



DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN POST-INDEPENDENT INDIA: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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Abstract:- Public Library is a social institution with advancement of civilized literate society. The history of the evolution and growth of libraries is an essential chapter in history of the intellectual development of human beings. From the ancient period, India had library, there is evidence of well managed library in 6th Century AD, the Nalanda and Taxila University had library with huge collections of books. Like the ancient period, we also find evidences of library in medieval period of Indian history; Mughal Emperors like Babur, Humayan, Akbar are some examples who had established libraries. In real sense the development libraries in India begun from the British rule, the British Government took many initiatives for the development of public library in India. In post-independence period, Government and various non-government organizations play a significant role for the establishment of the Public Library in India. This paper is an attempt to trace the history of the growth and development of Public Libraries in India in post-independence period. This paper examines the various schemes, policies and steps taken by the Government of India for the spread of Public Library system in all over India and also discusses the circumstances which led to the development of the Public Library system in post-independent India.

0.00 Introduction: The term 'Library' is derived from the latin word 'Liber' which means 'book' or 'document', whereas Latinized Greek word, 'Bibliotheca' is the origin of the word for library in German, Russian and Roman language. 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 entury 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. The development of Public Libraries in the country gained momentum in the post-independence period. 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.

0.01 Methodology: In order to complete this task analytical and descriptive method is used. Sources are collected from the secondary sources which include books and various e-resources.

0.02 Objectives: The main objective of this paper are-

- To discuss the development of Public Libraries in post-independent India.
- To investigate the legislative action taken by the Government for the growth of Public Library network in the post-independence period.
- To discuss the role of Five-year plans for the improvement of Public Library service in India.

1.00 Discussion:

1.01 Development of Public Libraries in Post-Independent India: The Public Library is a kind of library which is accessible for public and is generally funded from public sources, such as 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. Transportation was poor and the mass media merely nominal. In such circumstances, it was challenging for Government to spread the Public Library system in India.

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.

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. Indian National Bibliography (INB) is being published by the Central Library of Calcutta.

1.02 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.

States of India those passed Public Libraries Act (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

1.03 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. The committee submitted its report to Dr. K.L. Shrimali (then Minister for Education, Government of India) on 12th November, 1958.

1.04 Role of Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation: One of the important steps taken by Central Government was the establishment of the Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) at Calcutta on May 22, 1972. The main objectives of the RRRLF are to develop library in general as well as in rural. It provides finances to the central and helps in spreading rural library network in union territories and many states.

1.05 Five-Year Plan and Growth of Public Library: One of the significant steps forward the development of the Public Libraries is to include scheme for the expansion and improvement of library service in five-year plan. In the following there is a discussion how the Public Libraries network developed during the plan:

1. 1st Five-Year Plan (1951-1956):- In this plan, Government of India include the scheme of 'improvement of library service'. This scheme planned to spread the network of libraries in all over the country. The proposal of setting up 'New Delhi National Central Library' was also made. This Plan decided to establish state central libraries in 9 states. The states are Assam, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, PEPSU, Rajasthan, Saurasthan, Bhopal and Vindhya Pradesh.

2. 2nd Five-Year Plan (1956-1961):- In this plan, special attention was given to establish districts libraries. The Government allocated about 140 lakhs funds to set up nationwide network of libraries in 320 districts. During this plan, the 'Institute of Library Science' at Delhi University was also established.

3. 3rd Five Year Plan (1961-1966):- In this plan, Government took steps to set up and developed four national libraries i.e., at Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. During this plan in 1964, the Planning Commission took a stock of library development. The working group submitted its report on 7th September, 1965 with some recommendations. Some of are mentioned as follows-

- State central library should be established in four states i.e., Madhya Pradesh, Mysore, Nagaland and Orissa.
- The state central library must have a children section.
- States which don't possess adequate functional buildings for their states central library should be provided with library buildings.
- A programme of book production should be undertaken etc.

4. 4th Five-Year Plan (1966-1974):- The Planning Commission made an appointment of working group on libraries, this group was consisted with Librarians and Educationist, with Prof. V.K.R.V. Rao as Chairperson. This group was formed to evoke a sound programme of library development.

5. 5th Five-Year Plan (1974-1979):- During this period, special emphasized on the infrastructure development of the libraries in the country. Strengthen of the buildings of libraries, collection and staff of the central and state libraries, as well as strengthen the district block and village level.

6. 6th Five-Year Plan (1980-1985):- This plan is significant for its interest towards the development of Public Libraries in rural area. Moreover, during this period, 26 states or union territories out of 31 (in 1981) had established state central libraries and 291 district libraries.

7. 7th Five-Year Plan (1985-90):- In 7th Plan, significant attention given to improvement of facilities at national level institutions. An important development was the 1986 adoption of National Library Mission, which emphasized the education of women and established of rural libraries. (There are two annual plans - 1990-91 and 1991-92).

8. 8th Five-Year Plan (1992-97):- In this plan, the Delhi Public Library was improved and created two new libraries in its services area. An important proposal was made to reorganize the Central Reference Library into the National Bibliographical and Documentation Center.

9. 9th Five-Year Plan (1997-2002):- In 9th plan, the Kolkata National Library was upgraded through the modernized its collection of building programs, reader services and conservation of library material. During this plan, funds were provided to Delhi Public Library and Central Secretarial Library, Delhi for collection of different language books. Funds were also provided to the Connemara Library, Chennai, Thanjavur Maharaja Serfoji's Saraswathi Mahal Library for the modernization and computerization of library system.

10. 10th Five-Year Plan (Action Plan):- During 10th plan, Planning Commission proposed for the future improvement of the Central and Public Libraries. Through RRRLF more attention was given to strengthen the Public Library.

1.06 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.

1.07 Conclusion: The Public Library network is varies in different parts of India, because of the difference in economic condition. There is still a gap between the rural and urban libraries; most of the rural libraries are less resourceful than urban libraries. Still these libraries are providing great opportunities to students and knowledge hungry citizens of India and with some necessary adjustments. We can multiply its effect to produce more human resources compared to present situation. The Public Library Act, which is important for the development of libraries in India, is enacted in some states and union territories, but some are still have to enact this act. For the equal development of the Public Library network services in all over India, all the states and union territories which should have enact the Public Library Act.

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