LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION IN ITS CURRENT DEVELOPMENT

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Libraries have been the companions of higher education for many centuries. They have preserved and given access to all sorts of materials – books, manuscripts, rare documents, journals, maps, etc. – that have supported the process of learning. They have also been the keepers of materials produced by students, faculty and researchers – graduate projects, theses & dissertations, technical reports, etc. – in this sense they have functioned as the institutional archive.

". . . Administration has been use loosely to include all types of activity, ranging from government of the library to typing letters or licking stamps,"[1] the present article must be hedged about with a few caveats and definitions. First, as to caveats, earlier issues of Library Trends have dealt with the problems of scientific management in libraries and management in college and university libraries, with emphasis on management surveys and the literature of management.[2,3]

These matters will therefore be touched up on only incidentally in this paper. Furthermore, since the subject of the present article might well serve as the basis for an entire issue, the treatment accorded it here must be somewhat superficial and fragmentary. Under the circumstances, it has seemed desirable to concentrate on a few fundamentals and to bring to bear on them such enlightenment as the writers have gained from personal experience in a variety of libraries, rather than to use the survey-questionnaire technique, valuable though that might be. Many of the things dealt with here will seem obvious to the experienced administrator. Basic principles are frequently both simple and obvious, and for these very reasons are often overlooked or neglected. Second, as to definition, administration may be defined as getting things done through people.

This is the context within which this article is written, and two assumptions have been adopted as a point of departure:

(1) Important though administrative theories may be just as the library with the most books is not necessarily the best library, so it is that the possession of a large fund of administrative theory does not, per se, make one a good administrator, although it Mr. Mumford is Librarian and Mr. Rogers is Chief Assistant Librarian, Library help; in the last analysis, however, there is no substitute for common sense, and

(2) Administration is concerned primarily with people not things, and therefore certain since patterns of human conduct
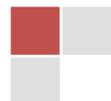
and the inevitable differences between, and individuality of, people must never be forgotten. It follows that much of what is said here applies to libraries of all sizes and not merely to large libraries with many departments. To underscore this point, one need only refer to H. M. Lyden-berg's History of The New York Public Library in that part 4 dealing with the Astor Library in 1873: "... even with such a small family a composed the staff in those distant years all did not go well at timesand ... friction, jealousy [and] lack of cooperation occasionally manifested themselves, as seems inevitable whenever men must work with fellowmen."

OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the extent of HEC Digital library usage by college students.
2. To solicit their purpose of seeking information on Digital libraries.
3. To investigate the kind of resources consulted by college students.
4. To find out their preferred place for Digital libraries usage.
5. To identify the impact of Digital libraries on college students.
6. To find out what problems are faced by college students in seeking information.

HYPOTHESIS

The college students are induced of digital library benefits. The basis of selection of digital library is public library in place of colleges. Urban students are more aware than rural students, about use of digital libraries.

METHODOLOGY

For this study, the researcher has purposively selected 60 college students belonging to different disciples as- BA, BSc, B Tech, MA, MSc etc., colleges of district Aligarh in UP.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

By the analysis of primary data, we find that 60respondents are selected purposively for the study, in which the benefits told by the students are-Saves from troublesome browsing of print material, Less time, Fast access to unlimited resources, Faster and easier communication, Less effort, Useful for accessing distant publications, Helps developing up-to-date knowledge, Makes independent in searching all types of resources.

Also the difficulties that are told about using digital libraries are- Inadequate number of computers, Electricity failure, Lack of time, Overworked, Slow speed, English language problem, Lack of awareness, Lack of technical support and security, Lack of user education. Government of India has made a policy to make the libraries digital, at college level under RUSA (Rashtriya Uchch Shiksha Abhiyaan). This is an appreciable step for quality education and to make INDIA, digital and mode. Art or science of administration has taken its present form under the pressures of bigness. The complexities of large organizations, great numbers of people, diversity of functions, and multiple lines of communication call for special methods and fresh approaches. It is both difficult and hazardous to generalize about administration in libraries. Although it is unquestionably true that libraries have a long way to go in adopting modern administrative practices, administration is highly developed in many libraries, and categories of administration, such as organization, are more widely developed than others. In order to approach a big subject with some logic, it is proposed to deal with it under the categories of

planning, organization, communication, training, controlling, public relations, and supervision.

Planning as used here means the development of long-range objectives of an institution and assuring that the policies adopted are in harmony with these goals. Lack of sensitivity among library administrators to this important factor seems fairly widespread. To too great an extent, the objectives of an organization are taken for granted. It is not sufficient to say that a library gives library service; it is essential that a program be worked out in detail with degrees of emphasis in book selection, service to readers, and the many programs not directly book-oriented.

There is no truer axiom in administration than that" nature abhors a vacuum." In the absence of planned objectives, people work at cross-purposes, with strong personalities determining the pro-file of the organization; short-term expedients are substituted for long-range goals; and staff members struggle in the murk of ignorance and confusion.

On the affirmative side, it should be remembered that goals should be realistic and timely: realistic in the sense that they be desirable from the standpoint of the community served or susceptible of gaining support; timely from the standpoint of being achievable within a reasonable planning projection, such as a generation. Objectives which fail to meet these two standards will lead to repeated failure in achievement, with attendant frustration and even controversy.

Organization, or the grouping of activities according to specialty, is intended to facilitate the attainment of the goals of an institution by introducing order, system, and purpose into cooperative effort.

Organization is the means to an end and not an end in itself. As a consequence, organization must be built around objectives, always taking into account the human elements involved, because the assignment of qualified personnel is complementary to and completes the more formalized organizing procedure. Libraries have applied organization techniques widely and in many variations. Geographic organization is used in many city branch systems. Departmentation is applied (1) by type of materials (maps, newspapers, manuscripts), (2) by subjects (science and technology, history, art), (3) by clientele (children, industry, schools, the blind), and (4) by function (acquisition, circulation, reference) to name but a few patterns.

Perhaps the greatest danger in grouping activities is excessive vertical organization. To achieve what is a theoretically desirable span of control, some administrators will pile Ossa on Pelion with an array of

potentates, sub-chiefs, and administrative assistants that effectively isolates the head of the organization from the people who are doing the work at the production level and, conversely, that makes the ordinary line employee feel that he is about as far from Mt. Olympus as it is possible to submerge a human being. Many factors enter into the determination of an effective and viable span of control, notably, the geographical dispersion of an organization, the stability of the activity, the similarity of functions carried out, and the strength of the intermediate supervisors.

The old strictures which would limit span of control to from five to seven are no longer in great favor, and more recognition is being accorded subsidiary factors which dictate the wisdom of a broad or narrow span. Position classification is the grouping of positions within an organization according

to responsibilities, duties, type of work, and the training and attributes required. This practice, which is now wide spread among libraries, has shortcomings as well as virtues, and although the subject might be discussed under supervision because of its effect on morale, it is placed here because it is the means for giving expression to an organizational plan.

Position classification has corrected many evils of excessively varying rewards and status among employees doing essentially the same level of work and requiring comparable training. As such, the practice is to be applauded. Theoretically, human differences can be accommodated within a classification plan through promotion; however, there are the cases of employees who are excellent within a classification but who by reason of long service or outstanding performance de-serve special and tangible recognition. There is the eternal problem of employees who do not recognize their own limitations and other employees who are in dead-end jobs after many years of service.

More recently the concepts of longevity, incentive awards (either in money or special commendation), and merit salary increases have eased some of the inflexibility of classification plans. Horizontal reassignment may likewise introduce a note of variety for the person who is going stale and who cannot be promoted. Transfers of this kind should never be used to place all the personnel problems in one "limbo" department. He who sows in this fashion will reap a sorry harvest.

The experienced administrator realizes that every organization has its share of people in the problem category, and he must make reasonable adjustments in work assignments and even organization to allow for these problems.

Theoretically, a classification system is developed for an organization on the basis of the requirement for work to be done to achieve institutional objectives. Again speaking theoretically, there is a need for just so many positions at each level; otherwise there would be a natural tendency for everyone to attain a fairly high, common level.

This concept of a fixed position structure has its value, but herein lies the danger of rigidity when dealing with people. Particularly in a large organization, the capable person can make a real contributions a specialist, and any classification plan ought to be flexible enough to permit the utilization of such ability with suitable rewards. Special promotion plans to give consideration to exceptional ability are particularly appropriate in an expanding organization.

This idea is gaining favor in certain libraries, notably in the federal civil service which has formally recognized the principle. Communication is a subject largely neglected in administration a generation ago but now a very live topic of consideration. A well-conceived organization staffed by able people may Hounder by reason of communications failure. The importance of communicating with the people who need to receive information, with colleagues above and below one in the administrative hierarchy, and, above all, horizontally with associates in other departments working toward an over-all institutional objective, cannot be exaggerated.

Communication is a device which must constantly be kept in mind, and even with the best intention on the part of the administrator, it is the area most fraught with pitfalls and the likelihood of oversight.

There is no absence of communications devices in libraries. Between the grapevine and the annual report bristle policy statements, memoranda, signs, staff publications, bulletin boards, interim and progress reports, staff handbooks, staff organizations, orientation meetings, conferences, that useful demon-the telephone, and that essential and often over-used monster, the meeting.

A full issue of Library Trends could easily be devoted to the nature, weaknesses, and utility of this array of communications media, but here consideration must be limited to a few instrumentalities and a few generalities. The grapevine and rumor thrive in the absence of adequate communication. The amount of time wasted and the damage to morale can be incalculable. There are those who seriously advocate the use of the grapevine as the most effective means for spreading information. The present authors subscribe to a balanced and more orderly procedure.

Communication, irrespective of the direction-up, down, or sideways-should be clear, concise, unemotional, and honest. Reports upward should not, but often do, conceal the true facts and there by corrupt decision-making. No administrator can hoodwink a staff by failure to communicate or by reporting substantially less than the whole story, although both practices must be resorted to upon occasion for countervailing reasons.

Two principles are worth remembering, however, whether the program is so formalized or just another duty of the chief librarian: (1) a public relations program is viable only in so far as it honestly represents the organization and (2) it is always possible to say "no" pleasantly, and it invariably pays to do so.

Although placing the library before its public in a favorable light is an important public relations function, it would be a mistake to conclude that the responsibility begins or ends there. Perhaps even more important is timely action to prevent unfavorable publicity. This may take the form of deciding not to do something because of its adverse public relations effect or moving rapidly and decisively to minimize or negate adverse reaction when a mistake has been mad or there has been an unfortunate occurrence.

In both of these instances, the chief librarian will do well to take counsel with his public relations expert if he has one; otherwise, the advice of other staff members with a public relations consciousness can be invaluable. To be most effective, the public relations specialist should be a part of the top-management team, participating in policy-making and program planning-business has long since recognized this-because there are public relations aspects to most managerial decisions.

An additional essential is to instill into the minds of all staff members the necessity of informing the public relations officer in advance of either happy or potentially bad news. Basically this is a problem in communication, but it is evident that a public relations specialist can only act effectively when fully informed. A corollary to this is that it is wise to centralize all press (and similar) contacts in the public relations specialist if there is one. Much public relations misfortune can stem from each of many officials on a staff being his own expert.

The picture which almost inevitably emerges from such a situation is one of conflict and confusion. Supervision and administration are frequently used

interchangeably. Whereas administration has been defined broadly as getting things done through people, supervision may be regarded as the technique of getting the daily work done. It is a subject so inextricably bound up with human relations that it is impossible to cover the subject, even superficially, without pointing out some of the things that matter to employees and of which the supervisor must be mindful. The belief that salary is the sole concern of employees has long since gone by the board. Compensation, although important, takes its place with other things that employee's desire:

1. To be part of an activity of which they can be proud

2. Interesting work

3. Fairness and ability in supervision

4. Recognition of accomplishment

5. To be told things they have a right to know

6. A chance for self-expression

7. Fair compensation

8. Opportunity for advancement

9. Good working conditions, particularly in relation to light, space, temperature, and absence of noise

10. Security

11. Acceptance as an individual.

Administrators of large libraries are increasingly aware that the strength of an organization often rests in the intermediate supervisor. Too frequently such supervisors, in a library with excessive vertical organization, identify themselves with the staff rather than with the administration of which they are a part. This may result in development of anti-administration attitudes and poor morale. Policies may not be carried out, and the chief librarian may find himself constantly involved in petty problems, thereby diverting his time from major issues. All of these considerations suggest the importance of selecting super-visors with care and with an eye to the factors listed above which are of concern to employees.

A supervisor must have qualities other than ability to do good work, important though this is. Common sense, fair-ness, humanity, loyalty, courage, and forcefulness (but short of the point of driving others) are some of the leadership qualities to look. Since there is no oversupply of people with these virtues, a training program to develop supervisors is greatly to be desired.

One quality not listed above but which is of inestimable value in administration is a sense of humor. In any group of people working closely together, there are sure to be times when there are   of opinion. Particularly in meetings, situations will become tense and tempers may be short. The administrator who can relieve this tension by a humorous twist is gifted indeed. It is a quality which, if not forced, is well worth cultivating.

Wise delegation of authority commensurate with responsibility is practiced by successful administrators. The person who must do everything himself is almost sure to be one who is insecure within himself and distrustful of others, not qualities to be sought in administrators or supervisors. The other extreme, "throwing the reins out of the buggy" as one writer characterized it, is equally to be deplored.

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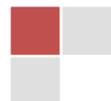
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