technology is going to be the tool which human beings will use to achieve their objectives. Sophisticated computers, or even robots, will not work as librarians, nor the discs, tapes, floppies will be the libraries. They will only facilitate the work of the librarian in achieving the ultimate objective of the library viz. to acquire and organise relevant information and disseminate it to the legitimate user. Thus, the role of the library as a social institution designed to serve the purpose that has been assigned to it will remain the same even in a high-tech society.

3. Soon, Cham Tao - "The library in the information age" IN The library in the information revolution : proceeding of the Sixth Congress of the South-east Asian Libraries, 1983 pp 7-9.

Library as a social institution has been created, right from ancient times, basically to act as a store house of knowledge and repository of the records of mankind's achievements to conserve and transmit culture and to underpin education, both informal and formal. It emerged as a most convenient, reliable, economical and successful social institution. In course of time, it became a source of power⁴. In the countries where this power was recognised and exploited, the libraries feature significantly in the economic welfare of the community, they are crucially related to all other intellectual, artistic and creative activities, They have been the instruments of social and political change. They are, as the guardians of the freedom of thought, the bastions of liberty.

It is necessary for the developing countries like India to understand and appreciate this power of the library and utilise it for the national development. Once it has been realised, the next task would be to build the network of libraries. The most crucial aspect in building-up the network is to make a provision for self-sustenance. Countries like India which learnt from the experience of developed countries during the last two centuries did make efforts to set up libraries with a view to supporting the socio-economic and scientific development, but unfortunately the effort did not result in creating self-sustaining libraries. In spite of the Delhi Public

4. Thompson, James. Library power : a new philosophy of librarianship. London, 1974 p 110.

Library experiment, for example, the public library system could not develop in the country. Even the special libraries which showed some promise in the earlier days could not develop to the desired extent.⁵ Even in the field of general education, the libraries in universities, colleges and schools could not make an impact. This was clear when the two documents on new education policy released by the Government of India^{6,7} made only casual references to the library service. The document on the Programme-of-action for National Policy on Education⁸ noted the miserable condition of libraries in educational institutes and simply called for improving it without assigning to the libraries a definite role and without indicating standards for improvement.

5. Naidu, R.Sreepathy. "A survey of the specialist libraries in Andhra Pradesh". Lucknow Librarian 14:1 (Jan-Mar 1982) 1-20. (This survey was based on the questionnaires sent to the 178 special libraries in the Indian State of Andhra Pradesh. The 32 usable responses indicated that most of the state's libraries were only being organised and administered at the housekeeping level. Much effort, money and manpower would be needed to enable them to raise their services to the research level. The author calls for effective inter-library cooperation and suggests that the State Government should provide as much help as possible).
6. India. Ministry of Education. Challenge of education : a policy perspective. New Delhi, 1985 pp 119.
7. India. Ministry of Human Resource Development. Department of Education. National Policy of Education 1986. New Delhi, 1986 pp 22.
8. Ibid. 'Programme of action' - national policy on education-1986 New Delhi, 1986 p 83.

A scientific approach is needed while setting up and developing the library if it is expected to generate the required power. Management science provides the concept of the effective organisation that can very well be adopted for the purpose. It would be useful not only for setting up an effective library but for taking a periodic review of the library work so that the level of its effectiveness is maintained.

An attempt has been made in this study to apply the concept of organisational effectiveness to the library and to develop an instrument that would be useful to measure in quantitative terms the degree of its effectiveness. For this purpose the library is viewed as an organisation - a complex social unit deliberately designed to achieve a specific purpose or a set of purposes.⁹ The study presents the portrait of an effective library. Measurement of the organisational effectiveness is necessary to keep up the level of its effectiveness. Measurement in quantitative terms is more concrete. As Dougherty and Heinritz¹⁰ put it, the very fact that libraries are not dependant upon showing financial profits in order to exist makes it even more imperative that they be well-managed. Some criteria for measuring their effectiveness, therefore, are necessary. Such a measurement in

9. Knight, K.E. and McDaniel, R.R. Jr. Organisations : an information systems perspectives. Belmont, (C.A), 1979 5.

10. Dougherty, R.M. and Heinritz, F.J. Scientific management of library operations. New York, 1966 p 16.

quantitative terms will be useful to a) internally monitor library performance indicators; b) compare actual performance with planned performance in order to guide future decision making, and also c) to compare the performance of one library with that of other libraries¹¹ In the end, it will help to maintain the effectiveness level of the library.

The objectives of the present study, therefore, are

- a) to define the library effectiveness;
- b) to present a model for the effective library;
- c) to develop a scoring model by which the effectiveness of the library can be measured in quantitative terms; and
- d) to suggest ways to collect, process and analyse data for the measurement exercise.

The study is confined to what may be appropriately termed as institutional libraries. Institutional libraries by definition are attached to institutions where they function as their part.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

The outline of the chapters that follow is as under. The next chapter defines library effectiveness and clarifies the concept as developed in the present study vis-a-vis the ones that are available in the literature. It deals, in greater details, why the exercise in measurement of library effectiveness is necessary. The problems that arise in conducting such an exercise are also discussed in the chapter. The third chapter reviews the literature on the subject. The model of the effective

11. Brockmann, J.R. The assessment of library performance : an Australian perspective of the British interlibrary project. Perth, 1984. pp 3-4.

library and its theoretical foundations are presented in the fourth chapter. It embodies the contribution of the present study to the literature on the subject. The detailed description of the model follows in the next four chapters. Each of them explains one of the four components of the model and the method for collecting data and information for the component and instructions on how to analyse them. The scoring method is also explained. The ninth chapter deals with the opinion survey conducted to resolve some of the debatable issues. The methodology and the questionnaire designed for the survey and the responses to the questionnaire are analysed in the chapter. The model developed for measuring library effectiveness was tested on libraries of different types, viz. university, college and school libraries, those attached to research organisations and those of training institutions. The results of this survey are presented in the tenth chapter. The summary and conclusions of the study are presented in the last chapter. Bibliography of references used is appended at the end.