

# DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM IN INDIA

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## ABSTRACT:

This paper provides a descriptive account of the development, growth and the present scenario of the public library system and services in India. Moreover, the changes, happened during the period of time are also taken in to the consideration in this paper. The Public libraries have recognized their role to satisfy information needs of all types of people in the society. The government at the state level and National level has taken initiatives to make public libraries as important source of information's for people formal walks of life.

**Key words:** Public Library, Library Legislation, Public Library Bill, Acts, RRRLF.

## INTRODUCTION:

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. Extensive studies were undertaken to study the role of public libraries in information society value offered and use of the resources. The Public library is regarded in the people's institution. It is local gateway to knowledge that provides basic condition for life learning and facilitates cultural development of the individual and social groups. The public library provides services to all irrespective of age, sex, cast, religion, education and social studies; generally all users get the material relevant to their needs and requirements in the public library. A Public library is a nonprofits library maintained for public use. Library movement is a saga of organized growth and development of libraries giving the details of establishment; maintenance and functioning make a library a growing organization. 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 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.

### 1) Ancient Period (Before 1200 AD)

In India the emperors and kings always supported scholars and scholarships. Therefore the libraries in ancient India were established by the patronage extended by emperors, Zamindars and scholars. These libraries functioned like private institutions and the admission was limited to scholars and royal guests. In the sixth century A. D. there was a well developed library of Nalanda University in Bihar which had its own magnificent collection of manuscripts which cover the universe of knowledge, which was available only for scholars. Similarly ancient universities of Taxila and

Vikramshila had valuable libraries. When we study the history of early libraries in the world it is found that the early libraries of the world mainly consisted of published records called Archives. Archaeological findings from the ancient city – states of Sumer have thrown light on temple rooms full of clay tablets in cuneiform script. Similar libraries were found in Ancient Egypt. There is ample evidence showing libraries at Nippur around 1900 BC and those at Nineveh about 700 BC showing a library classification system. Another early organization was in effect at Alexandria. Over 30000 clay tablets from Ashurbanipal library was discovered at Nineveh, giving Archaeologists with an amazing wealth of Mesopotamian religious, literary, and administrative work.

## **2) Medieval Period Libraries (1200-1757 A. D.)**

The Mughals entered in India during 13th century A. D. which created a new era of learning of scholarships. Mughal rulers also considered importance of libraries and hence, they appointed scholars as librarians. The Mughal emperor like Babur, Humayun and Akbar established many new libraries and existing libraries were further developed. In which rare manuscripts were stored. Humyan set up a library at his Agra Fort where he kept books, portfolios, Plated Pen cases, picture books and works of calligraphy. Akbar encouraged reading habits among his kingdom. He setup

a unique library of rare books at Fatehpur Sikri exclusively for women. It is learnt that there was a collection of 24000 books in his library. Jahangir, son of Akbar created a law that if a wealthy person died without any successor then his assets should be used for creating Schools, Monasteries and libraries. During Mughal period the technical work of the library like arranging the books in a meaningful sequence, keeping a written record were also carried out. In 17th century A. D. the Maharaja of Tanjuar started the famous Saraswati Mahal library it is unique library for collection and services. In India the public libraries were opened for common people after the advent of British rule.

## **3) British Period (1757-1947)**

The British rulers made changes in traditional educational system and encouraged the book production and establishment of libraries. These libraries were mainly used by the British Ruler and these libraries were later on converted in to native libraries, as the book production local languages increased considerably. These libraries were opened for common people of the country. In 1845 Bombay native library was established.

The year 1808 can be regarded as the beginning of first phase of public library development in India as the government of Bombay proposed to register the libraries which used to provide published books from the “funds for the encouragement of literature”. In the early 19th century the three presidency towns of Bombay, Calcutta & Madras had public libraries. These libraries were mainly financed by Europeans who were residing in these cities. The public library at Calcutta which was established in 1827 was later developed into National Library of India. Around this period the subscription libraries started in many cities of India. These libraries did not offered free services and reading facilities but the same was made available by charging reasonable fees. But these libraries were used by small portion of an affluent society. The Indian library system golden was between 1900-1930. The Imperial Library Act was passed on January 31, 1902 and in 1906 Lord Curzon converted the Calcutta Public Library to the imperial Library. In the development of Public Libraries the state of Baroda was a pioneer in its approach. Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad III played an important role in establishing network of public libraries in the entire state. He invited an American scholar, William Alson Borden in 1910 to establish public library system in the state of Baroda. Under his guidance the public library movement flourished in Baroda. He is known as “Father of Library Movement” in India.

## **20 century (Before independence)**

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 or book acts of 1867 amalgamating Calcutta public library with imperial library soon after independence government of India passed the national library act 1948 following which the imperial library was renamed as the national library of India.

The contribution made by the maharaja Sayyji rao gaekwad III to public library movement in India is highly remarkable. He visited united state and was deeply impressed with role played by public libraries in promotion of education. He thought of extending the library services to public in his state. Thus he invited Mr. M.A Borden an American librarian in 1910 to introduce a wide free scientifically organized free and open access public library system in Baroda. He established state wide free public library network. According to annual report of Baroda library department by the year 1940-41. There were four districts central library forty two town libraries, 1351 village library and 300 travelling libraries in the Baroda state.

## **20-21 century (after independence)**

Origin of national library Calcutta can be traced to the Calcutta public library which comes into existence in 1835. The Calcutta public library and an imperial library formed in 1881 were amalgamated in 1903 to become the imperial library of colonial India and finally it was named as national library by government of India in 1948.

The establishment of the Delhi public library involvement of the union government in public library movement and enactment of public library laws are some of the main issues which contribute towards the improvement and expansion of public library in independent India.

Delivery of books and newspapers acts was passed in 1954. The act make it mandatory for publisher in India to deposit a copy of every book they published with the national library in Calcutta :the Asiatic society central library .Bombay:Connemra public library madras and the Delhi Public Library .based on books receive under the this acts Indian National Bibliography (INB) is being published by the Central Reference library Calcutta.

### **Library Legislation in India:**

Since the beginning, the public libraries served as the local information centers making the source of knowledge readily available to the public. The local community from the local fund or individual munificence could not achieve the services of a public library. Public leaders, scholars and learned societies have realized that the only way to establish and develop a public library system is through legislation. The UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, 1972 stated that, “The public library should be established under the clear mandate of law”, which is substantiated by the IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994 as; “The public library shall in principle be free of charge. The public library is the responsibility of local and national authorities. It must be supported by specific legislation and financed by national and local government. It has to be an essential component of any long-term strategy for culture, information provision, literacy and education”. Libraries are recorded under the Article 246 of Indian Constitution, Seventh Schedule List II of State List No.12 and the Indian Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, 1956, Section 27 reads, “Libraries, museums and other similar institutions controlled or financed by the State; ancient and historical monuments and records other than those to be of national importance”. Provision of public library service is the responsibility of the State Government as the subject matter of libraries is relatable to entry 12 of the State List in the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India (Trehan;1986).

**States of India those passed Public Libraries Acts. (Legislation)**

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

**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.

**Salient features of final version are:**

- Establishment of public libraries in city, rural and other areas;
- Constitution of State Library Authority i.e. Minister of Education;
- Constitution of State Library Committee as an advisory body of the State Library Authority;
- Constitution of Local Library Authority for each city and one for each district.

.State Library Authority, Government and Local Library Authority may determine library rate in such a manner and may determine collection of library cess from time to time.

**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.

**The salient components of this Bill are:**

- .Constitution of State Library Authority as an apex body to advise the Government in the matter of library developments;
- .Constitution of State Library Directorate for direction and controlling of library services. .Constitution of District Library Committee in each district.
- .Treatment of employees as government servant.
- .Collection of library cess at the rate of 6 paise per rupee on house tax and property tax.

**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.

**The Bill included the following features:**

- . Establish, maintain, develop and integrated adequate public library service in the state;
- Constitution of Committee of Experts to prescribe the standards of service;
- Constitution of State Library Council to advise the government for the promotion and development of library service;
- Establishment of State Library Directorate to control, direct and supervise library system in the state;
- Establishment of State Central Library, State Regional Libraries and District Libraries;
- Treatment of employees in the system of State Government Servants.
- Government shall be the financial source and shall maintain the public library system in the 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. Accordingly, as asked by ILA, Dr. Velaga Venkatappaiah, Chairman, Central Sectional Committee on Public Libraries of the ILA prepared a Model Public Library Bill. ILA accepted the draft Bill with minor changes at its National Seminar on Public Library Legislation in 1990 at the final product of the Model Public Libraries Bill was published in 1991. 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.



**The important components of this Bill are:**

- State Library and Information Service, based on a State Policy;
- Constitution of State Library Authority at the apex level with Minister of Libraries as Chairman as policy making and executive body;
- Establishment of Directorate of Public Libraries for directing, controlling and supervising;
- Constitution of City, District Library Authority for rendering service from district to village level;
- Provision for network of Public Library and Information Services from state to village level;
- Constitution of State Library and Information Service;
- Collection of Library cess on house tax and property tax, entertainment tax, professional tax, vehicle tax, etc.;
- Constitution of State Boards for education, book production, co-ordination, etc.
- Accountability of public expenditure and services.

**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.

**The main features of this model Act are:**

- .Constitution of a National Library Authority;
- .Establishment of national central libraries;
- .Constitution of National Library Committee as an advisory body to the National library Authority;
- .Constitution of National library fund;
- .Amendment to the delivery of Books and Newspaper Act, 1954.

**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.

The primary objective of RRRLF is the promotion of the library movement. The rest are subsidiary objectives. RRRLF is the first government-sponsored body specifically created for this purpose. The foundation also has a programme of assistance to libraries for workshops, conferences, and exhibits. The foundation has taken the major initiative for the formulation of a national policy on library and information systems by the Government of India. The current programmes of assistance are:

- Collection building;
- Rural libraries and mobile library service for rural areas;
- Seminars, workshops, conferences, training courses, and exhibits;
- Facilities and equipment for storage and display of materials;
- Public library buildings;
- Television and VCR equipment for educational purposes;
- Assistance to voluntary organizations providing public library services;
- Assistance to children's libraries or children's sections of general public libraries

### **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.

Though the government has not adopted the recommendations as the official policy, but it serves as a suggestive model for the development of libraries as a whole. The recommendations under the Public Library System are as follows:

- ❖ The most important task before the government is to establish, maintain and strengthen the free public libraries in the country and enable them to work as a system.
- ❖ The main thrust in this area should go to the rural public library. A village or a village cluster with an adequate population should have a community library, which will also serve as an information center. Resources of different agencies engaged in the work of public health, adult education, local self government and such others may be pooled to build up this composite center.
- ❖ An important link should be established between the community library of the village and the village primary school. If the school does not have a library of its own, the community library should provide the children with an adequate book-corner.
- ❖ The community library should also importantly cater for adult education and make adequate audio-visual aids available to attract the illiterate villagers.
- ❖ The district library should serve as an apex library for each district with public libraries at city, town and village levels constituting important components in the district library system. In addition to the usual services to be rendered by it, it should also provide for learning facilities and recreation for the handicapped. Wherever possible, district libraries and comparable city public libraries should provide literature in Braille. The district library and branch libraries should also arrange mobile and circulating library services within its area wherever it is necessary and feasible. Special services should be rendered to hospitals, prisons, and the infirm in their homes.
- ❖ Libraries for special groups should be built in areas of tribal concentration or minority communities to develop their distinctive cultures. The government will provide all encouragement for such communities to develop their own libraries through voluntary effort.
- ❖ Each public library should have a section for children and, in addition, separate libraries for children with attractive books and audio-visual supporting materials should be established wherever possible.
- ❖ The district library will take the leadership in establishing linkages between all other public libraries of the district and work towards resource sharing within the area.
- ❖ The key role of public libraries as chief sustaining agencies of distance education should be recognized and they should be adequately equipped with the relevant resources for this purpose.
- ❖ All the libraries within a state should form part of a network extending from the community library of the village through intermediary levels to the district and to the State Central Library. This State network should eventually connect with the national level.
- ❖ The role of the State Central Library is crucial in networking and the establishment of uniform library procedures within the States. The State Central Library/Directorate of Public Libraries has to perform as the coordinating agency for public libraries in the State.
- ❖ To bring about the development of the public libraries in a State it is vital that each State enact its own library legislation. The Central Government should revise the Model Public Library Bill, which it has already prepared, in the light of experience gained in recent years and urge upon the States the importance of enacting such legislation. Finances for library development should be found by each State either from its general revenues or from local taxation.
- ❖ The Central Government should assist the State in the development of public libraries in a larger way than it has done so far. The Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation as the national agency for co-ordinating and assisting the development of public libraries be suitably strengthened enabling it to discharge its responsibilities effectively.



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