

ACQUISITIONS AND COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH

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Abstract – *Through an examination of the development of library education in Bangladesh, this paper analyzes the extent to which acquisitions and collection development are covered in existing courses.*

Libraries in Bangladesh are not a twentieth century phenomenon. Bangladesh has a long tradition of love of learning, and developed several ancient libraries. In the historical accounts of travellers and scholars who visited the area libraries were mentioned. Extant inscriptions, artifacts and architectural ruins further support these early documentary accounts. Bangladesh passed through the Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, and British periods, with the British ruling in the area for nearly 200 years. In 1947 the Indo-Pak subcontinent was divided into two separate states, India and Pakistan. Pakistan comprised two parts, East and West Pakistan. Finally East Pakistan emerged as a sovereign independent state on 16 December 1971.

LIBRARY EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH

Even countries which have had library scholars for several decades have not managed to provide staff for the sections of their libraries which require professional librarians. It was logical that after the birth of Pakistan, a need for trained librarians would be felt. Mr. Fazle Elahi, who became the Librarian of Dacca University in 1951, felt the need for trained librarians to run a library at university level. (In 1985 spelling of the name of the capital city was changed from "Dacca" to "Dhaka.") It was in 1951 that he initiated a Certificate course in librarianship. Certificate holders were equipped to run small public or school libraries.

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Although this course was discontinued, in 1955 another Certificate course in librarianship was started at Dhaka University with the assistance of the United States Educational Foundation. This continued until 1958 with both local librarians and librarians from foreign organizations serving as teachers.

ROLE OF THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The Library Association of Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) was established in 1956, and in 1958 started a Certificate course aimed at producing sub-professional skilled and technically trained persons who could work as cataloguers or librarians in small libraries. The course attracted a large number of candidates, especially as it was the only professional training for librarians offered before 1959. The curriculum included:

1. classification (theoretical and practical);
2. cataloguing (theoretical and practical);
3. reference;
4. library administration;
5. book selection;
6. school librarianship.

Since 1958 the Association has regularly conducted the Certificate course, and in 1965 extended it to twice a year.

As the library service expanded, there was considerable demand for those with the Certificate. The course is of short duration and provides for the speedy training of library personnel. It is also inexpensive. The Certificate course run by the Library Association is meant for undergraduates. The basic qualification needed for admission is the Higher Secondary Certificate. The medium of instruction is Bengali. To date the Library Association has conducted 38 courses (the most recent ending in March 1987) and has produced 1,076 Certificate holders.

There are also two certificate courses conducted by the Library Association of Bangladesh at Rajshahi and Khulna. In 1976 the Government of Bangladesh established the Library Training Institute, and the Library Association is responsible for conducting its Certificate courses.

Acquisitions and Collection Development

The Certificate course of the Library Association gives due importance to the topic entitled "Book Selection." The course includes:

1. introduction to acquisitions;
2. education system of Bangladesh;
3. different types of libraries and their aims and objectives;
4. acquisition of books and serials in libraries;
5. selection and evaluation of materials in different types of libraries;
6. book review;
7. censorship and copyright;
8. weeding.

Students are given a basic idea about evaluation techniques for library materials, together with the problems of acquisitions, as well as management problems concerning censorship and weeding. Student librarians become conversant with types of material to be added to a particular type of library. But no attempt is made in the course to discuss subjects like surveying user needs, proper utilization of a budget and collection evaluation. However, the main objective of the course is to train students for junior-level duties in libraries.

UNIVERSITY-LEVEL COURSES

There are four general and three technical universities in Bangladesh. Only the University of Dhaka offers librarianship courses.

Librarianship Courses at the University of Dhaka

In the early 1960s the librarian of Dhaka University, Mr. M. S. Khan, initiated a Post-Graduate Diploma in Librarianship course at Dhaka University. The success of this course led to the institution of two library science courses: a Diploma course in Library Science from 1959–60; a Master's Degree course in Library Science from 1961–62 [1].

Courses for the Diploma and Master's Degree in Library Science each extend over one academic year. "A candidate shall not be admitted to the Diploma course in Library Science unless he is a graduate in Arts, Science, or Commerce of this University or of any other approved University" [2]. The Diploma course is comprehensive enough to enable holders to organize and administer small or medium-sized libraries. The course curricula were modelled on the postgraduate Diploma in Librarianship of the School of Library Archives and Information Studies, University of London. The Diploma course covers:

1. history of books and libraries;
2. classification and cataloguing (theoretical and practical);
3. bibliography and reference;
4. library administration and organization;
5. evaluation and selection of library materials;
6. archives.

The Diploma course proved to be very important for two reasons: (1) it attempted to equip students with adequate knowledge to fill professional positions in libraries; and (2) students were trained on the basis of up-to-date curricula that enabled them to be conversant with modern librarianship. It was found that Diploma holders became very good librarians.

Acquisitions and Collection Development

The Diploma course has one paper devoted to "Evaluation and Selection of Library Materials." It covers the following areas:

1. scope and limitation of the subject;
2. different parts of a book and judging book values;
3. books on different subjects and selection and evaluation criteria;
4. principles of book selection in different kinds of libraries;

5. aids and guides to selection;
6. book reviewing: national and international review media;
7. publishers' catalogues, bibliographies, government publications, etc.
8. censorship and copyright;
9. collection evaluation;
10. weeding.

This course concentrates on fundamental issues of acquisitions and more on techniques of book selection and evaluation criteria. The purpose of the course is to discuss the subject in detail and to prepare students to participate in the book selection process on the job. However, the course emphasizes theory and methodology; practical aspects of the acquisitions process are ignored.

For the Master's Degree course, begun in 1961-62, the entrance qualification is a Diploma in Library Science. Thus the Department of Library Science runs a one-year Diploma course and a one-year Degree course (MA) for Diploma-holders [3]. The curriculum for the MA course includes:

1. advanced classification and cataloguing (theoretical and practical);
2. research methods;
3. documentation and information retrieval;
4. library systems and services (elective, any one of):
 - a) The National Library
 - b) The Public Library
 - c) The Special Library
 - d) The Academic Library
 - e) The Medical Library;
5. guided research and viva voce.

At the beginning of the MA course there were practically no qualified library personnel to teach. However, the Asia Foundation helped in providing teachers. The course was intended to create a class of librarians capable of building and administering well-equipped library systems.

Acquisitions and Collection Development

The Master in Library Science course has no specific component on collection development, which is treated in the "Library Systems and Services" section. This includes national, public, special, academic, and medical libraries. The importance of collection building is treated separately for each type of library. However, practical applications are ignored.

During the 1964-65 session the Department of Library Science was recognized as a full-fledged department under the Faculty of Arts of Dhaka University. Another two-year Master's degree program was started in 1975-76. In this program the first year is called Preliminary Master's Degree course, which is practically equivalent to the Diploma course. As a result both successful Diploma students (from the one-year course) and Preliminary MA students (also from a one-year course) are eligible for admission to the MA final year course. The introduction of the Preliminary course in librarianship provided an opportunity for graduates in arts, science, or commerce to be eligible for a librarianship course. The Prelim-

inary MA course constituted a great extension of library education in Bangladesh. The curriculum comprises:

1. social functions of libraries;
2. classification and cataloguing (theoretical and practical);
3. bibliography and reference;
4. library administration and organization;
5. elective paper (any one of):
 - a) audiovisual aids in libraries
 - b) archives
 - c) abstracting and indexing
 - d) viva voce.

Acquisitions and Collection Department

Like the MA final course (the second part of the MA), this course has no specific subject entitled "Collection Building." However, this is treated in a section entitled "Library Administration and Organization." Students are given basic knowledge of selection criteria in different types of libraries, treatment of non-book materials, and collection development in different subject groups.

In 1975-76 a new MPhil course was instituted in the Department of Library Science. This is a two-year course. Set components in the first year do not include collection development. The course of studies is as follows:

1. first year—any two of:
 - a) social functions of libraries;
 - b) organization of knowledge;
 - c) principles of research methods;
 - d) comparative studies in librarianship;
 - e) current trends in technical services in libraries;
 - f) bibliography of literature on any one of:
 - (1) social science
 - (2) humanities
 - (3) science
 - (4) government documents;
2. second year
MPhil thesis.

Steps are being taken to introduce an Honours course in librarianship for undergraduate students at Dhaka University in 1988. This would further widen the library education program in Bangladesh. The proposed course would give considerable emphasis to acquisitions and collection development. One section would deal exclusively with "acquisition and collection building." Implementation of this proposal would bring the Library Science Department into line with the other 36 departments of Dhaka University. It is expected that young undergraduates would bring new enthusiasm to the profession. Furthermore, an Honours course is prestigious in the eyes of the government and would enhance the status of the department and the profession.

SHORT COURSES SPONSORED BY OTHER AGENCIES

In addition to the courses offered by the Library Association and the University of Dhaka there exist other short courses. The National Institute of Education Administration Extension and Research in Dhaka, formerly the Education Extension Centre, conducted short courses, ranging from two to four weeks, from 1963 to 1984. The aim was to acquaint teacher librarians with basic library techniques. The course was mainly organized for graduate teachers and librarians of pilot high schools of Bangladesh. Senior cataloguers of different colleges and government public libraries also participated. Courses included a component on book selection. The course comprised the following:

1. brief history of books and libraries;
2. library administration;
3. school library;
4. book selection
5. cataloguing (theoretical and practical);
6. classification (theoretical and practical);
7. reference service.

Although these were short courses, the participants learned some basic concepts of theoretical and practical librarianship which would help them in running small school libraries. As a result they proved useful for teacher librarians. Up to 1983, 28 of these two- to four-week courses had been conducted, training 377 graduate teachers and public librarians. Courses were suspended in 1984, but it is hoped that they will be resumed in the future.

Short courses in librarianship were also conducted by the four Teachers' Training Colleges in Bangladesh. This was a compulsory subject covering many aspects of librarianship in the ten months' program of the colleges. A section on book selection was included. The course covered:

1. brief history of books and libraries;
2. cataloguing;
3. classification;
4. library methods;
5. book selection;
6. reference service.

However, this course has been temporarily suspended in all the Training Colleges.

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the library education programs offered and the training of library personnel achieved to date in Bangladesh.

LIBRARY EDUCATION TODAY

Library education should "produce qualified staff for their libraries who will be competent to step into a professional post and perform the duties assigned to them, with only the minimum amount of in-service training being necessary" [4]. It is generally accepted that subjects such as library administration, reference and bibliographical work and cataloguing and classification be included, but it is also necessary for today's society to include subjects like

TABLE 1.
LIBRARY EDUCATION PROGRAMMES OFFERED BY UNIVERSITY AND OTHER AGENCIES IN BANGLADESH

Institution	Level of training	Admission requirements	Duration of course	Qualification	Curriculum	Teaching staff
Dhaka University	Advanced postgraduate university course leading to Diploma and Preliminary MA Degree	Open to Bachelor's Degree in arts, or commerce or science	1 year	Diploma in Library Science	Core curriculum: technical courses, specialized courses, visits, practical work, end-of-course thesis	Full-time
		Holder of Diploma or Preliminary in Library Science	1 year	Preliminary MA		
			1 year	MA		
	MPhil	Master's Degree in Library Science only	2 years	MPhil		
Library Association (Library Training Institute)	Short post-secondary but non-university course	Open to holders of Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate	6 months	Certificate	General, technical courses, practical work	Part-time (members of the Library Association)
National Institute of Education Administration Extension and Research (NIEAER)	Professional middle-level vocational training	Open to holders of university Bachelor's Degree	Two to four weeks	Certificate	Theoretical and practical training courses	Part-time
Teachers' Training Colleges	Non-university professional middle-level and technical non-university training	Open to holders of university Bachelor's Degree	One paper, ten months	Certificate	Theoretical and practical training courses	Part-time

TABLE 2.
LIBRARY PERSONNEL TRAINED IN BANGLADESH

Institution	Level of training	Number of candidates trained
Dhaka University, 1959-1985	Diploma, 1959-1985	886
	Preliminary, 1975-1985	—
	MA, 1962-1983	624
	MPhil, 1975-1985	—
Library Association, 1958-1986	Certificate	1076
NIEAER, 1963-1986	Certificate	377
Teachers' Training Colleges (4), 1975-1982	Certificate	1426

management and statistical tools. The library education program at Dhaka University should include subjects such as computer applications in libraries, computer software and hardware, and modern management techniques. We need to equip the only library school in the country with a model workshop to train student librarians in the modern art of librarianship. Moreover, teachers need short training in the advanced nations so that they will be able to communicate to their students the new knowledge thus acquired.

Acquisitions and Collection Development

Acquisitions and collection development are very important topics of study in the library science curriculum, especially for the developing nations. Higher education is dependent upon imported foreign texts and reference books. Books published locally are not only meager in number but also not up to the required standard. In Bangladesh it is difficult to acquire up-to-date books because of import procedures. Also the local book trade presents a gloomy picture: "Where only about 400 titles were published in 1972, a recent compilation of available publishers' lists shows that, by 1981, the number of titles in print had risen to 3,000, of which only 200 are in English" [5].

Thus higher education depends upon publications from the UK, the USA and India: engineering, medical, technical, and specialized education at tertiary level would be impossible without foreign publications. The case is similar for general and scientific journals. "In a list of 343 key information sources covering general science and engineering, mathematics, computer science, physics and astronomy, chemistry, earth sciences, metallurgy, aviation, aerospace, meteorology, civil engineering, mechanical engineering, biology, agriculture and energy, 20% are in English published in Britain, 2% are in English published in non-English speaking countries, 76% are in English published in the United States, and only 2% are in languages other than English" [6]. Moreover, "The Federation Internationale de Documentation (FID) has observed that 85% of all information storage and retrieval network is in English language" [7].

From the above it is apparent that student librarians must be conversant with the techniques of collection development. "There is a well-known chain showing the four stages of library activity relating to books—'acquisition, protection, organisation, exploitation'; while all are important, the first is undeniably indispensable" [8]. Book selection is no doubt an important subject and one of the core subjects taught in the library science curriculum in Ban-

gladesh. In all the library education programs acquisitions and collection development must be given due prominence.

THE ROLE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

In Bangladesh there exists no institution for continuing education. In an era of rapid advances in knowledge it is essential for librarians to acquaint themselves with new developments in the field. Continuing education is immensely beneficial for all librarians, especially in developing nations like Bangladesh.

CONCLUSION

Acquisitions and collection development must be core subjects in library education in Bangladesh. Book selection is a challenging job for all librarians. "Every book its reader" is only possible through careful collection development. The techniques of collection development need to be improved in a changing situation where new publications are appearing at a much higher speed. A collection which is built up with care, attention and consideration of user needs should provide "every reader its book."

Today artificial intelligence can perform many jobs in the library, but selection must remain a task for the human brain. Thus collection building should remain a core subject for years to come.

It is high time that international organizations like IFLA, Unesco, and FID devoted themselves to framing standards of teaching and providing model course curricula to be adopted by all nations. The needs of the poor nations must not be underestimated: there is an ever-widening gap between rich and poor nations in information location and handling. International food aid and assistance to combat epidemics, to control population, to provide flood and famine relief is common and easily available. However, nothing has been done to improve the information situation among the poor nations. It is very urgent that NATIS come forward to check deficiencies and help the poor countries in this area. Librarianship is a profession with an international flavour, and greater international mobility of librarians would improve and upgrade the profession. An international body should be in a position to outline courses of study, to review them from time to time, to rationalize them and make suggestions for future developments whenever such need arises.

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