

Libraries in national development

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Education has been regarded as a social obligation. As a matter of fact the basic condition for all national development depends on education and dissemination of knowledge.

Books and libraries are two inseparable, invisible concepts. None of them is an end in itself rather they together constitute a means to an ultimate end—the end is education. Now-a-days we cannot conceive of our existence without books and libraries. It may sound heartless and cruel but few would deny the fact. The simple definition of a library is a collection of books. Unfortunately however the library situation in our country is not at all encouraging.

To speak the truth, a library is non-existent in our primary schools and the

situation in secondary schools is also not happy at all. Primary and secondary education are considered to be the most important stages of education, "where most of the skilled manpower of a nation is trained, and where quality of future university students is determined, where character building and qualities of leadership can best be developed" and the object of these stages of education is the attainment of "the ability to select problems easily, to plan work effectively, and to form opinion based on authoritative information".

Such programme of education requires wide reading, use of various reference books and consultation and investigation of extensive sources of information. Hence to educate our children properly and

to enable them to shoulder the responsibilities of developing the nation's economic, social and cultural condition we should organise our school libraries and improve their efficiencies by providing necessary funds, furniture, equipment, space and required number of trained library personnel.

College libraries are of course often research libraries. College students study such a vast and fast changing body of knowledge that few courses can be taught with one, two or half a dozen text-books. Research plays an increasingly important part in college life and the library is the central workshop for the entire student and teacher community.

The main purpose of the college libraries is to sup-

port the academic programme of the college but the present condition of the college libraries in Bangladesh specially in private ones, is discouraging.

The situation in the government colleges is comparatively better but not as it should have been. Their collection is neither rich nor up-to-date. Due to lack of correct selection policy the growth of the collection is unplanned and haphazard. Most of them have arranged their materials without any relation to any modern scientific scheme. They may better be called the store houses of knowledge rather than libraries.

(To be continued)