



DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM IN INDIA

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Abstract

The present study provides a descriptive review of the development, growth and the present scenario of the public library system in India. Moreover, the changes, happened during the period of time are also taken in to the consideration. Generally, the Public libraries have recognized their role to satisfy information needs of all types of people in the society. Public Library is a social institution with advancement of civilized literate society. The evolution and growth of libraries is an essential chapter in history of the intellectual development of human beings. Evidence of a well-run library dating back to the Sixth Century AD can be found at the universities of Nalanda and Taxila, both of which possessed sizable book collections. Similar to the ancient era, the mediaeval era of Indian history also contains evidence of libraries; Mughal Emperors Babur, Humayan, and Akbar are a few instances of those who built libraries. The British government took numerous steps to build public libraries in India, so in a practical sense, the development of libraries in India began during their control. Government and numerous non-governmental organisations played a major role in India's public library system's construction in the post-independence era. In this study, we attempt to chronicle the post-independence expansion and development of public libraries in India. In addition to discussing the events that led to the formation of the public library system in post-independent India, this study explores the many plans, strategies, and actions implemented by the Indian government to disseminate it throughout the country.

Keywords: *Public Library, Library Legislation, Public Library Bill, Acts.*

Introduction

The history of the evolution and growth of libraries is an essential chapter in history of the intellectual development of human beings. A Public Library is a social organization supported by public funds, which provides for self-education, free information on social, economic, culture and recreational needs of all members of rural and urban classes of the society. It served the public without any discrimination of caste, creed, age or gender, status and educational attainments. It is, therefore, described as 'People's University'. Through the passes of time, the modern library was introduced all over the World and India was no exception of it. From the ancient period, India had libraries, there is evidence of well managed library in 6th century AD, the Nalanda and Taxila University had library with huge collection of books. Like the ancient period, we also find evidence of library in medieval period of Indian history, Mughal Emperor like Babur, Humayan, Akbar are some examples who had established libraries. In 17th century AD, the Maharaja of Tanjur started the famous 'Saraswathi Mahal' library; it is unique library for collection and service. In India, the Public Libraries were opened for common people after advent of the British. The modern concept of the Public Library in India has its origins in the British Colonial period, with the development of the Public Libraries in the cities like Bombay, Madras and Calcutta (Dutta B.K., 1970). The Government enacted acts, introduced various schemes for development of Public Libraries in all over the country and the non- government organization also took some initiative for it. Public libraries are essential since they improve literacy, stimulate imagination and expand personal horizons. They also inform and empower citizens, enable access to a common cultural heritage and support education at all levels. Also a positive relationship is observed between



public library and literacy level which in turn contributes to increase in economic productivity. Numerous studies were conducted to examine the value provided by public libraries in the information society as well as how the resources were used. The public library is thought of being a place for the people. It is local gateway to knowledge that provides basic condition for life learning and facilitates cultural development of the individual and social groups. Regardless of age, sex, caste, religion, education level, or social studies, everyone can access the public library, and most users are able to find the materials they need there. A public library is a nonprofit institution that is kept open to the public. A library is a growing organization and the library movement is a story of the organized creation and development of libraries, detailing how they were founded, maintained, and operated. Without offering its residents access to free public libraries, no nation in the world can advance. Establishing service organisations like public libraries is essential for a democratic nation like India if it wants to further the democratisation of information and advance general public understanding of social, cultural, historical, scientific, and technological topics (Agarwal, 1989).

Development of Public Libraries in India

The Public Library is a kind of library which is accessible for public and is generally funded from public sources like taxes. The Public Library is established to provide materials, which communicate experience and ideas from one person to another and make them easily and freely available to all people.

The development of Public Libraries in post-independent India is significant. The Government of India and non-Government organization forwarded steps for spread of the Public Library system in all over the India. Just after the independence in front of India, there was host of challenges in terms of education and literacy, the condition was not well; 88 percent of the rural populations were newly illiterate. The National Library of India was established in Kolkata in 1948. The origin of the National Library can be traced to the Public Library, which was established in the year 1835. It was became Imperial Library of colonial India after the independence in 1948, it was declared as National Library by the Government of India (Misra Jogesh, 1979).

The establishment of Delhi Public Library is one of the major developments in the field of Public Libraries. It was joint library pilot project by UNESCO and the Government of India. On the eve of independence, Sir John Sargent (then Educational Advisor to the Government of India) set up a national library committee to find out ways and means of establishing national library at Delhi. As a result, Delhi Public Library was established, which was inaugurated by PM Jawaharlal Nehru on 27th October, 1951. The enactment of various laws and acts helped in the growth of Public Library system in India. Delivery of books and newspapers acts was passed in 1954, the act make the rule for the publisher in India to deposit a copy of every books; they published to the National Library of Calcutta, the Asiatic Society Central Library of Bombay, Connemara Public Library of Madras and the Delhi Public Library based on books receive under this acts (Panda, 1993).

Objectives of the Study

- To discuss the development of Public Libraries in India.
- To investigate the legislative action taken by the Government for the growth of Public Library network in India.



In order to complete this task analytical and descriptive method is used. Sources are collected from the secondary sources which include different Library Acts, Reports, Journals, Books as well as different e-resources.

Public Library System in India Development of Library Legislations

The main aim of the Public Libraries is to provide educational books, pamphlets and reading materials and organized them for productive use in most effective ways. For this, Public Libraries need finance, to ensure finances; legislation is imperative. The Public libraries are free, so it is normal that the private enterprise don't show any interest towards Public libraries. Moreover, the financial requirements of the Public Libraries are huge that the work can't be done only through philanthropy. At such circumstances, Government should take the responsibility. The proper development of the Public Libraries in India wasn't possible until the enactment of library acts. If we see the pattern of expenditure and on education during Public Libraries in the 2nd and 3rd Five-Year Plan, in these plans only a less amount of funds provided for libraries, e.g., in 2nd plan only 5.13 crore rupees allocate for libraries. Unless there is library legislation to fix responsibility on the Government squarely, libraries will not get adequate attention from the Government. Dr. S.R. Ranganathan pointed out 'if library services are found to be essential for the well-being of the state, it must be provided by legislative enactment'. Indian legislation of libraries created mainly to spread network of Public Libraries in national as well as state level. The first step towards the library legislation took by the state Madras. The Madras Library Act, 1948, which received the assent of the Governor General on the 29th January, 1948. The former Hyderabad state also introduced legislation due to the effort of Dr. S.R. Ranganathan and S.K. Ujlambhara in 1954, this legislation became act on 1955 known as 'Hyderabad Public Library Act, 1955'. Through the passes of time many states of Indian passed library legislation act (Mangla, P.B., 2000).

Table 1 States of India those passed Public Libraries Act

S.No.	Library Act	Year
1	Tamil Nadu Public Libraries Act	1948
2	Andhra Pradesh Public Libraries Act	1960
3	Karnataka Public Libraries Act	1965
4	Maharashtra Public Libraries Act	1967
5	West Bengal Public Libraries Act	1979
6	Manipur Public Libraries Act	1988
7	Haryana Public Libraries Act	1989
8	Kerala Public Libraries Act	1989
9	Goa Public Libraries Act	1993
10	Mizoram Public Libraries Act	1993
11	Orissa Public Libraries Act	2001
12	Gujarat Public Libraries Act	2001
13	Uttar Pradesh Public Libraries Act	2005
14	Uttarakhand Public Libraries Act	2005
15	Rajasthan Public Libraries Act	2006
16	Chattisgarh Public Libraries Act	2007
17	Bihar Public Libraries Act	2007
18	Pondichery Public Libraries Act	2007
19	Arunachal Pradesh Public Libraries Act	2009



Advisory Committee for Libraries

The appointment of Advisory Committee for libraries in 1957 by Ministry of Education, Government of India, was another important step towards the betterment of libraries in India. This committee came into existence, as a result of one of the recommendations of the seminar on the ‘Role of libraries in special education’, which was organized by the India Adult Education Association at Chirang, Delhi in September-October, 1955.

Present Status of Public Libraries

In India, there are 54,856 Public Libraries (survey report ORG-MARG). All the states and union territories have their own Public Library service network. 19 states and union territories (till 2015) had passed Public Library Act but other still have to enact which is needed for better advancement of Public Library system.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation

Another positive step taken by the Central Government was the establishment of the Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) at Calcutta on May 22, 1972, as a part of the bicentenary celebrations of the birth of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a social reformer of the early 19th century. Its objectives are library development in general and rural library development in particular. It provides financial assistance to public libraries in the form of matching grants. It assists State Central Libraries and District Central Libraries, which has helped many states and Union Territories develop rural public library services. Main Objectives of RRRLF:

- Promotion of the library movement in India;
- The adoption of a national library policy by the central and state governments;
- Development of a National Library System by integrating the services of National Libraries, State Central Libraries, District Libraries, and other types of libraries through an interlibrary lending system;
- Propagation and adoption of library legislation in the country;
- Provision of financial and technical assistance to libraries;
- Provision of financial assistance to voluntary organizations and library associations for the promotion of library development;
- Periodic publication of reports on library development;
- To act as a clearing house for ideas and information on library development in India and abroad;
- To advise the Government of India library development;
- Promotion of research in problems of library development (Viswanathan, 2005).

National Policy on Library and Information System (NAPLIS)

According to P.B. Mangla, National Policy on Library and Information Science is to “provide a framework for properly planned and co-coordinated development of library and information structure in a country, resulting thereby in an enhanced and user-oriented information services to its user population”. (Mangla; 2001). The need for the formulation of National Policy on Library and Information Systems (NAPLIS) was brought to the notice of the Government of India by Indian library profession since 1950s by Dr. S. R. Ranganathan and in the recommendations of the Library Advisory Committee Report, 1958. Afterwards, professional organizations, like RRRLF, NISSAT and National Library urged upon the Government the necessity of enunciating such policy. The matter was discussed in the annual conference of IASLIC in 1979 at Roorkee and ILA in 1984 at Jaipur. Consequently, Indian Library Association submitted a draft policy statement to the Government in 1985. The Planning



Commission Working Group in its report *Modernization of Library Services and Informatics for the 7th Five-Year Plan (1985-1990)* emphasized the need of such policy. The Raja Rammohun Roy Foundation, after nine years of its inception, took up the task in 1981 and after careful deliberations submitted a Draft National policy on Library and Information Systems to the government in July 1984. On the basis of the draft policy submitted by the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation and Indian Library Association, the Government of India, Ministry of Human resources Development, Department of Culture, set up a Committee in October 1985 under the Chairmanship of Professor D.P. Chattopadhyaya for the formulation of a National Policy on Library and Information Systems and the final report was submitted in May 1986 which includes:

- The Public Library system;
- The Academic Library System;
- Special Libraries and Information Systems;
- The National Library System and the Bibliographical Services;
- Manpower Development and Professional Status; and
- Modernization of Library and Information Systems (Jagnayak, 1999).

Model Public Libraries Act of Dr. S R Ranganathan

The first Model Public Libraries Acts was prepared by Dr. S R Ranganathan in 1930 and revised in 1957 and 1972. It was discussed at the First All Asia Educational Conference held at Banaras during 26-30 December 1930. It was introduced in West Bengal Legislature in 1931 and in Madras Legislature in 1933. The Bill could not be passed due to financial clauses on library grant, library cess etc.

Model Public Libraries Bill of Ministry of Education

The Government of India, Ministry of Education appointed an Advisory Committee for Libraries in 1957, under the Chairmanship of Shri K P Sinha, former Director of Public Instruction, Bihar. This committee recommended the need for library legislation for each state. As a follow-up action of the Advisory Committee, the Ministry of Education, Government of India Appointed a committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. M D Sen. the Committee drafted Model Public Libraries Bill in the year 1963.

Model Public Libraries Bill of the Planning Commission

The Planning Commission, Government of India, constituted a 'Working Group on Libraries' in 1964 to plan and advice on the development of Libraries during the Fourth Five Year Plan. The Working Group recommended a Library Development Scheme to be implemented during the Fourth Plan period with a financial commitment of Rs.309 million, which was appended by Model Public Libraries Bill and submitted its report in 1965. Bill was not considered even by a single state.

Model Public Libraries Bill of Indian Library Association

The Indian Library Association (ILA) formed in 1933, has keen interest in library legislation. The ILA discussed library legislation at its various seminars organized in 1964, 1978 and 1981. Consequently, ILA Council at its meeting held on 23 June 1989, keeping in view of the developments and experiences gain from the existing Acts, resolved to prepare a Model Library Bill. The Bill was circulated to all the states and union territories but few states reacted favorably to the Bill. This Model Bill was again discussed in a National Seminar on Library Legislation and revised as the Model State Public Library and Information Service Act in 1995. In view of emergence of Information Technology at all levels, the model act was again revised in 2000.



Model Union Library Act

The Government of India appointed a committee to explore the possibilities to establish a National Central Library at New Delhi in 1948. Dr. S R Ranganathan, a member of the committee drafted a Library Development plan in 1950 with a 30-year programme and a draft Library Bill for the states and Union Public Library Act. This was revised in 1959 and again in 1972. However, libraries falls under the state list of the constitution and it may not be possible to pass Bill as a Union Act, unless and until the constitution is suitably amended for this purpose.

Conclusion

Due to the disparity in economic conditions, the Public Library network varies in different regions of India. With some necessary tweaks, these libraries are offering excellent chances to students and information seekers in India. There are various bills, acts and legislations have been passed in the country for the growth and development of public libraries. Some states and union territories have already passed the Public Library Act, while some still need to do so in order to flourish libraries in India. All the states and union territories that ought to have passed the Public Library Act did so in order to ensure the equitable development of the Public Library network services throughout India. Establishing, maintaining, and bolstering the nation's free public libraries and enabling them to function as a system is the government's most crucial duty. Public libraries at the level of the city, town, and village should play major roles in the district library system, serving as an apex library for each district together with the district library. Along with the typical services that it will offer, it should also offer accessible learning environments and recreational opportunities for people with disabilities. Public libraries should offer books in Braille wherever available. Wherever it is necessary and practical, the public library should additionally set up mobile and circulating library services across their region. Every public library should feature a section just for kids, and when possible, separate kids' libraries with appealing books and audio-visual supplemental materials should also be constructed.

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