



INDIAN PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS: AN ORIGIN AND GROWTH

Dipankar Halder

Student, MLIS, NSOU, Kolkata, dipankarhalder99@gmail.com

Abstract: A public library is one that serves the entire population of community. Everyone in the community, regardless of nationality, race, colour, creed, age, sex, status, educational attainments, language or any other considerations has a claim to its services as a matter of right. The public library is generally established and maintained out of public funds under the mandate of legislations. There are libraries maintained by private agencies or registered societies which extend their facilities to the public and thus would qualify to be designated as public libraries. Public library service is generally free of charge. Some public libraries charge a nominal fee and such libraries are referred to as subscription libraries.

Keywords: Public library, Library service, Information service, Community service, Self education.

Introduction: The basic requirement for a library, in order to be accepted as a public library, is that the library should be open for use to all people in its area without any distinction whatsoever, irrespective of whether the library is supported by public funds or not, or whether its service is free or not. The modern definition of a public library as approved by the UNESCO and IFLA is “Public libraries are those libraries which serve the population of community or region free of charges and for a nominal fee.” A public library is a cess supported institution, serving a town, village, city country or other local area, which is owned and maintained by the public for utilisation of its learning materials for free service to the people of the area. Its basic function is to make books and other library materials available to all the citizens it serves. Public libraries provide materials for general reference and research, for continuing education, and for recreation. Many public libraries are small and can offer only basic reading materials. Large public libraries often provide materials for specialised reference and research coordinate events. Public libraries often serve as cultural centres with facilities for meetings; lectures often serve as cultural centres with facilities for meetings, lectures, exhibition and film show presentation. Areas which cannot serve by public libraries often provide library materials through mobile libraries.

Objective of Public Library System:

1. To help the lifelong self education of one and all.
2. To furnish up to date facts and in function to one and all.

3. To distribute in an unbiased and balanced way all shades of recorded views and thoughts to one and all as help in the discharge of their political functions in respect of local, national and international affairs.
4. To contribute to productivity drive by informing top management of the latest trends in diverse and technicians every piece of relevant new thought promptly and pin-pointedly.
5. To provide to one and all a harmless and elevating use of leisure.
6. To preserve the library remains of humanity for prosperity, as vehicles of culture and as a source material for antiquarian research.
7. To work for the continued social well being as the agency in charge of all socialised recorded thoughts.

Indian Scenario:

The concept of the public library emerged towards the end of the 19th century along with nationalism created by the activities of the Indian national congress. It was only by the middle of the 20th century that most of the Indian states accepted the need for library services as a vital root for of the reconstruction. The public library development is a state subject and they found it difficult to mobilise additional resources for this purpose. However most states and union territories have established state central libraries and libraries at the district, block and village levels. Such public libraries belong to various categories-government administered autonomous, semi autonomous or in the form of local library authority, library board or entirely privately managed.

In India, the tradition of learning has been strong since ancient times and libraries have always been necessary appendages of learning. These libraries, however valuable as they were, not instruments of mass education and hence did not form part of the public library structure in the country.

First Indian Public Library:

The first significant date the development of libraries for the public in India is 1808 when the Bombay Government initiated a proposal to register libraries which were to be given copies of books, published from the “Funds for the Encouragement of libraries.” By the middle of the 19th century, the three presidency towards of Bombay (Mumbai), Calcutta (Kolkata) and Madras (Chennai) led their “public libraries” founded mostly with the active support and initiative of the Europeans in these towns. They were not public libraries in the full sense of the term as these public libraries were founded in initiation of their western counterparts, the use of these libraries was confined to a thin upper layer of the society, Moreover they were subscription libraries. The movement spread to the other areas beyond the metropolises and by the end of 19th century, many of the district towns had their “Public Library”. Even some of the princely states, like Indore and Travancore-Cochin led the distinction to take advantage of these institutions due to illiteracy. The Calcutta public library was first attempt to set up a public library in British India at a meeting of eminent personalities of Calcutta on 20th August, 1835 which led to the establishment of the Calcutta public

library on 21st March, 1836. Connemara Public library (Chennai) established 1890. Khuda bakhsh oriental public library established 1891, Imperial library 1903, Delhi Public library 1951.

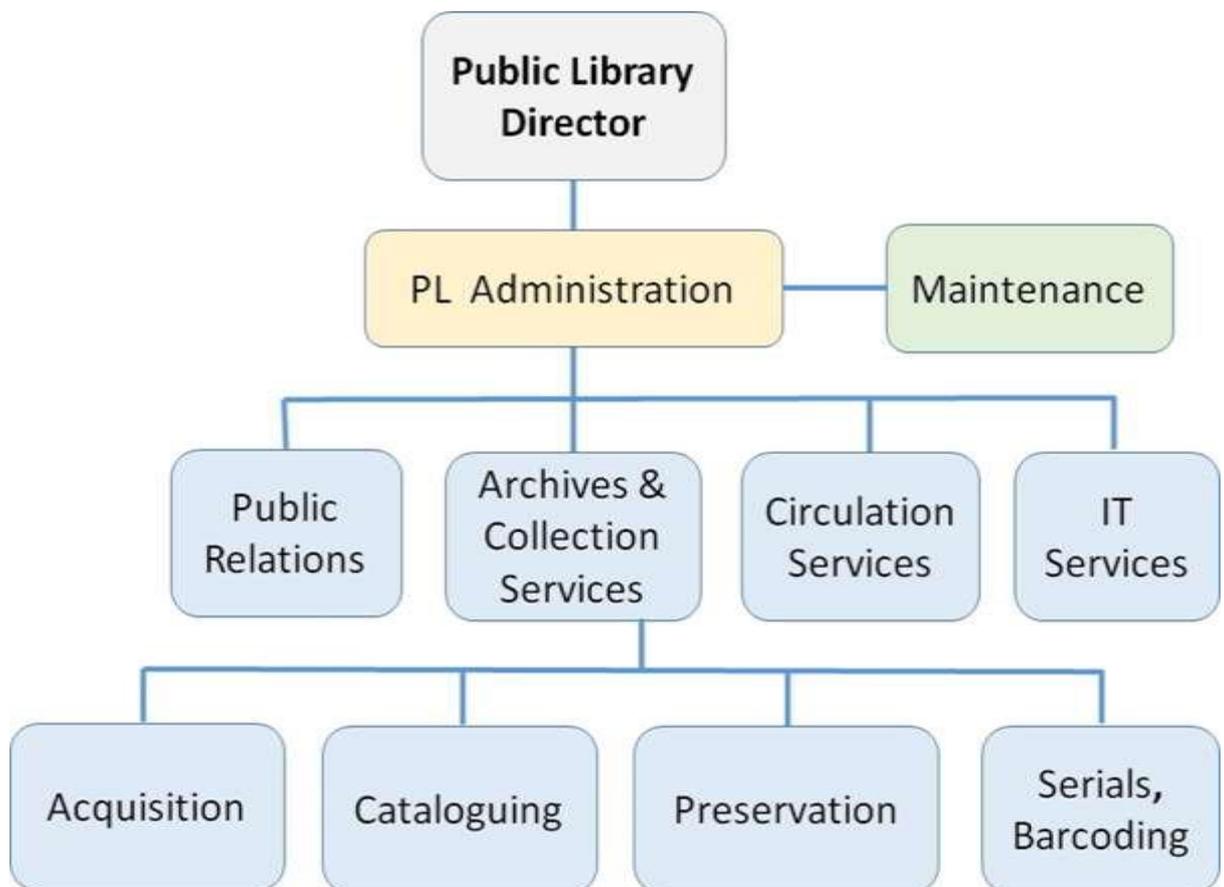
Public Library Act:

In 1867, the Government enacted the press and Registration of Books Act, under which the printer of a book was to deliver free to the provincial Government concerned a copy of the book and one or two more copies, if the provincial Government so desired. The additional copies were to be forwarded to the central government so desired. After independence public library act enhanced, 1957.

India is a diverse federal country with wide variations in geographical and educational backgrounds of its constituent states. Naturally, the size and pattern of libraries differ from state to state thus from the public library organizational point of view, the states and union territories can be classified into 19 states public library legislations.

- Tamil Nadu (1948)
- Andhra Pradesh (1960)
- Karnataka (1965)
- Maharashtra (1967)
- West Bengal (1979)
- Manipur (1988)
- Haryana (1989)
- Kerala (1989)
- Mizoram (1993)
- Goa (1993)
- Gujarat (2000)
- Orissa (2001)
- Uttaranchal (2005)
- Rajasthan (2006)
- Uttar Pradesh (2006)
- Lakshadweep (2007)
- Bihar (2008)
- Chhattisgarh (2009)
- Arunachal Pradesh (2009)

Structure of Public Library System:



Public Library Services:

The following key missions which relate to information, literacy, education and culture should be at core of public library services.

1. A public library serves its community through the provision of access to knowledge. Information works through a range of resource and services. It's does this through access to materials in any format in order to meet the needs of individuals and groups for education, information and personal development including recreation and leisure.
2. Public libraries have an important role in the development and maintenance of a democratic society by giving individuals access to a wide and varied range of information, ideas and opinions.
3. Public libraries serve as a first point of access for information for the general public and for the public's access to the national system and information services.
4. Creation and strengthening reading habits in children from an early age.
5. Supporting both individual and self conducted education as well as formal education at all levels.
6. Providing opportunities for personal creative development.
7. Stimulating the imagination and creativity of children and young people.

8. Promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievements and innovations.
9. Providing access to cultural expressions of all performing arts.
10. Fostering inter-cultural dialogue and favouring cultural diversity.
11. Supporting the oral tradition.
12. Ensuring access to for citizens to all sorts of community information.
13. Providing adequate information services to local enterprises associations and interest groups.
14. Facilitating the development of information and computer literacy skills.
15. Supporting and participating in literacy activities and programme for all age groups and initiating such activities if necessary.

Conclusion:

In the modern age, library has become a part and parcel of the culture life of man. Every village town, city or educational institution strives to have a library. A library caters to the verity needs of the people, belonging to different classes and creeds in each and every nook and corner of the world. Thus, public library is an institution for the people, by the people and of the people. Dr. S. R. Ranganathan , father of library science, defines public library” as a library owned and maintained by the public of its area for the socialization of its books and other kind of materials for free service to the people of the area”. A public library is free to all irrespective of age, profession, race, sex, colour or creed and provides free access to any literature required.

Reference:

1. Kumar, P S G : Foundations of Library and Information Science, BR Publishing corporation, Delhi, 2003, 131-133p.
2. Ranganathan, S R: Public Library Provisions and Documentation Problems, 1951, 22p.
3. Ranganathan, S R: Education and Library System : Bangalore, Mysore Library Association, 1971, 98-99p.
4. Maurios, Andre: Public Libraries and their Mison
5. <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=98125>
6. http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/25020/12/12_chapter_2.pdf
7. http://rrrlf.nic.in/OldWebsite/lib_legislation.asp
8. Government of India, Ministry of culture: National conference on Libraries towards a New vision, 2005, 127-128p.
9. Ranganthan , S R: Suggestion for Organization Libraries in India , Madras, 1945, 32-33p.
10. Raman Nair, R (Ed.): Public Library Development, Ess Ess Publication, New Delhi, 1993, 326-328p.
11. Trehan, G L: Modern Public Library, Literature House, Chandigarh, 1983, 52-54p.