

## GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARY SYSTEMS IN INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper describes about the growth and development of library system in India since ancient period to the modern 21st century. The paper states about the role of different authorities such as central/state government, UGC, UNESCO, Library Associations, corporate and an individual who played a vital role in the development of library system in India.*

### INTRODUCTION

India has been the cradle of one of the earliest civilizations. Intellectual enquiry and philosophical thinking were the factors that shaped the Indian civilization. Library system's development in India is a saga of organized growth and development of libraries, giving the details of establishment, maintenance and functioning of libraries in India. These aspects viz., establishment, maintenance, functioning and development make a library a growing organism. No country in the world can progress without providing free public library services to the citizens. It is imperative on the part of the democratic country like India to establish the service institutions like public libraries system in order to strengthen the democratization of information and to promote the social, cultural, historical and scientific and technical knowledge in the public at large (Kumbar, 2005). The growth and development of library system in India can be easily studied by categorizing it into three groups:

1. Ancient Libraries; 2. Medieval Libraries; and 3. Modern Libraries.

### ANCIENT LIBRARIES

The first libraries were only partly libraries, and stored most of the unpublished records, which are usually viewed as archives. The archeological as well as literary evidence make it clear that writing and reading of manuscripts were regularly practiced in ancient period since the fourth century B.C. to the sixth century after Christ. This must have led to the growth and development of collection of manuscripts in important centers of learning. The important library of that period was that of Nalanda University of Bihar in the fourth century AD. The library was said to be in three grandest buildings, the area of which was called "Drama Ganja". The other important academic library of that period was Vikramasila, Odantapuri, Somapuri, Jaggadal, Mithila, Vallabhi, Kanheri, etc. (Sharma 1985, p.97). During that period there was a considerable activity in South India too, and there was a tradition about the libraries in that period known as sangam age.

The Buddhist of India laid special emphasis on the writing of manuscripts and maintaining their collection. The Jains and Hindus also made immense contribution in the field of learning. They patronized education and literary activities, established innumerable institution called Upasrayas and Temple College. Acharya Nagarjuna, the founder

of Mahayana Buddhism is known to have maintained a library on the top floor of the university building. It was also said that Taxila has a rich library.

## MEDIEVAL LIBRARIES

The medieval cycle may be roughly taken to have ended with the seventeenth century. It was during the ascending phase of this cycle that the giant intellectual and spiritual leaders such as Sankara, Ramanuja and Madheva flourished. This was the time when personal as well as public Libraries were established in different part of India.

**Personal Libraries:** From the earliest times the kings and nobles of India patronized education and encouraged writing of manuscripts and their preservation. Even the princes of small states maintained their manuscripts libraries. The tradition was continued till the nineteenth century. The emperors of Timuride dynasty were patrons of learning. With the exception of Aurangzeb all the early Mughal rulers extended their support to art, music and literature. The libraries also made remarkable progress during their times. Humayun converted a pleasure house in purana quila in Delhi into a library. Akbar maintained an "imperial library"; he was also instrumental in introducing reforms in the classification and storage of books. Jahangir is said to have maintained a personnel library which moved with him wherever he went (Khursid 2004, p.6).

**Public Libraries:** In the seventeenth and the eighteenth century, the development of libraries received an impetus due to rise of European settlement in India. From 1690, Calcutta began to develop as one of the principal English settlement, when a large number of British began to settle there. Subsequently, the circulation and subscription libraries came into being.

The East India Company established the Fort St. David library in 1707 at Cuddalore. In the year 1709, the society for promotion of Christian Knowledge sent out a circulating library to Calcutta, the first of its kind in India. Subsequently, a number

of such libraries were established in India, the notable among them were Fort St. George library (1714), East India Company's library, Bombay (1715), John Andrews circulating library at Fort William, Calcutta (1770), The Calcutta Circulating library (1787), etc (Datta 2004, p. 172).

## MODERN LIBRARIES

### Library Development till Nineteenth Century-

**Public Libraries:** The role of Mughal rulers and missionaries in establishment of some libraries also find their way to modern cycle. Some of the scattered manuscripts of the early periods have been collected and preserved in many modern manuscripts libraries. These are found in many states in India. Those of Baroda, Banaras, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Mysore, Poona, Tanjavur and Trivandrum are well known.

The year 1808 is considered an important period during which the then government of Bombay initiated a proposal to register libraries which were to be given copies of books published from "funds for the encouragement of literature". This has been the first attempt to register the libraries and assist them with literature by the government (Bhattacharjee 2002, p.82).

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century John Andrew's circulating library at Fort William, Calcutta (established in 1770) was converted into a public library. A few public libraries started appearing sporadically here and there during the same period in this country. The notable among them are Asha Granthalaya, Waltair (1800), Calcutta Literary Society's Library (1818), United Services Library, Poona (1818), Raghunandan Library, Puri (1821), Bombay General Library (1830), etc (Sharma 1987, p.99).

In August 1835, the Calcutta public library was established. It was meant to serve the needs of all ranks and classes without distinction. In 1860, a small library was established by Jean Mitchell in Madras as a part of the Museum. It was opened to the public in 1896. It was named Connemara Public Library, this library can be claimed to be the first

true public library, only a nominal refundable deposit was required. In 1948, it becomes State Central library.

In 1867, the Government of India enacted the Press and Registration of Books Act (XXV) under which the publisher of a book was supposed to deliver free, to the provincial government concerned, one copy of the book and one or two more copies, if the provincial government so desired, to be transmitted to the central government.

In 1876, Khuda Baksh Oriental public library (Patna) was established. Maulvi Muhammad Baksh Khan, on his death left a collection of 1500 manuscripts. It formed the nucleus of the library. In 1891, the library was opened to the public (Patel and Kumar 2004, p.10).

The imperial library was also established at Calcutta in 1891. Lord Curzon, the viceroy of India promulgated the imperial library act 1902, which is based on Registration of books act of 1867, amalgamating Calcutta public library with imperial library. Soon after independence the Government of India passed the National Library Act in 1948 following which the imperial library was renamed as the National library of India (Nagar 1983, p.3).

By the end of nineteenth century, all the provincial capitals as well as many of the district towns, especially in the three presidencies (Bombay, Calcutta and Madras) had so called public libraries. Even princely states such as Indore and Travancore-Cochin had public libraries in their capital. However, the masses in general did not take full advantage of these institutions.

**Academic Libraries:** The first college was started in this country is the Fort William College in 1800. Sir John Colville in 1857 introduced the bill to establish universities in India. In the same year Lord Dalhousie, then the Governor General of India, gives immediate consent to this bill. As a result, the first three modern universities were started at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857 based on the patterns of London University.

**Calcutta University Library:** Calcutta University was the first university which established on January 24, 1857. On February 24, 1869 Mr. Joy Kissen Mookherjee donated Rs. 5,000 to the University for purchasing of books for the library. The senate in the year 1872 succeeded in constructing a beautiful building at a cost of Rs. 4, 34,697 (Naidu 1990). This is the first and oldest university library that was established in British India. In 1874, the library also started a collection of periodicals. In 1876-77, Calcutta University library had a good collection of books with printed catalogue service to the user. In 1934, a new library building was set up in the Calcutta University. In 1937, the Calcutta University Library appointed the professionally qualified Librarian, Dr. Nihar Ranjan Roy. He, for the first time in India introduced the DDC and AACR rule for providing effective library services to the user.

**Madras University Library:** The Madras University Library was opened in 1907. The government of India gave a special grant of Rs. one lakh to the library to develop its book collection. In 1924, Dr. S. R. Ranganathan joined the Madras University Library as Librarian. He was the first professionally qualified Librarian in Indian history. Due to his active involvement he was able to receive grant of Rs. 10, 00,000 in the year 1926 for Madras University Library (Jambhekar, 1995). This was the first grant to be received from the government in the history of the university libraries in India. As a result of this grant, the University Library that was in-house at the Connemara Public Library since 1908 was shifted to the new location in 1936. Again five well-trained reference librarians were appointed to provide special reference

service to the user. This was done for the first time in the Indian history.

**Bombay University Library:** The Bombay University library was established very lately due to the lack of donation. It was the university authorities of Bombay that offered a donation of Rs. 20,000 for construction of library building. In 1931, a very special grant of Rs. 10,000 was given by Kikabhai and Meneklen the sons of late Premchand Roy Chand (Jambhekar 1995). In 1939, the Central government provides a special grant of Rs. 50,000 to the University of Bombay library to strengthen its collection.

**Research Libraries:** The Asiatic society of Bengal that was established at Calcutta in 1784 started building up a good research library since its inception. The Asiatic Society of Bombay, founded in 1804, also developed a good library. The first technical library to be founded in this country is the Victoria Technical library at Nagpur in 1806. The Madras Literary Society had founded its library in 1812.

## **LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN TWENTIETH CENTURY**

**Role of Individual:** The development of public libraries as a movement may be said to have started by Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III, the ruler of Baroda state in 1906. During his visit to USA he was impressed by the public libraries system in that country. In order to organize libraries along modern lines, the Maharaja appointed an American librarian by name William Allenson Borden as curator of libraries of his state. During his tenure of office that is in between 1910-13, Borden could organize a very good network of free library services in the state. However, this example did not set a pace in the later development due to lack of interest on the part of the state government. But the contribution made by Maharaja Sayajirao III would be written in golden

letters in the history for developing public library system in Baroda.

The library movement in Baroda originated as the peoples movement under the leadership of Motibhai Amin (a public leader) in the form of Mitra Mandal (Society of Friends) as early as 1906 which received state patronage in 1960. Newton Mohan Dutta, curator of libraries at Baroda also did good work (Nagar 1983, p.22).

There have been a number of pioneers who made contribution to the library movement in Andhra Pradesh. Out of them Sir Iyyanki Venkata Ramanayya holds a place of pride. From Bengal we have the name of Monindra Dev Rai Mahashaya. Master Motilal (1876-1949), by his own effort and meagre resource established Shri Sanmati Pustakalaya (a public library) in Jaipur in 1920. From Punjab we had Sant Ram Bhatia, who played an important role in promoting the cause of public libraries in Punjab. In Assam, the library movement at its true spirit was led by Late Kumudeshar Barthakur (1893-8<sup>th</sup> November 1966), a retired Secondary School teacher under the brand name of Assam Library Association (Nagar 1983, p.23).

The contribution of S.R. Ranganathan is unique and remarkable. He is regarded as the father of Indian library movement. The idea of an integrated library system was first introduced by him at the first "All Asia Educational Conference" held at Benerai in 1930. There he presented a model library act that form the basis of the Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka library legislation and as a whole the subsequent library legislation in India.

**Role of Library Association and Organization :** Library association also played a vital role in the progress and development of library system in India.

The Andhra Desa Library Association, founded in 1914, is the first of its kind in India. It started the first full fledged professional periodical in 1925 under the title "Indian Library Journal".

All Indian Library Association was also set up in 1920, but it could not do anything for libraries and their development. By Dr. S. R. Ranganathan's effort Indian Library Association was set up in 1933 in its present form. The association published a

quarterly periodical named ABGILA (Jambhekar, 1995). In the same line, Indian Association of Special Library and Information Centre (IASLIC) were established in 1955 at Kolkata for the systematic growth and development of special libraries in India.

Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) was set up in 1972, on the occasion of the bicentenary of Raja Rammohun Roy who raised the banner of revolt against obscurantism in the society and devoted his life to fight against injustice. RRRLF is an autonomous organization of Dept of Culture, Govt. of India and it provides different types of grant to different public libraries.

Bengal Library Association (1925), Madras Library Association (1928), Punjab Library Association (1929), Assam Library Association (Sadau Assam Puthibharal Sanga) (1938), etc. played vital roles for the growth and development of public libraries in the respective states of origin (Buragohain 1999, p.8).

#### **Role of Union and State Government :**

**First Five Year Plan:** The government of India in its first five year plan of educational development includes the scheme of "Improvement of Library Service". This scheme envisaged a network of libraries spread all over the country. The proposal of setting up a National central library at New Delhi was also made. During the first five year plan nine state governments i.e. Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, etc. decided to set up state central libraries (Sharma 1965, p.89).

**Second Five Year Plan:** Under the second five year plan the government of India allocated about Rs. 140 lakhs for setting up a country wide network of libraries in 320 districts. Under this plan, the "Institute of Library Science" at University of Delhi was also established. The refresher course on "The public library and national development" on March 2,

1959 also started (Planning Commission India, 1956, p. 522).

**Third Five Year Plan:** During the third plan period besides the Institute of Library science, University of Delhi other universities also upgraded the facilities for training library personnel and enhanced the facilities for research in library science (Panda 1993, p.36).

**Fourth Five Year Plan:** The government of India announced on July 16, 1964, appointment of a 16 member education commission to make a compressive review of the entire field of education and advice the government on evolving a national pattern at all stages of education. The commission has formed various sub committees to prepare report on various aspect of education including the libraries, which plays a great role towards the betterment of libraries in India. During the fourth five year plan, the government of India set up the Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation in 1972 to make the bicentenary of the birth of Raja Rammohan Roy, the father of modern India (Thomas 1997, p.29).

**Fifth Five year Plan:** This plan included measures to strengthen the buildings, collections, and staff of the central and state libraries, as well as strengthening the district, block, and village libraries. During this period, attempts were made to develop a district-level library system, so that district library could act as a leader for the smaller libraries in the district. The adult education programme was the hallmark of this plan. The programme was to be supported by a network of libraries at the village and block levels and various community centres. Thus steps were taken to strengthen not only the village and block libraries, but also the central, state libraries and the district libraries (Thomas 1997, p. 30)

**Sixth Five Year Plan:** This plan emphasized establishing a network of rural public libraries to sustain literacy and disseminate information to rural areas. It discussed the necessity of integrating school and college libraries with the system of public libraries. During this period, 26 states or union territories out of 31 (in 1982) had established state central libraries and 291 district libraries (Thomas 1997, p. 31).

**Seventh Five Year Plan:** During this period, the Commission's objective was to address the needs of 90 million people in the Adult Education Programme. The network of libraries was to play a role in the development of literature for neo-literates. Library systems were to be strengthened, with specific attention given to improvement of facilities at national level institutions. An important development was the 1986 adoption of National Literacy Mission, which emphasised the education of women and the establishment of rural libraries. In addition, the RRRLF set up an Integrated Research Cell-cum-Computer Unit for promoting research in librarianship and database of public libraries in the country (Planning Commission India, 1991, p. 258).

**Eighth Five Year Plan:** During this period it was proposed to reorganise the Central Reference Library into the National Bibliographical and Documentation Centre, which would also have a computer centre. The Delhi Public Library set up two new libraries in its service area. RRRLF created programmes to help state central libraries to purchase reprographic equipment, to help libraries process rare books, and to give special assistance to networks of public libraries that were at least 100 years old (Planning Commission India, 1992).

**Ninth Five Year Plan:** Funds were provided to the Delhi Public Library and Central Secretariat Library, Delhi, for acquisition of

new material in different languages and media as well as for modernizing their infrastructure. Funds for modernizing and computerization were also provided from central grants to the Connemara Library, Chennai, Thanjavur Maharaja Serovji Sarasvati Mahal Library, Thanjavur and the State Central Library, Mumbai. Besides these, the RRRLF provided assistance to public libraries across the country for collections and storage, construction, and seminars and workshops (Planning Commission India, 1997).

**Tenth Five Year Plan:** The Tenth Plan focused on upgrading existing libraries, including private collections, and widening the programme for bibliographic control and documentation. The Commission resolved to strengthen public library infrastructure through the RRRLF. To make readers services more comprehensive and effective, the National Library is expected to act as the ultimate referral centre for various subjects. To keep pace with the latest developments in information technology in public libraries, the upgrading and networking of central and state libraries was also planned (Planning Commission India, 2002).

**Eleventh Five Year Plan:** Eleventh plan was focused on National Archives of India (NAI) to revitalize its programmes of expansion of records management and repair and reprography. Developing a National Bibliographic Database in electronic format to encourage resource sharing, networking and to improve reader services is the hallmark of modernization activities in the library sector (Planning Commission India, 2007).

**Twelfth Five Year Plan:** During the Twelfth Plan, public library system in the country should be rejuvenated by taking advantage of the technological developments that have transformative potential to change the

public libraries. Existing public libraries must modernise their collections, services and facilities and become pro-active in resource sharing, professional development of staff, extending library facilities right up to the grassroots through the Panchayats (Planning Commission India, 2012).

#### Role of UGC :

The UGC gave a new life to the university and college libraries. It gave librarian a status, prestige and a better life. The major commission and committees formed by UGC for the growth and development of college and university libraries are

**Library Committee (1957):** The UGC programme (Commission) appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Dr. S. R. Ranganathan to advise on a wide range of subjects including the standards and principles for the designing of library building, fitting and furniture, administration of university libraries, training of librarianship etc.

**Review Committee (1961):** In order to consider the question of improving and coordinating the standards of teaching, and conducting research in the department of library science in Indian Universities under the chairmanship of Dr. S. R. Ranganathan a review committee was formed in July 1961. The first meeting of the committee was held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1961, in which a questionnaire was finalized on the basis of data supplied by the Indian Universities. In response to this questionnaire a note was prepared by the UGC, which form the back bone of many developments in the subject of library science.

Other mentionable Committees and Commissions are

- Education Commission (1964): Chairman D. S. Kothari.

- Pal Committee (1970): Chairman A. B. Lal.
- Mehrotra Committee (1983): Chairman R. C. Mehrotra.
- Committee on National Network System for Universities (1988): Chairman Yash Pal.
- Curriculum Development Committee on LISc (1990): Chairman P.N. Kaula

**Work Flow Seminar:** UGC organized a seminar on “work flow” in libraries in New Delhi from March 4-7, 1959, Dr. C. D. Deshmukh, the then chairman of UGC, extended assistance to libraries for constructing building and furniture as well as for the engaging the staff on a scale which is, relatively speaking, larger than found in many other countries. The recommendations of the seminar were circulated to the universities and colleges all over the country. These comments were considered by the commission and were accepted.

**Revision of Pay Scale:** Another great improvement in the history of universities and college libraries is the revision of salary scales of professionally qualified librarian under the third five year plan.

**Establishment of INFLIBNET:** UGC established an Inter University Centre (IUC) named INFLIBNET at Gandhinagar in 1988 to make network of all the libraries of the universities and colleges of the country and help in automation and up gradation of it.

#### Role of UNESCO :

The great contribution of UNESCO towards the library profession in India is that it gave it an international status. UNESCO for the first time started the first pilot project by establishing the Delhi Public Library in October 1951. The main aim of this project was to provide information on the

problem of public library services for the parts of India in particular and for Asia in general.

The Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre (INSDOC) was set up in 1952 by the government of India with technical assistance from UNESCO. In 1964, UNESCO assisted INSDOC again in setting up its regional centre in Bangalore.

The second important step that the UNESCO took in this direction was the holding of a seminar on the development of public libraries in Asia in Delhi from October 6-26, 1955. It was the first international meeting on this subject to be organized in an Asian country. On the whole, the seminar was a great success for the library profession in India.

Another UNESCO seminar which had far reaching effect on library profession in India was the "Regional seminar on library development in South Asia". It was held in the University of Delhi library from 3-14 October 1960. The most significant achievement of this seminar was the "grading of staff", "salary scales" and "status of librarian".

Besides these, the UNESCO honored the Indian librarians by inviting them to advice on various library projects meant for the member country. The prominent among those are Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, B. S. Kesavan, S. S. Saith and a few others (Sharma 1996, p.37).

Indian National Commission is the official agency of UNESCO, the National Information System for Science and Technology (NISSAT) in Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) is the focal point for UNISIST (PGI) and is also the coordinating centre for ASTINFO programme. NASSDOC of ICSSR is the focal point for UNESCO supporting APINESS programme.

#### **Role of Corporate :**

Some Indian corporate has also contributed through donation/grant in the establishment/ development of the different academic/public libraries in different parts of the country. Apart from that, in late twentieth century, Due to globalization and high competition in the market many Indian corporate have established their own well stoked, advanced and networked library system for (R & D purpose)

use to their staff members that help (indirectly) in knowledge gain to the peoples of India.

## **LIBRARY NETWORKS**

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*Indian information professionals, education specialists and scientists have realized that the time has come to share the information resources and to coordinate mechanisms. This has resulted in discernible change in the Library scenario in India. A large number of library resource sharing networks like the Metropolitan Area Networks such as CALIBNET in Calcutta, DELNET in Delhi, BONET in Bombay, PUNENET in Pune, MALIBNET in Madras, HYLIBNET in Hyderabad, ADNET in Ahmedabad, and countrywide ones like ERNET (Educational and Research Institutions), INFLIBNET (Universities and Research Institutions) and DESINET (Defence Laboratories), and sectoral ones like BTISNET (Biotechnology Networks) etc. are under various stages of conceptualization, design, development and implementation. These networks of library play a vital role in the growth and development of library system.*

## **NATIONAL KNOWLEDGE COMMISSION**

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Indian National Knowledge Commission (NKC) was established in 2005 by the union government which eventually formed a Working Group on Libraries. This Working Group on Libraries along with other related working groups of NKC re-established dialogs with national and state actors and other stakeholders through public consultations. The Commission envisaged the future road map for the growth and development of the libraries by imbibing core issues such as, set up a National Commission on Libraries (NCL), prepare a national census of all libraries, revamp LIS education, training and research facilities, re-assess staffing of libraries, set up a central library fund, modernize library management, encourage greater community participation in library management, promote information communication technology applications

in all libraries, facilitate donation and maintenance of private collections, and encourage public private partnerships in LIS development, etc.

**National Mission on Libraries:** NKC envisaged a transformation of India's public library system through a newly formed institution called "National Mission on Libraries". National Mission on Libraries set up four working groups and after deliberating on the recommendations of the working groups formulated the scheme "National Mission on Libraries (NML) – up gradation of libraries providing service to the public". The scheme consists of four components:-

- Creation of National Virtual Library of India (NVLI)

- Setting up of NML Model Libraries,
- Quantitative & Qualitative Survey of Libraries
- Capacity Building

The NML has started its functioning and we may hope it can make a revolutionary change in the growth & development of library system in India.

## STATUS OF LIBRARY LEGISLATION IN INDIA

Since independence of India the following States have passed Public Libraries Acts-

<u>S. No.</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>S. No.</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>State</u>
01.	1948	Tamilnadu	02.	1960	Andhra Pradesh
03.	1965	Karnataka	04.	1967	Maharashtra
05.	1979	West Bengal	06.	1988	Manipur
07.	1989	Haryana	08.	1989	Kerala
09.	1993	Mizoram	10.	1993	Goa
11.	2000	Gujarat	12.	2001	Odisha
13.	2005	Uttaranchal	14.	2006	Rajasthan
15.	2006	Uttar Pradesh	16.	2007	Lakshadweep
17.	2008	Bihar	18.	2009	Chhattisgarh
19.	2009	Arunachal Pradesh			

So far, only two third of the States of the Indian Union have successful passed the library legislation, However, in the coming few years, there is greater possibility for a library law being enacted in the remaining States. Many of the state have just passed the legislation but it has not been yet implemented properly.

## CONCLUSION

The Development of Library System in India has moved a long way. The different societies have played a vital role in the development of library system in India. But there is still need to focus on establishment of Libraries in the remote

locations/disadvantaged area of the society. The central and state government should implement the Library legislation effectively and provide better library services to the mass of the peoples. India has a great scholarly past and there was a time when it was called "Vishva Guru". If India would like to gain its old glorious status of Nalanda and Taxshila period, it should must encourage and promote the Library services for every sphere of society.

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