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# Library for open university

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Libraries, whose business is to provide access to the materials containing information for those who seek it and are ready to take the troubles to get the benefit, must bestir themselves to a greater activity in this service. 80% of our population live in rural areas and unfortunately they have either inadequate or no library facilities. It is one of the basic principles of democracy to make knowledge free as far as practicable to every person.

We, the librarians, by job preparation, training and experience are instinctively in favour of anything which will help and encourage people to achieve a fuller life. The best education in modern days consists in the largest employment of the knowledge of the world both in process and in progress and libraries exist for this purpose.

The real concept of open university is to contribute to the improvement of educational, cultural and professional standards by providing facilities in an economic way to the people irrespective of race, religion or political views who care to look and listen. It aims at offering degree oriented scholarship of a high order in general and job oriented vocational education in particular.

In a country like ours thousands of students are refused admission in colleges and universities in spite of their requisite qualification and attainments for want of seats and facilities, not to speak of medical, engineering and other vocational and technological education.

On the other hand, there is no scope for denying the fact that we have an urgent need for production of adequate and competent human resources to provide leadership at all levels and to solve problems confronting the nation.

The establishment of an open university is a means to cater to the national needs and requirements and to satisfy the needs and desires of interested persons for education. We welcome

the initiative of sponsoring the open university.

It is also a matter of joy for us that the B. Ed. degree course for teachers serving in secondary schools has already been started since 1985 under the academic control of the University of Rajshahi.

The success of any form of education and instruction depends on the efficiency of library provision and services and as such it is regarded as fundamental and indispensable in education. Comparative effectiveness and success or ineffectiveness and failure of any instructional programme such as adult education programme, universal primary education, eradication of illiteracy, population control etc. may possibly be linked with their integration with or segregation from a good, efficient and effective library service.

## BENEFITS

The concept of library service and its benefit is not always clear to us. We are accustomed to consider library provision, as the last item in the priority list and as such most of our libraries in schools, colleges, teachers training colleges, etc. present a depressing look. We should not neglect library provision for an educational programme.

In a country like ours where the rural areas have no library, public libraries are not well-planned well developed and coordinated. A library is practically non-existent in primary schools. The condition of secondary schools is not at all happy, situation in colleges (including T.T. Colleges) is rather gloomy, the national library is still at its infancy, the special and research libraries are yet to gain a minimum required standard in respect of efficiency. In such a situation the university libraries may be encouraged to take some responsibility for providing library services to the open university community with a view to facilitating the programme.

We should pay careful attention to library provision in the interest of efficiency of an open university and

for the attainment of success of distant education.

If we want to maintain the standard of open university and not to be lower than that of the residential ones, students should have access to a wide range of materials and in doing this we should have to adopt all appropriate means and procedures.

The courses to be given to registered learners, will definitely be a combination of Radio, TV broadcast, well planned correspondence courses, programmed instruction, tutorials and practicals, short residential courses, distribution of texts and other special reading and audio-visual materials etc.

These are all fine, nice and impressive but these have to be supplemented by a countrywide network of library service to cater for follow up literature and to accord facilities for further education. Public libraries are generally in touch with the most intellectually alert members of the community and are therefore will be the best potential local agencies for open university.

They should be the second home for aspiration for degrees from the open university.

In addition to providing reading facilities they may popularise and publicise courses and distribute enrolment forms and can also provide facilities for all sorts. The third feasible alternative may be the libraries of Teachers' Training Colleges.

Public and Teachers Training College libraries should be developed and adequately strengthened to support the entire academic programme of the open university. University libraries should come forward for more advanced materials.

## COOPERATION

Regarding library provision for the students of open university, no matter what means be adopted, the library system and the situation of the country should be kept in mind clearly and distinctly. We should also consider the inadequacy of the resources of public, col-

lege, university and other libraries of the country even to support their local needs.

Hence a rigorous cooperation and coordination is necessary. Vigorous cooperative activities among libraries should be adopted if the project is to succeed.

Provision should also be made for the students of open university to use books in the libraries of conventional ones during vacation or special arrangement should be made for them outside normal reading hours.

There is need for a specially trained librarian at the administrative centre of the open university who will be responsible for preparing and editing book list and advise on book provision. He will also maintain liaison with academic staff and library agencies and will facilitate access to the materials needed.

Above all, he should have to maintain a good and effective library system to encourage and facilitate the entire community of open university. The distribution centres of open university must be also equipped with high level librarians with a mastery of library management, as well as the practical management and experience to run a family of audio-visual teaching aids and resources.

The essentiality and desirability of instruction and orientation in the effective utilization of library resources can never be ignored. A course on "Utilizing Books and Libraries" should be offered to all students. The course of study should cover library rules, purposes of cataloguing and classification, consultation of catalogue cards, reference tools and the possible use that can be made of each tool, how to go on garnering record materials to compile bibliographies and to give citation to a research paper etc.

It will stimulate a desire in them to know how to make further explorations and uses of resources. This programme will make students self-reliant and will open for them the doors to all subjects.