



## Growth and development of public library system in India

Dr. Sontakke Shivaji Narayanrao\*

\*Vice-Principal and Librarian, Kai.Rasika Mahavidyalaya, Deoni, Dist. Latur, Maharashtra, India

**Citation:** Dr. Sontakke Shivaji Narayanrao (2024). Growth and development of public library system in India, *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(04) 11537-11538. Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i4.10975

### ARTICLE INFO

### ABSTRACT

With India's growing economy and status as an emerging world power, a new consciousness is developing in the country about the need to reinvest in public services. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) is an advisory body constituted by the Prime Minister to provide recommendations for improving India's knowledge infrastructure. As part of this Commission, a set of recommendations has been developed to improve India's long neglected library system. This article explores the implications of these recommendations, with a specific focus on India's public library system and the social development gains that are often associated with public libraries. The potential of India's public libraries to serve as community information centers (CICs) is highlighted, as well as the challenges that lie ahead in implementing a new vision for public library revitalization. The study serves as an invitation for concerted action, reflection, and dialogue with regard to this important and pressing issue.

**Keywords:** Ancient, Medieval, Modern, National, Imperial, Public, Library etc.

Library movement is a saga of organized growth and development of libraries giving the details of establishment, maintenance and functioning of libraries in a geographical proximity. These aspects viz., 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. The growth and development of public library system in India may be studied by categorizing it broadly into three groups:

1. Ancient libraries
2. Medieval Libraries
3. Modern libraries

### Modern Libraries:

The first landmark in the pre-independence history of the public library system in India is the enactment of delivery and registration of publications Act of Bombay government in May 1808.

### Establishment of the Imperial Library:

The first three decades of the 20th century can be marked as the golden period of Indian library system. On 31st Jan 1902 the Imperial Library Act was passed and Lord Curzon transformed the Calcutta Public Library into Imperial Library in 1906. Another two important landmarks in the pre independent history of public libraries in India are:

1. Baroda State Public Libraries Network of late Shri Sayajirao Gaikwad-III of Baroda. He invited Mr. M.A.Borden, an American Librarian in 1910 to introduce a scientifically organized free and open access public library system. He established stated wide free public library network in the state.
2. Organisation of Library Conferences: Series of conferences were organized in continuation of the Indian National Congress Sessions. A few of them are mentioned below:
  - a. The first Conference of Library workers and persons interested in Library Movement was held at Beswada, Andhra in 1914.
  - b. The first All India Library conference of Libraries was held in 1918 at Lahore.
  - c. The first All India Public Library Conference was held at Madras in 1934.
  - d. The first All India Library Conference was held at Calcutta in 1933.

### Post-Independent Period:

After independence the growth of libraries in general and public libraries in particular have been remarkable. But it is observed that the development of public libraries compared to the growth of other types of libraries are not so remarkable.

### National Library:

After independence in 1948, the name of the Imperial Library was changed to the National Library. The origin of National Library, Calcutta can be traced to the Calcutta public Library, which came into existence around 1836. 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 named the same as a National Library by the central government of India in 1948.

### Delhi Public Library:

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 contributed towards the improvement and expansion of public libraries after independence.

The most significant development after the Baroda Public Library Movement was the establishment of Delhi Public Library. The Public Library was started in 1951 as the first UNESCO Public Library Pilot Project under the joint auspices of UNESCO and the Government of India. The purpose of this library was to adopt "Modern Techniques to Indian Conditions" and to serve as a model public library for Asia. The Delhi Public Library provides completely free service to all taking into consideration the modern concept of public library service. The success of Delhi Public Library service is possible only with adequate finance, trained personnel and government patronage. But it is pity that the authorities have not paid due attention to improve it. The Delhi Public Library System reflects in the Poorly status of Public Library scene of India.

### Conclusion:

As we near the end of the twenty-first century's first decade, India appears to be on the cusp of major improvements in social development. A growing economy has buoyed the hopes and aspirations of a large segment of the population, but the benefits of this growth remain uneven. Thus, despite the rising world economic status of the country, a neglect of proper investments in the social sector and public services will ultimately hinder this growth and continue to create vast inequities in Indian society. As I have argued here in this article, an investment in public library services, while only a small and modest part of the solution, can make a large difference in the achievement of social development and education goals. A momentum around the public library issue is developing in the country and the time is ripe for enlightened action; if proper action is not taken, this moment may slip away, as others have in the past. National governments, ruling coalitions, and elected officials come and go and the National Knowledge Commission may in fact not live up to its potential. However, the library movement in India has received some much-needed momentum which will need to be sustained.

### References

1. Cohen, A. (2009). Learning spaces in public libraries. *Public Library Quarterly*, 28(3), 227-233. doi: 10.1080/01616840903106964
2. Donovan, J. M. (2008). Skating on thin intermediation: Can libraries survive? *Legal Reference Services*, 27(2-3), 95-116. doi: 10.1080/02703190802398581
3. Gordon, R. S., & West, J. (2008). Tech tips for every librarian. *Computers in Libraries*, 28(9), 54-55.
4. Houghton-Jan, S. (2007). Assessing staff on the competencies. *Library Technology Reports*, 43(2), 44-47.
5. Janes, J. (2007). But is it librarianship? *American Libraries*, 38(10), 34.
6. Welsh, T. S. & Higgins, S. E. (2009). Public libraries post-Hurricane Katrina: A pilot study. *Library Review*, 58(9), 652-659.
7. ALA Office for Information Technology and Policy. 1997. *The 1997 national survey of U.S. public libraries and the Internet*. Summary Results. Chicago: ALA.
8. Amey, L. J., and R. J. Smith. 1976. Combination school and public libraries, an attitudinal study. *Canadian Library Journal* 33:259.
9. Anderson, R., P. Wilson, and L. Fielding. 1988. Growth in reading and how children spend their time outside of school. *Reading Research Quarterly* 23:285-303.
10. Billman, Betty V., and Patricia Owens. 1985. School and public library cooperation: A prerequisite for cooperative collection development. *Collection Management* 7:183-95.
11. Black, Nancy E., Ken Roberts, and Valerie White. 1990. School assignments: A public library responsibility. In *The school library program in the curriculum*, edited by Ken Haycock, 145-46. Englewood, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited.
12. Fitzgibbons, Shirley A., and Verna Pungitore. 1989. The educational role and services of public libraries in Indiana. *Indiana Libraries* 8, 1-2.