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Specialist Library versus Generalist Library: Reference Service.
(Teaching in library science. 21).

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[This is a report of four classes held in DRTC, extending over 6 hours, conducted by Dr Ranganathan, from 25 to 28 March 1967. Detailed elucidations are not mentioned. Singles out the features distinctive to a Specialist Library from that of a Generalist Library, in rendering Reference Service. They consist of more emphasis on long range reference service and the way of organising concurrent team work for this purpose,

development and use of depth classification schemes and cataloguing rules for arranging entries of micro-documents, intimate contact with the specialist reader, use of facet analysis for eliciting from the specialist reader his requirements in precise terms, matching it with the already facet-analysed documents, and lastly assimilating, more frequently than in a generalist library, information about each document, each specialist reader, and every technique used in the specialist library. The usual annotations highlighting the educational principles followed in the classes are added].

Abbreviations Used

P1 = Participant 1; P8 = Participant 8; T = Teacher

1 What of Reference Service

T.— I discussed with you in the previous classes about the difference between the function of a Specialist Library and that of a Generalist Library in respect of Document Selection. [See Lib sc. 5; 1968; Paper G]. Today, I want to discuss with you the difference between Specialist Library and Generalist Library in respect of another function. What function do you suggest for our discussion?

P2.— Reference Service.

T.— Alright. What is Reference Service?

P1.— "Reference Service" is a process of establishing contact between the reader and the document in a personal way.

T.— It is prosaic. Can you not put it in a better way? Can you elucidate the term 'Document'?

P5.— Will it be alright if we add "needed at the moment" between 'Document' and 'in a personal way'?

T.— Give the definition incorporating your suggestion.

P5.— "Reference Service" is a process of establishing contact between the reader and the document needed at the moment, in a personal way.

T.— P5 has improved the definition a good deal. But something is still missing.

[Puzzle . . .]

T.— P5 added "needed at the moment"; but he did not say needed by whom?

P5.— Needed by the reader at the moment.

T.— You have to add it. P2, give me the full definition of "Reference Service".

P2.— "Reference Service" is a process of establishing contact between the reader and the document needed by him at the moment, in a personal way.

1A ANNOTATION

Students usually miss the essential term. They will not be aware of what they are missing. The teacher will have to bring these points to the notice of students.

2 Four Focal Ideas

T.— What are the focal ideas in this statement?

P2.— Reader.

P4.— Document.

P5.— Reader's need at the moment.

P1.— Personal way.

T.— P4, write these four focal ideas on the black-board. (P4 writes). There are two concrete concepts and two abstract concepts in the definition of reference service. What are they?

P6.— Reader and Document are concrete concepts.

P3.— Reader's need at the moment and in a personal way are abstract concepts.

2A ANNOTATION

The teacher should show the way of analysing a statement.

3 Difference Between Specialist Library and Generalist Library

T.— What are the features that distinguish a Specialist Library from a Generalist Library, in relation to these concepts?

P2.— In respect of readers, we serve Specialist Reader in a Specialist Library as against Generalist Reader in a Generalist Library.

P3.— In respect of documents, we serve nascent micro-documents in a Specialist Library as against macro-documents in a Generalist Library.

T.— What are the distinguishing features of a Specialist Library in respect of the two abstract concepts: "Reader's need at the moment" and "Personal way"?

P6.— The reader's need at any moment is of a specialised kind in a Specialist Library; whereas the reader's need in a generalist library is of a general kind.

T.— What is the difference in respect of "Personal way"?

P8.— Since the generalist reader's needs are of a general kind, they will not require intensive search. Usually, the ready reference books would answer many of their questions. Further, most of the generalist readers ask for one and the same kind of information. Therefore, in a Generalist Library, it is more productive to train the reader in using ready reference books. Therefore, the reference service although personal, will not be intimate.

T.— What about the specialist library?

P1.— On the other hand, in a specialist library, the reader's

needs are of a "specific nature". They are individual. They require long searches and delicate handling. They will have to be assembled from a long chain of books, periodicals, etc.

P5.— Further, the specialist may not express his requirements specifically. He would usually give broad outline of his subject. The reference librarian will have to get the specific subject only after a dialogue with the specialist reader. Thus, the reference librarian has to know the specialist reader intimately.

T.— Do you think it is possible to have intimate relation with the reader in a specialist library?

P3.— Yes. It is possible to have intimate contact with specialist readers because their number is smaller when compared to the number of generalist readers. Therefore, a reference librarian in a Specialist Library can keep very close contact with each specialist reader.

3A ANNOTATION

As far as possible, the teacher should not give facts. But he should elicit facts from the students through questions.

4 Kinds of Reference Service

T.— There is a distinction in the kind of reference service rendered by the Generalist Library and that by the Specialist Library. In a Generalist Library, what I call Ready Reference Service is dominant whereas in a Specialist Library, Long Range Reference Service is dominant.

41 READY REFERENCE SERVICE

T.— Can any one of you tell me what is meant by "Ready Reference Service"?

P3.— It is reference service rendered within a short time.

T.— Can you illustrate it with an example?

P4.— Let us say a person asks for "the population and area of Ghana during 1967". We can look into the latest *Statemans' year-book* and give the information in a few minutes.

42 READY-REFERENCE BOOK

T.— What is it that helped you to get the information quickly?

P4.— I could get the information quickly because, the data had already been collected and recorded in the *Yearbook*.

T.— That is, you could get the information readily from the Reference Book—we can say Ready Reference Book. P5, what are the other kinds of Ready Reference Books?

P5.— Dictionaries, Biographical dictionaries, Directories, Encyclopaedias.

T.— Is that all?

P6.— Statistical tables, Gazetteer, Atlas, Indexes, and Bibliographies.

T.— I would like to set you a task. Find out the kinds of Reference books and make a list of them in the measure of their use in the library.

42A Annotation

Setting an assignment of this type suggested above, would be of help to students in keeping abreast with the latest trends in the publishing trade.

43 LONG RANGE REFERENCE SERVICE

T.— What is "Long Range Reference Service"?

P7.— It is Reference Service requiring prolonged search and therefore, taking long time.

T.— How long? Does it take days, months?

P6.— Not in all cases, though there may be cases which take a few days. By and large, the long range reference service in most cases can be done in a few hours.

T.— Can you illustrate a case of a Long Range Reference Service?

P4.— Let us take the case of preparing a "Subject Bibliography on Laser". Then, we will have to search through several indexing and abstracting periodicals.

T.— Don't you think of searching in the "Local Documentation Lists"?

P5.— Yes. We will have to search in the Local Documentation List.

T.— You forgot this most useful tool, is it not?

44 ESTIMATION OF TIME FOR LONG RANGE REFERENCE SERVICE

T.— Now tell me how much time the preparation of such a bibliography may take?

P3.— A few hours—say, two to three hours.

T.— Do you mean classified list of documents?

P3.— Yes. It depends on the number of entries.

T.— Tell me how many entries you can classify in two hours?

P5.— About a dozen, if we have a good schedule.

T.— Then how many entries you are likely to have in the preparation of a bibliography?

P3.— At least fifty entries.

T.— Then calculate the time required for classifying fifty entries coextensively with a depth classification schedule—such as the one you have designed as a project in DRTC.

P4.— It is approximately ten hours.

T.— Then, you will have to prepare the entries for the documentation list and get it typed etc. On the whole, tell me how much time the preparation of the bibliography will take?

P6.— It may take at least 20 hours including search time.

T.— What can you take as the number of working hours for a Reference Librarian?

P3.— Nearly 8 hours.

T.— How much time the Reference Librarian can spend on this bibliography per day?

P5.— He can spend at the maximum 3 hours per day on this bibliography, because he has to attend to other specialists.

T.— Then, P4, tell me how many days the bibliography will require to reach the readers' hand?

P4.— Nearly a week, Sir.

44A Annotation

Usually students will underestimate the time required to do a piece of work. This is due to inexperience and not being able to analyse the problem step by step. The teacher should bring this to the notice of students by step by step analysis of a work and assessing the time required for the same.

45 CONCURRENT WORK BY A TEAM

T.— Do you all agree with P4?

(Silence for a few minutes)

T.— Why are you hesitant? You seem to be puzzled ...
... P7, you seem to have got some idea.

P7.— (Hesitatingly) I think, this bibliography should not take a week to reach the hands of the reader. It should be done quicker.

P6.— How can you do it quicker? We calculated the time required systematically.

T.— P7, would you please explain how you can hand over the bibliography much quicker? Do not hesitate. I shall help you to express clearly.

P7.— I think we can reduce the gap of time between the query and the completion of the work by putting more number of persons.

T.— Well, you are on the right track. Go ahead.

P7.— For example, if we have two persons, we can reduce the gap of time to four days. If we have three, we can reduce the gap of time to two days.

T.— Let us say that we will have to complete the bibliography within two days and hand it over to the specialist reader,

within two days. How will you organise the work?

P2.— I will set one person to search and collect the articles using the Library Catalogue, indexing and abstracting periodicals. One person to classify, and one person to catalogue, arrange, and list the entries. Then, the list will be typed and handed over to the reader within two days.

T.— You have omitted a vital point. Can you organise in such a way that all the three persons can work concurrently?

P3.— I think it is possible, as one person goes on collecting articles, passes them in instalments to the classifier; the classifier will go on classifying them, and in turn, passes them on in instalments, to the cataloguer, the cataloguer goes on arranging and inter-filing as and when the entries come to him.

46 ADVANTAGE OF CONCURRENT TEAM WORK

T.— You see how you can telescope the time by organising team work, and how you reduce the gap of time in rendering long range reference service. Taking bit by bit and doing the work in instalments, at intervals of time, has not only reduced the gap in the time of the bibliography reaching the hands of reader, but it also relieves the persons working in the library from the monotony of the work. This is very important. You observe, experience, and understand the value of this type of organisation of work. Otherwise, you will not enjoy the work and you would not be efficient in your work.

47 VALUE OF ESTIMATING TIME PROPERLY

T.— Another point, I would like to tell you is that you could not judge the time required for the preparation of the bibliography. When I asked P3, how much time will be required to prepare the bibliography, he blissfully said, "Three hours", but when you worked it out in detail, it was found to be "20 hours" (Laughter). Where is "3 hours" and where is "20 hours"? I do not blame you. I wanted to show how blissfully we are ignorant, in respect of estimating time. We do not think of the various items of work we should do and how much time they involve and then arrive at an approximate duration of time required to complete the work. If you do not take care in estimating time, on the basis of a standard evolved for the purpose, you will be making a blunder. Your estimate of the staff requirement suffers, your estimate of finance required suffers, and finally you would never be able to complete the work (Laughter). . . . You know how important the estimation of time and work is. This kind of preplanning is now said to be a part of "Operations Research". I call it Organised Common Sense (Laughter) and it is nothing but that.

48 MAHASARASWATI

Another point. To estimate time required for each job exactly and to organise the work in a most productive manner, you should have the Grace of Mahasaraswati as described by Shri Aurobindo. . . Is it familiar to you?

P2.— Yes. An extract from Aurobindo's *Mother* has been printed in Ranganathan's *Library administration*.

T.— Mahasaraswati symbolises perfect perfection and nothing is trivial to her. "Her action is laborious and minute and often seems to our impatience slow and interminable, but it is persistent, integral and flawless".

5 How of Reference Service

T.— In our last class, we discussed the features of Specialist Library as distinct from that of a Generalist Library. Today, we shall discuss this aspect in relation to "How of Reference Service". How to do reference service? What are the different stages in it?

P5.— The how of reference service consists of the following three stages:

- 1 Preparation;
- 2 Service; and
- 3 Assimilation.

(P writes it on the black board).

T.— I think these are all too massive. We must break it down, analyse it. Intellect can take ideas only bit by bit and not *en masse*. Now, how will you break these into bits?

P6.— We shall consider each one of these aspects in relation to

Document; and Reader.

T.— Is there anything else?

(Silence for a few minutes)

Do you all agree with P6?

(Silence for a few minutes)

T.— What about the techniques used for reference service? Is it not a factor that helps in distinguishing the features of a Specialist Library from that of a Generalist Library?

P7.— I think we should take it.

T.— What about others?

P's.— We all agree.

T.— Now, P3, please write this on the black board. (T dictates the following after elucidating it from the participants and P3 writes).

- 1 Preparation
 - 11 Preparation in relation to Document
 - 12 Preparation in relation to Reader
 - 13 Preparation in relation to Techniques used
- 2 Service
 - 21 Service in relation to Document
 - 22 Service in relation to Reader
 - 23 Service in relation to Techniques
- 3 Assimilation
 - 31 Assimilation in relation to Document
 - 32 Assimilation in relation to Reader
 - 33 Assimilation in relation to Techniques used

T.— We shall discuss the features distinguishing a Specialist Library from that of a Generalist Library with these nine aspects of how of reference service.

5A ANNOTATION

It is helpful to take students' suggestion while analysing a problem. The above discussion shows how students participate in analysing a problem.

6 Preparation

61 PREPARATION IN RELATION TO DOCUMENT

T.— What is meant by 'Preparation' in relation to 'Document'?

P4.— That is selecting, acquiring, and knowing the content of each of the sources of information.

T.— Should the Reference Librarian do the job of acquiring documents also?

P6.— Not necessarily. But he should keep a watch over the receipt of the books selected for acquisition.

T.— Can you tell me the features distinguishing Specialist Library from a Generalist Library in this respect?

P1.— The "Preparation work in relation to document" in a Specialist Library is more elaborate and exacting than that in a Generalist Library.

T.— Why do you say so?

P1.— Because, in a Generalist Library the reference librarian will have to largely know about the kinds of reference books, the query they can answer, and their structure; and it is sufficient if he has a broad knowledge of all kinds of subjects. He need not specialise in any subject.

T.— What about the Specialist Library?

P3.— On the other hand, in a Specialist Library, the reference librarian will have to know not only the ready reference books mentioned earlier but also periodical publications, monographs,

newspapers, conference proceedings, standards, specifications, etc. In addition, he should also have a fairly good knowledge of the subjects on which the specialists in the organisation are working. He should keep a very close watch on the wave-front of knowledge.

T.— Thus, you say that the task of reference librarian in a Specialist Library is more exacting, more arduous, and minute than that of Generalist Library in respect of Preparation for Reference Work in relation to documents. The book *Reference service* (Ed 1; 1941. Ed 2; 1961) by S R Ranganathan gives you details about this distinction.

62 PREPARATION IN RELATION TO READER

T.— Let us next take "Preparation in relation to Reader" What are the features that distinguish a Specialist Library from a Generalist Library in this aspect?

P3.— We have already seen that we are concerned with a Specialist Reader in a Specialist Library as against a Generalist Reader in a Generalist Library.

P5.— Secondly, the number of readers in a Specialist Library is relatively smaller than in a Generalist Library.

P6.— Thirdly, the requirement of a Specialist is of a minute kind and it requires an intimate contact, whereas the requirement of generalist reader is relatively broader and in general, does not necessarily need very intimate contact.

T.— How does all these affect 'Preparation work in relation to reader'?

P8.— In the Specialist Library, the reference librarian will have to keep a record of the subject of specialisation of the reader, his current project interest, his method of reading, and even his other habits. Whereas in a generalist library this is not very necessary.

T.— How can you come to know the habits, interests, etc of a specialist reader? . . . Will you ask him about his interests etc?

P7.— No, no. It will be offensive to ask such questions as these are all delicate personal matters.

T.— Yes, they should be handled delicately. The reference librarian in the Specialist Library should closely watch the reader when he comes to the library, what kinds of books and periodicals he reads, what are the subjects he is interested in, etc; he should also watch him when he is at his work in the laboratory or at his work-table, his temperaments, etc. He can also have an informal talk in the canteen. The reference librarian in a Specialist Library should also keep a watch on the trends in the parent organisation — change in objectives, change in business

production, or research activities. These are all arduous and exacting tasks than those in a generalist library where the number of readers are large. The interest of the majority of the readers more or less converge on some issues of current interest. Then the handling of the information will relatively be easier.

63 PREPARATION IN RELATION TO TECHNIQUES USED

T.— Let us now take "Preparation in relation to techniques used". What does it connote?

P3.— It means the design, development, and use of techniques that would help the service of documents to readers in a productive way.

T.— What are the techniques; which you think are the most productive ones in rendering reference service?

P6.— Classification and cataloguing.

T.— In what way does classification of documents help reference librarian in rendering reference service?

P7.— If we arrange books on the shelf and the main entries of articles and books in the catalogue in a minutely classified sequence it will suit majority of readers. Then they can browse through and formulate their query precisely and thereby get the document they want. This considerably lightens the work of a reference librarian.

64 HELPING MINORITY AMONG READERS

T.— Well, you said that majority of readers are benefited by classified arrangement. What about the minority for whom the classified arrangement is not helpful?

P5.— They will be helped by the catalogue. The catalogue will bring other entries of books that do not come together in the classified arrangement.

T.— Can you explain how the catalogue can do it?

P6.— The classified part of the catalogue arranges the main entries of all the documents in one linear sequence. But the alphabetical part provides, for the approach to documents by the name of the author, by the name of the subject etc. A catalogue can satisfy a reader who approaches it, even by the name of any isolate, in the subject.

T.— Have you heard of the Area-Specialist . . . A person who specialises in everything about a particular geographical area—let us say,

Physics in Thailand,
Agriculture in Thailand,
Medical sciences in Thailand,
Religious beliefs in Thailand,
Folk dances in Thailand, etc.

Can you tell me how you can provide for such an approach? . . .

P7.— We can put a Guide Entry Card with "Thailand" as the guide and place duplicate main entry cards for the subjects having "Thailand" as one of the facets . . . In this connection, an article has been published in *Library science*. I think it is Paper K, in Volume 2 published in the year 1965. You should read it.

65 ADVANTAGE OF CLASSIFIED CATALOGUE

T.— So far what we have discussed is only about Classified Catalogue. Do you think Classified Catalogue is better than Dictionary Catalogue?

P1.— I think Classified Catalogue is superior to Dictionary Catalogue, on the grounds that the Classified Catalogue provides not only all the facilities that a Dictionary Catalogue can give but it has also certain additional advantages. For example, it provides for browsing through the classified entries which helps the reader in finding his document.

P8.— Why should catalogue provide for it? The books are already arranged in that sequence.

P7.— True. But books are sometimes composite—that is they embody two or more subjects. In such cases, the shelf sequence can place the book in only one place—that is, with one of the many subjects that get represented in the class number. The others are to be represented by some other means. Here, the catalogue provides for browsing these subjects by giving Cross Reference Entries.

T.— An important advantage of Classified Catalogue over the Dictionary Catalogue is in browsing through. A reader will have to browse "A to Z" in a Dictionary Catalogue to get all documents relevant to his requirements at the moment. But in a Classified Catalogue he will have to browse through a small range of entries in the Classified Part.

66 NEED FOR DEPTH CLASSIFICATION

T.— Now in what way the classification and cataloguing work in Specialist Library is different from that in Generalist Library?

P4.— In a Specialist Library, we will need depth classification for classifying articles in periodicals. Whereas in a Generalist Library we would use Book Classification for classifying books.

T.— Is there any difference between the preparation for depth classification and that for book classification?

P5.— Yes. Depth classification would require addition and correction much faster than that for book classification.

Because, innumerable new ideas are published in articles in periodicals and these are to be classified. These are brand new thoughts and the depth classification should provide for methods of fixing the position of the new ideas among the already existing ones and also provide for methods of fixing the position of the new ideas in a filiatorily helpful way. And also provide for their representation in the notational system used by the scheme.

T.— Have you experienced this with designing depth classification schedule for classifying documents in your project for the Associateship of DRTC.

P6.— Yes. And the principles and devices taught to us gave very facile solutions to many difficult problems.

T.— What about book classification. Does it not require the changes that you mention in the case of depth classification.

P7.— In Book Classification, we require principles and devices. But the need for addition and correction will be fewer when compared to that required in depth classification.

T.— One more point. Do you think that one and the same scheme for classification provides schedule for depth classification as well as book classification?

P6.— It is possible. It has been demonstrated by Colon Classification

T.— There is a controversy over it. Even in the Elsinore Conference on Classification Research held in 1964, this was discussed ... What about cataloguing work?

P2.— In Specialist Library, we will have to provide for a large number of cross reference entries and also prepare main entries for articles in periodicals. In a Generalist Library, need for cross reference entry is comparatively less.

T.— I think we discussed some of the features of the Specialist Library distinguishing it from that of a Generalist Library in relation to "Preparation work for Reference Service". We shall discuss in the next class about the features of Specialist Library and that of a Generalist Library in relation to service and assimilation stage of reference service.

7 Service

71 SERVICE IN RELATION TO DOCUMENT

T.— What is meant by "Service in relation to Document"?

P1.— That is, making known to the reader the existence of a document in the library, when its existence is not known to the reader.

T.— Why don't you express this in terms of the Laws of Library Science?

P3.— That is to satisfy Law 3 of Library Science "Every Book its Reader", the reference librarian should bring to the notice of the reader the existence of the book which the reader may overlook.

T.— Can you tell me the features that distinguish a Specialist Library from a Generalist Library in this respect?

P4.— The reference librarians should do more elaborate and intensive work to bring to the notice of the reader, because the micro documents are usually hidden.

T.— What are the ways that a Specialist Library can adopt in making known the existence of micro documents?

P5.— Issuing a periodical list of nascent micro documents — that is, a periodical documentation list.

P6.— Also, preparing *ad hoc* retrospective documentation list on a particular micro subject in anticipation or on demand by specialist readers.

T.— In what way does this service differ from that of a Generalist Library?

P7.— For all practical purposes the Generalist Library usually caters to the general interest of the reader — a generalist reader. This means, that the documents we serve are largely macro documents — that is, books. We usually issue a weekly list of new books included into the stock of the library.

T.— Is that all? What about "Topical Collections"? Haven't you heard of it?

P8.— Yes. Whenever, there are some specific topics of interest, for example, during events such as Gandhi Centenary, National Integration Colloquium, International Film Festival, Trade Fairs, the books and periodicals having a bearing on these subjects are brought into a Topical collection and are labelled, for example, "Books on National Integration".

T.— That is good. There are a number of ways in which reference service could attract the attention of the reader. Please read about this in the following documents.

(Writes on the black board)

- 1 Ashworth, Ed. Special libraries handbook. Ed 5.
- 2 Foskett (D J). Information service to reader.
- 3 Ranganathan (S R). Five laws of library science. Ed 2. 1957.
- 4 —. Library administration. Ed. 2. 1959.
- 5 —. Library book selection. Ed 2. 1966.
- 6 —. Reference service. Ed 2. 1961. Chap F5 and J5.

72 SERVICE IN RELATION TO READER

T.— Let us next take "Service to the Reader". What

are the features that distinguish a Specialist Library from a Generalist Library in this aspect?

P3.— Generally speaking, the specialist reader may require more aggressive offer of reference service than that for a generalist reader.

T.— What do you think are the steps a reference librarian should follow for providing service to the specialist reader?

P6.— Broadly speaking, here are eight stages:

- 1 Dialogue with the reader;
- 2 Rough enunciation by the reader of the subject sought;
- 3 Facet analysis of the reader's query;
- 4 Dialogue with the catalogue;
- 5 Nearly precise enunciation by the reader of his subject;
- 6 Picking up from the Alphabetical Part, the class number of the almost precise enunciation of the subject;
- 7 Search by the reader, in the region of the Classified Part having the class number; and
- 8 Supplying the document to the reader.

T.— Do you think that there is variation between a Specialist Library and a Generalist Library in following the eight steps mentioned by P6?

P3.— I think that there are special features in case of Specialist Library in all the steps. For example, the specialist reader's query may be more vague than what usually a generalist asks for. This makes the dialogue with specialist reader more detailed and the reference librarian must be able to grasp more quickly and facet analyse it carefully.

73 SERVICE IN RELATION TO TECHNIQUES

T.— What do you think are the distinguishing features of a specialist library in relation to techniques used for service?

P5.— The techniques such as classification and cataloguing used for rendering reference service is deeper in a Specialist Library, in order to get pin-pointed service of documents.

P7.— In addition to this the methods of presentation of information of documents also differs. For example, a Manager may require a digest or a short trend report rather than a bare list of entries. A research worker may require an abstract with a slant to his particular requirement.

T.— Which Law is operative in what P7 is saying?

P6.— Law 4 of Library Science "Save the Time of the Reader".

8 Assimilation

81 ASSIMILATION IN RELATION TO DOCUMENT

T.— What is meant by 'Assimilation in relation to

Document'?

P5.— Many times a reference librarian would come across new information contained in a document. Such information may be shared with colleagues.

T.— Can you tell me some distinctive features of the Specialist Library with respect to assimilation of information about a document.

P2.— In a Specialist Library, assimilation of information about a document would be more frequent than in a Generalist Library. For, the information contained in micro documents is hidden and the specialist librarian may come across it now and then. He almost discovers information contained in micro document— usually nascent micro document— daily. This will have to be passed on to the reader concerned.

82 ASSIMILATION IN RELATION TO READER

T.— Now, let us know what is meant by 'Assimilation in relation to Reader'.

P3.— It is assimilation of information about a reader's interest.

T.— Is there any difference in assimilating information about a specialist reader?

P7.— The information about specialist reader should be kept upto date more frequently than in the case of generalist reader.

P8.— Further, since the Reference Service in a specialist library has to be individual, information has to be kept on each individual Specialist Reader, whereas in a Generalist Library, we can keep a record of the information on a group of generalist readers.

T.— Do you mean to say that in a Generalist Library, we need not assimilate information about each individual reader?

P8.— Not as much as in a Specialist Library. For, the number of generalist readers in a Generalist Library is very large. It is practically not possible to assimilate about each reader.

T.— Further, there won't be frequent changes in the interest of each generalist reader and there would not be much variation between the interest of one from another'. Therefore, there won't be need for frequent assimilation about generalist readers.

83 ASSIMILATION IN RELATION TO TECHNIQUE

T.— Now, let us discuss about the "Assimilation in relation to Technique". In what way 'Assimilation in relation to Technique' is different in a Specialist Library from that in a Generalist Library?

Pl.— In a Specialist Library, the reference service is much more intensive than in a Generalist Library, and the scope for assimilation of newer ideas into library techniques is greater in a Specialist Library.

T.— The library techniques, such as Book Selection, Classification, Cataloguing, and even Shelving, are to be improvised with the experience gained during reference service to the reader. This improvisation usually lies in sharpening of techniques. Opportunity for this is more frequent in a Specialist Library than in a Generalist Library. This is so, because in a Specialist Library the reader's query usually asks for a new and deeper idea and the reference librarian will have to match it usually with nascent Micro idea, usually contained in articles in periodicals. This is a fertile ground for improvising and improving the library technique and to prove our efficiency in meeting reader's requirements.

9 Reference Service — A Consummation of all Library Techniques

T.— We have discussed so far the distinguishing features in relation to Reference Service, of a Specialist Library from those of a Generalist Library. My main purpose was to bring out some salient distinctions between a Specialist Library and a Generalist Library. These distinctions were made to show you how a Specialist Library is different from a Generalist Library and to approach the problems involved in an analytical and helpful way. All these are done to help you to give library service — particularly "Reference Service" — in an efficient way. Since this is the last class, I want to tell you that library service is essentially an intellectual service. Here, the reader, the document, and the librarian meet; and Reader is paramount. Document and the librarian are there for service of readers. Therefore, in our thinking, we should ultimately aim at helpfulness to reader.

All our techniques are designed for making this intellectual service to readers efficient. If some emphasis has been laid in our course on techniques such as Book Selection, Classification, and Cataloguing, it is because these techniques are helpful — nay, essential for making library service efficient. This is what the Five Laws of Library Science demand. I wish you all every success.

9A ANNOTATION

Students generally feel that if they build up excellence in library techniques, their job ends. This wrong impression is due to emphasis on techniques in library science courses. But the teacher should always try to remove this wrong impression at every opportunity. He should make students understand that "Reference Service" is paramount. Every thing else is secondary, however essential they might be for this purpose.