CHAPTER I

PUBLIC LIBRARY

A CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

The origin of the library can be traced to the human instinct of possessiveness and that of passing on whatever he has acquired to his progeny. This instinct is a sort of negative quality when it concerns about mundane things like money, gold and land, and the inheritance is confined only to the man's own clan. On the other hand, the same instinct becomes a superb and sublime act when it concerns about the rich human experience and recorded knowledge, and the whole mankind is the potential recipient of the resources. No wonder, as Jesse H. Shera feels, "The library is a product of cultural maturation".

With the invention of printing and as a sequel to the industrial revolution, education became accessible even to a common man. As an anticlimax to this positive trend, the

world suffered two World Wars. The United Nations Organisation, in its Preamble to its charter mentions that "war starts not on the battlefield, but in the minds of men. And it is in the minds of men that bastions of peace must be erected...." Therefore, to prevent wars, it was necessary to promote understanding through massive programmes to further literacy and education. Both formal and non-formal education became necessary to reach out the human mind. Libraries, play a pivotal role towards this noble end.

1.2 Public Libraries

Public library is an instrument of education and a vehicle of socio-economic mobility. "Today by public libraries we mean a library open to all without the distinction of caste, creed or sex, free of charge and supported by legislation. And which houses books and other reading materials for use" S. R. Ranganathan feels that the "libraries have the power to produce material happiness, mental joy and spiritual delight, they are social institutes charged with the duty of providing the means for perpetual self-education of one and all." The literature of librarianship is full of several


definitions of the public library, its objectives, functions and operations. The essence of all these thoughts by stalwarts like L. R. McColvin, Leon Carnovsky, Carl White and S. R. Ranganathan may be summed up in the following few lines. Public library is one "... Which is financed for the most part out of public funds; .... Which charges no fees from readers and yet is open for full use by the public without distinction of caste, creed or sex; ... Which is intended as an auxiliary educational institution providing a means of self-education which is endless. Which houses learning material giving reliable information freely and without partiality or prejudice on as wide a variety of subjects as will satisfy the interest of the readers." In essence, the public library is an important ingredient of a welfare state. This idea was amply recognised and acknowledged in the Unesco's Manifesto of Public Libraries 1949, revised in 1972. "This manifesto proclaims Unesco's belief in the public library as a living force for education, culture and information, and as an essential agent for fostering of peace and understanding between people and between nations."


The Manifesto, which is a landmark in the evolution of Public Libraries, elaborately explains its expectations in terms of resources and services. Further, the public library's role as a democratic, social educational institution and as a cultural and recreational centre is well recognised in the literature of librarianship. But, a mere academic recognition of the needs and roles do not bring in a system of good public libraries. Even the Unesco's Manifesto may tell what is desirable. Unesco may even provide the necessary support. However, good public library service and system can come in force in any country with only the active support of people and the government and a set of carefully drawn policies form good foundation towards such an end.

The essence of this section, i.e. the concepts and objectives of public library is more easily indicated than implemented. Successful implementation of the spirit of what McColvin, Ranganathan and others have envisaged about the public libraries is possible only under meticulously designed strong Library Legislation.

1.3 Library Legislation

Provision of essential structure of authority within a
The legislative framework ensures the smooth running of public libraries. "... the aim of the library legislation should be to create the necessary library agencies and to define their functions in such a way that the National Library Service may work along the most effective and economical lines. Library legislation guarantees establishment, development and maintenance of libraries. It provides for necessary financial support on a suitable and progressive basis. It ensures development of libraries on an approved and uniform pattern. It sets up proper management for the running of libraries. The library authorities are so constituted that they are responsible to the public."

It is a time-tested fact that the legislation gives strong backbone for the establishment and maintenance of good public library system.

The uniform and continuous growth of public libraries in the western world was possible only through strong library legislation. The United Kingdom was the first to have library legislation as early as 1850. The U.S.A. got it in 1876 and Japan in 1899.

1.4 Indian Scenario

Perhaps an overview of library legislation in India should start from the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867. This expected every printer in the country to file three copies of every book printed. This, later, triggered the beginning of the India Office Library. A modification of this act was the Delivery Of Books (Public Libraries) Act of 1954, which led to the strengthening of the National Library, Calcutta and publishing of the Indian National Bibliography.

"The idea of an integrated library system was first introduced by Ranganathan at the first All Asia Educational Conference held at Banaras in 1930, in his capacity as the Secretary of the Library Service Section of the Conference. He presented a Model Library Act that formed the basis for the subsequent library legislation in India. Ranganathan presented about thirty-nine draft bills to different local governments. Four States in India - Tamil Nadu (1948), Andhra Pradesh (1960), Karnataka (1965), and Maharashtra (1967) - have introduced library legislation. Earlier, two states - Kolhapur (1944) and Hyderabad (1955) - had enacted their laws which later lapsed as a result of the
reorganization of the States in 1956."

Today eight States have passed their Library Acts. They are Tamil Nadu (1948), Andhra Pradesh (1960), Karnataka (1965), Maharashtra (1967), West Bengal (1979), Manipur (1988), Kerala (1989) and Haryana (1989).

Perhaps lack of uniformity among these acts is one of the serious problems. These differ in content, intent and in working. Therefore, naturally, their effect also, is less uniform.

Thus, it is difficult to draw an overall picture of public library scenario. However, it is clear that the factors that determine success of public libraries are the same, though the content of the acts under which these are operational are different.

A good legislation, in itself, can ensure certain degree of accomplishment in the successful implementation of a Public Library System. However, to be good in every respect, the library legislation must have certain ingredients critical for the effective running of a Public Library System.

A close look into these success factors is an essential part of this overview.

1.5 Success Factors

The success of a public library depends on several factors such as its collection, staff, users, building, physical facilities etc. Further, it is essential to have proper flow of funds under a well framed legislation. Among all these factors, the staff is the most pivotal. This is because every professional activity - technical or the service related - is implemented through the staff. Keeping the staff professionally happy and satisfied is the master key of success. This would indirectly mean that all other professional norms are adhered to. This also means that all managerial standards are observed. Therefore, manpower management is the most important ingredient.

1.6 The Present Thesis

The broad theme of the present thesis is the manpower management in the Public Library System. Manpower Management i.e. Personnel Management has grown into a major subject. Further, the personnel management techniques differ from profession to profession. For instance, the same norms do
not entirely hold good for nurses, blue collared workers and managers. One has to look into the needs and aspirations of the individual professions. Therefore, it is essential to identify some aspects of personnel management which are exclusively based on the expectations of different professions. In other words, one has to identify some ingredients of personnel management which may mean different things in different professions, yet it can be identified under a unique caption.

After scanning through the literature on personnel management, one such ingredient was found. It was the concept of "Job Satisfaction."

Job satisfaction of a practicing doctor is different in content from that of an engineer. Further, the job satisfaction of two professions may even clash. Booking and framing a criminal may give job satisfaction to a police officer, while getting the criminal acquitted is the job satisfaction for an advocate. Yet, job satisfaction is very much there in the realm of personnel management.

Above all, one can see that job satisfaction encompasses the entire arena of personnel management. It provides a pipeline between each profession with its ethics and objectives.
and management in general and personnel management in particular. Thus, job satisfaction is the real measure of successful personnel management in each profession.

It can, therefore, be said that "Professional Manpower Management" would mean, simply job satisfaction. While the expression "Professional Manpower Management" may appear abstract, job satisfaction, though complex in nature, is more concrete, and a measurable concept. Therefore, the broad scope of the present study could be restated as the study of Job Satisfaction in Public Libraries.

But, before arriving at the precise scope, unambiguous objectives and a hypothesis, it is necessary to find out what work is already done in the field of job satisfaction in general, and its application to librarianship in particular. Accepted theoretical background about job satisfaction in Management and Behavioural Sciences is given as a foundation in the following chapter.