

## Public libraries in India with special reference to Jammu and Kashmir: A study of systems services and future development plans

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### **Abstract:**

*Public library is an institution which provides priceless services to the society. It brings wide range of benefits by providing educational, recreational, inspirational and informational services and also provides access to digital resources to its readers.*

*The role of public libraries has changed with the rapid growth of ICT and changing information needs of the users. Now the time has come to keep new vision of public libraries in India as numbers of peoples are visiting public libraries for using their services, materials and programmes than ever before but communities need continue to change. This paper discusses about the public library system in India and the systems, services and future development plans of the public libraries in Jammu and Kashmir State. The main objective of this paper is to provide ICT resources and services to keep pace with vibrant knowledge based society. Jammu and Kashmir has yet to enact legislation. This paper will be useful to provide the enactment of library legislation in J&K state. It will be in the fitness of things that sound legislative foundations laid down for the total library system.*

**Key words:** public libraries, India, Jammu and Kashmir, systems services, future development plans

## **INTRODUCTION**

Several professional organisations have made concerned efforts to promote the cause of public libraries and create public awareness about their utility. UNESCO needs a special mention as it played a very vital role in promoting and popularizing the public library movement worldwide. Right from its inception in mid-forties of the past century, it has organised or supported a host of conferences and workshops to highlight the role of public libraries in the society.

To crown all this, it came forward with a public library manifesto, which has been updated from time to time in keeping with the changing social and technological environment. The latest version is of 1994 which defines public library as : “The public library, a local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision making and cultural development of the individual and social group”. Ranganathan defines a public library as:” An institution maintained for and by the community primarily for social purpose of providing easy opportunity for self education through the life of every person of the community.”

Right from the inception of human, education has playing a very important role in the integrated development of individual and society. We cannot imagine a society or a nation without education. Without education society is as good as early society of the Stone Age. Education has changed the thinking of the present society and has brought many changes and innovative ideas to resolve the human day to day problems and has also removed the language and culture barriers of the world at large.

## **DEFINITION OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

A public library is an entity that is established under state enabling law or regulators to serve a community, district, or region.

A public library is a library that is accessible by the general public and is generally funded from public sources, such as taxes. It is operated by librarians and library professionals, who are also civil servants.

A public library is an organisation established, supported and funded by the community, either through local, regional or national government or through some other form of community organisation. It provides access to knowledge, information and works of the imagination through a range of resources and services and is equally economic and employment status and educational attainment.”

On the basis of above definition; public library is an institution

1. Which is established under the mandate of law
2. Which is maintained and run by the public funds, taxes etc. And
3. Which is accessible by the general public at free and is open for all.

## **OBJECTIVES OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

1. Help the people to meet the educational, informational and personal development needs including recreational.
2. Provide documental and informational services to all people.
3. Preserve the reading material
4. Provide access to wide and varied range of knowledge.
5. Assist lifelong learning and self education.
6. Provide current information on all subjects.
7. Work for social well being.

8. Provides ICT resources and services to keep pace with vibrant knowledge based society.
9. Support the cultural and educational activities.

## **SERVICES PROVIDED IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

1. Charging and discharging of documents
2. Reprographic and printing services
3. Newspaper clipping services
4. Inter library loan
5. Reservation of books
6. Reference services
7. Library orientation service
8. Extinction services
9. Internet service
10. OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue)
11. Readers advisory service
12. Bibliographic and documentation services

## **PUBLIC LIBRARY FINANCIAL SYSTEM**

It is a well known fact that public libraries are established and maintained by law to cater informational needs of people free of charge. To full fill the objective, sufficient and continuous supply of money is must to provide the effective services. Generally, the main sources of public library finance are:

### **I. Government Sources:**

1. Local bodies and cooperative societies
2. State government
3. Central government

### **II. Library Cess:**

1. Cess with matching grant from the state government
2. Cess without grant but state government meeting establishment charge in lieu of it

III. Self generated income:

1. Overdue charges
2. Xerox coping/ printing
3. Interests on investments
4. Fee from users

IV. Savings:

1. Saving generated from through networking of libraries, library resources sharing

V. Other sources:

1. Gifts
2. Endowments and donations

## **GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN INDIA**

With the growth in education, literacy and publication, public libraries arose worldwide. Every country has its own public library history and India is no exception. Libraries were established in India mainly by the patronage extended by emperors, major capitalists and scholars. Libraries established by kings and capitalists functioned like private institutions and their use was permitted to the privileged ones.

In the history of public libraries in India His Highness Sayaji Rao Gaekwad III, Maharaja of Baroda, set up a milestone of Public Library System in 1919. He thought that libraries should be opened for all not only for English. He also setup a Library Department with help of Mr. W. A. Borden who took over the charge as first Director of State Libraries. A Central Library at Baroda was established with a nucleus collection of 88, 764 volumes including 20,000 books from the personal collection of Maharaja.

There are some notable public libraries having national recognition in India and has very much importance in the history of public libraries in India. There are six public libraries

of National Importance which are administrated by Ministry of Art and Culture. All the six libraries have their own history.

**Rampur Raza Library** – It is located in Uttar Pradesh, India; was founded in 1774 by Nawab Faizullah Khan. It is of the largest libraries of Asia. After independence in 1975, the Government of India took over the library under Union Ministry. It has more than 17000 manuscripts in Arabic, Persian, Pashto, Sanskrit, Urdu, Hindi and Turkish languages. Besides this, it has collection of more than 60000 printed books in Indian and foreign languages.

**National Library of India**- The history of the National Library of India started from the foundation of Calcutta Public Library in 1836. It is the largest library of India. In 1891 imperial library was founded but the use of library was permitted only to government officers who were superior in rank. Later, Imperial library was merged with the Calcutta public library, and then in 1903 Imperial library was opened to the public. After Independence, it was declared as National Library of India.

**Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library**-The Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library is located in Patna Bihar. It has been named after Kuda Baksh who was Chief Justice of Nizam's Cort Hyderabad in 1895. Earlier, it was founded as private library in 1880 by Khuda Baksh with 1400 manuscripts inherited from his father Mohammad Baksh. It has approx 21, 136 manuscripts in different languages like Arabic, Persian, Urdu and others. Besides this, it has 2,082,904 printed books.

**Central Secretariat Library (CSL)**- It was established in 1891. It was validated by the Imperial Library Act of 1901 and is housed in Calcutta. Earlier it was shelved with collection received from the amalgamation of resources of old institutions.

It was shifted to Delhi in 1912 with the shifting of the Capital to Delhi and was housed in the old secretariat building, Civil lines Delhi. Central Secretariat Library is also rich in collection of about 6 lacks printed and non printed documents in different languages. It has very big collection of govt. Publications.

**Thanjavur Maharaja Serfoji's Sarasvati Mahal Library** –

It is founded in 1918 is located in Thanjaver , Tamil Nadu and is administered by a committee constituted by state and central Govt. Earlier it was founded for the Nayak King of Thanjavur who ruled during 1535-1675 AD. It is also one of the oldest libraries in Asia. It has rare collection which comprises over 60000 volumes of Palm leaf manuscripts written in different Indian languages. A part form this, there are 1342 bundles of Maratha Raj records which were written in fast script for Devanagri of the Marathi language. Today, library has computerized all the activities.

**Delhi Public Library-** Delhi Public Library was initiated as a project with UNESCO by Govt. of India in 1951. Earlier, it was started as a small public library in old Delhi near railway station; now it has developed as Public Library System of Delhi. It has been accorded status of National Depository Centre also. It works as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Art and Culture. It serves the people of Delhi with great collection of books approx 18 Lacks in Hindi, English and different Indian languages. It has great network of public libraries and through its portal it shares the information regarding collection of all the public libraries in Delhi.

There are two more libraries which are one of the 4 National Depositories i.e. Connemara Public Library and Asiatic Society of Bombay.

**Connemara Public Library** – It was founded by Bobby Robert Bourke on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 1890 in Chennai city and was

dedicated to the public in 1896. It got the status of State Central Library w.e.f. April 1, 1950. It has been magnificently constructed and designed by H.Irvin. It has also been given the status of National Depository of India.

**The Asiatic Society of Bombay** – It was established by Sir James Mackintosh in 1804. It is located in Mumbai, India. It holds more than 10,000 books in its collection with the majority of books in English language and other Indian languages and it also has wide range of books in Greek, European, and Latin, German and French languages. In total, it has approx 2,42,645 documents.

### **After Independence**

Just after independence in 1947, it is was a challenge to strengthen education in the country; it was felt that the public libraries can provide documental and informational services for all people and can meet their individual requirements for education , information and personal development.

In 1957, Govt. Of India established an Advisory Committee (Sinha Committee) for libraries. In 1958 Committee reported the unsatisfactory public library services throughout the country and besides other recommendations. Specifically recommended State Governments to accept the responsibility for public library services in their respective states by levying library cess.

Important recommendations reported are as follows:

1. There should be a coordinator between public libraries and other types of libraries
2. Training of librarians and semi-professional staff for all type of libraries
3. Responsibility should be shared between central and state government for providing public library services to people
4. Establishment of Directorate of libraries in each state.



5. Directorate of Libraries should be headed by qualified Director.
6. The working Group emphasize the enactment of legislations.

### **NATIONAL POLICY ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SYSTEM (NAPLIS)**

In 1985 a committee was set up under the chairmanship of Prof. P. Chattopadhyay to formulate a National Policy on Library & Information System (NAPLIS) (Chatoopadhyay, 1998). The major aim of policy was to suggest the steps to improve the existing public libraries in the modern context. The Committee was its report in May 1986. To follow up the recommendations of the earlier committee, another committee was empowered to look at implications of the report and created an action plan for its implementation (Bhattacharjee 1999). The committee submitted its report in 1988.

### **Given below are recommendations of NAPLIS for public libraries:**

- A Model Public Library Bill was proposed according to which funds should be available from State Govt. From general revenue or taxes and contribution from central govt. may also be part of plan expenditure.
- Every village should have CCL (Community Centre Library). It should also be equipped with audio and visual systems. All the agencies and Govt. should also coordinate for this.
- More funds should be allocated from Central Govt. to develop the public libraries.
- District Library should serve as an apex library for the district and should lead for coordination among all the libraries
- More facilities should be provided to handicapped and under-privileged classed.

- Standard guidelines are required for public libraries.
- A National Commission on Libraries and Information System or National Commission on Informatics and Documentation may be constitutes.
- RRRLF may be accorded the status of an Institution of national importance

In 2005, National Knowledge Commission was established with the aim to underpin the growth of the country and to respond global challenges efficiently. The commission submitted its recommendations to the Prime Minister in December 2006 which were published in 2007.

**The major recommendations of the commission are as follows:**

1. Central govt. should set up a National Mission on Libraries to look into the libraries related matter so as to meet the informational needs of citizens.
2. To prepare a national census of all the libraries this would help for baseline planning.
3. To keep the library and information science abreast of latest developments, necessary steps should be taken with regard to training, research and education in the field.
4. Libraries and staff should be so organized that they are able to perform relevant services for the user community
5. Digitization should be encouraged for enabling the equitable and universal access to the knowledge resources.
6. Facilitate the donation of books and preserve the same for posterity.

## **NATIONAL MISSION ON LIBRARIES**

In pursuance of the recommendations of the NKC, Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India initiated “National Mission on Libraries” in 2012 with the aim to upgrade the public library serving to the public in the country. The scheme has four components;

- 1<sup>st</sup> component of the scheme is to create the National Virtual Library of India (NVLI) which would provide access to knowledge resources at all levels through an open source platform.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> component of the scheme is to set up MNL model libraries to meet the needs related to recreation and culture of the community; providing free access to all the government and institutional documents. NML will help to improve the 35 State Central libraries, 35 District libraries and 6 libraries under the Ministry of Culture.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> component of the scheme is to get the quantitative and qualitative survey of libraries conducted to find out the users’ satisfaction with services, collection etc. and to find out that the libraries are meeting the demands of the users or not.
- 4<sup>th</sup> component of the scheme is to Capacity Building of library personnel by organizing workshops, trainings and seminars about handling technology and online resources etc.

## **DIGITAL LIBRARY OF INDIA**

The project Digital library of India is a significant initiative taken by Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India to provide free to access digitized searchable collection for 24X7. The portal was launched in 2003 .It is an initiation with Collaboration of Mellon University (CMU). Pittsburgh and is being hosted by

Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. And many other institutes like CMU, IIIT-H, NSF, ERNET and MCIT and 21 major centres are participating in the project. 480329 books in different languages of the world have been scanned till 26 March, 2015 as reported on portal of Digital Library of India.

## **PUBLIC LIBRARY ACT**

An act or a bill gives legal provision or format; which is passed through legislative process of a particular nation and becomes law. "In relation to libraries, the library act provides library systems, its maintenance, services, functions, rights and management under any state and national government. As it is well known that public libraries are the social institutions, its aim is to provide free services to citizens. Legislation is the way which ensures and lays down the structure and help to provide better services to its users.

## **PUBLIC LIBRARY ACT IN DIFFERENT STATES**

Sr. No	Name of the State	Bill Passed
1	Tamilnadu	1948
2	Andhra Pradesh	1960
3	Karnataka	1965
4	Maharashtra	1967
5	West Bengal	1979
6	Manipur	1988
7	Haryana	1989
8	Kerala	1989
9	Mizoram	1993
10	Goa	1993
11	Odisha	2001
12	Gujarat	2001
13	Uttaranchal	2005
14	Rajasthan	2006
15	Uttar Pradesh	2006
16	Lakshadweep	2007
17	Bihar	2008
18	Chhattisgarh	2009

## **CONTRIBUTION OF S.R. RANGANATHAN TOWARDS PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN INDIA**

Dr. S. R Ranganathan was a great personality and had a great sense of thinking. His contribution towards library science is unforgettable. He is known as father of library science. His contribution towards public libraries is also appreciable. His visionary thinking realized him the importance of library legislation for promotion and development of library movement in India (Siddiqui, 2006).

During his visit of United Kingdom in 1924, he observed the functioning, system and services of various libraries which convinced him the need of library legislation in India. In 1925 when he returned from United Kingdom, he drafted a , Model Library Act” and it was discussed in the first All Asia Educational Conference held in December 1930. It was appreciated. It was published by Madras Library Association and later it was amended twice in 1957 and 1972.

In 1946, Ranganathans old student Mr. Avinashalingam Chettiar, became the Education Minister in Madras State. Dr. S.R. Ranganathan met him with a copy of Model Library Act and got promise to get it enacted. Mr. Avinashalingam Chettiar also made efforts and ultimately the Bill got enacted in 1948 in Madras. Hence, India got first public library act. Late on, he drafted a number of model bills for many states.

## **PUBLIC LIBRARY NETWORK**

Public libraries all over the world are struggling to find a new, unique and vital source of value. ICT and internet technologies have changed the nature of libraries in all the sectors, and they have also change the perception and expectations of the user community .. A large number of Library resource networks like the Metropolitan Area Networks such as Ahmedabad Library Network (ADINET), CALIBNET (Calcutta Library Network) in

Calcutta, BONET (Bombay Library Network), etc. are under various stages of development and implementation. The limitation of financial resources and space for housing library collection in the libraries in Delhi led to the promotion of sharing of resources by automation and networking and establishment of the DELNET (Developing Library Network) in 1988.

But, it is important to discuss the West Bengal Public Library Network which provides facility of digital collection through a portal of all the public libraries. Its wide range accessibility brings the library at door step of the users.

Delhi Public Libraries are also in a common network through a portal and share their collection through union catalogue.

Directorate of Public Libraries, Tamilnadu has a great network of 32 District libraries along with Connemara Public Library which have been automated using Integrated Library Management Software (ILMS) called Koha. Its portal provides integrated web-OPAC as well as personal web-OPAC of each library. Document Delivery Service is also being provided to users on cost.

Department of Public Libraries, Andhra Pradesh is administered under the Andhra Pradesh Public Library Act, 1960. A.P Grandhalaya Parshad does the task of policy making. The Directorate looks after the library services in the state and maintains the integrated comprehensive library systems, It provides access of web-OPAC which has full bibliographic information of collection existing in the 22 District Libraries, 6 Regional Libraries and 1 Central State Library

## **PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR**

The Jammu and Kashmir is situated in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent. The territory is bounded on the north by Afghanistan and China, on the east by China, on the south by

the state of Himachal Pradesh and the state of Punjab in India, and on the west by the North-West Frontier Province and the Punjab Province of Pakistan, The entire State of Jammu & Kashmir has an area of 222,236 sq km. India presently holds only 100,569 sq km, whereas Pakistan holds 78, 932 sq km and China 42735 sq km. The Indian administered are is divided into 21 administrative districts, 59 Tehsils, 6,652 villages and 75 towns with total population of 10,143,700 and the Pakistan administered Kashmir consists of 8 district, 19 sub-divisions.

## **EDUCATION IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR**

The State has several renowned institutions of higher learning, providing high-quality education in the fields of medicine, engineering and management. There are 14171 Primary Schools, 6665 Elementary Schools, 1194 Secondary Schools, 597 Senior Secondary Schools, 95 Degree Colleges, 4 Engineering Colleges, 4 Medical Colleges, Universities, 1 Deemed University, 12 Polytechnic Institutes and 37 Industrial Training Institutes.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARIES IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR**

The valley of Kashmir has been endowed by nature with the beautiful atmosphere. The Kashmiri have derived full inspiration from their amiable surroundings and produces a galaxy of philosophers, scholars, poets and chroniclers. Hiuen-Tsang, a Chinese traveller, visited South Kashmir in 629-645 A.D. The king of Kashmir invited the pilgrim to read and expound the scriptures, gave him twenty clerks to copy out manuscripts and five men to act as attendants. These details amply prove the existence of a splendid place Library of Kashmir. Reading manuscripts was a regular feature and there was provision for copying them. It was again during 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>

century A.D; Kashmir produced the world personalities like famous historian poet Kalhana, the author of a famous book Rajtarangini, Patanjali, the immortal grammarian; Charka, the great physician, Abhinavagupta, the great Philosopher and other famous philosophers. The practice of learning flourished during this period. The local Muslim rulers also made some exemplary effort in educational development of the valley, Sultan Shihab-ud-Din (1354-1373 AD) at the instance of shah Hamdan established the first College for study of Quran known as Madrastul-Quran and Sultan Qutub-ud-Din (1373-1389 AD) built a college in his headquarters at Qutbudinpora in Srinagar and named it after himself. He also laid the foundation of residential system of education in Kashmir which provided for free association of teachers and pupils after formal hours of instruction. Sultan Sikander (1389-1413) was an exceedingly generous man and his liberal patronage of letters attracted learned men from Iraq and Khuransan and trans-oxiana in such numbers that became an example to the courts of other provinces. He established a college called college of Jami Masjid Zain-ul Abidin( 1420-1470 AD) son of Sultan Sikander love for learning. A translation bureau was also established under the auspices of the university. It was here that books were translated from Arabic and Sanskrit to Persian and Kashmiri. He spent huge sums on the collection of a library for the university. He sent out agents to different parts of the world to secure books and manuscripts for library, which equalled the leading libraries of the time in Turkistan and Iran and which existed for a century. Late on, Hussain Shah Chak founded a great college which was known as Madras-i-Hussain Shah in the Hussain Angan locality (which now a days is part of downtown area) with a library and a free hostel. Revenue coming from large portion of land in Srinagar was reserved for the maintenance of hostel and library. During the later years Kashmir passed into hand of Mughals, Afghans and Sikhs.



## **DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR**

Jammu and Kashmir as a single political entity was founded by Maharaja Gulab Singh under the infamous Amritsar treaty signed by him with the British government in March 1846. At initial stage no attention was given towards the development of libraries by Dogra rulers. However, the later links in the hierarchy of this dynasty began allocating some of their revenue towards the development of education and free book service. Accordingly two major public Libraries were established by Maharaja Ranbir Singh and Maharaja Pratap Singh in 1879 and 1898 at Jammu and Srinagar respectively. These two libraries at Jammu and Srinagar and are acting as State rules i.e. Sri Ranbir Singh (SRS) Library and Sri Pratap Singh (SP) Library and are acting as State Central Libraries irrespective divisions. With the development of political consciousness among the people triggered by the local educated youth several book clubs were started in the important towns in the state by the young and progressive people. These clubs used to circulate books worth any cost among their members. One such club established reading room at Fateh Kadal in 1931 under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, which later on became nucleus of Kashmir freedom struggle.

### **POST 1947 DEVELOPMENT**

After 1947 different initiatives were taken by State and Central governments for the improvement of libraries in the State. One of the initiatives was extension of free books service to the villages under the National Extension Service Scheme. In every Panchayat Ghar small libraries were opened with the books mostly on agriculture. At the town level, the town area committees established their own libraries to provide free

reading rooms. But the most of these libraries could not continue due to political and administrative unrest in the State.

## **ESTABLISHMENT OF DIRECTORATE OF LIBRARIES**

However, in order to create, promote and sustain a well knit public library system, the State Government took a giant step to set up a separate Directorate of Libraries and Archives in 1961. Prof. S. Bashir-ud-Din, a renowned librarian of his time, was appointed as its first director. The directorate gave new impetus to the library service in the state and devised a plan under which district and branch libraries were established. The directorate also appointed two research officers as subject experts, one for classification and cataloguing of Hindi and Sanskrit manuscripts and other for Persian and Arabic manuscripts. The Government also framed rules and regulations named as the Jammu and Kashmir Library and Reading Room Rules-1963, for guidance of public and library personnel, in order to improve the harmonious relations between the two. These rules define the duties of the Director, Librarian and clearly laid down the categories of persons who can become the members of such libraries. The important features of these rules are that no security money is to be deposited by any category of members except, of course, for temporary membership where the security deposit has been fixed as rupees twenty. However, these rules are too old and call for a change in present day situations.

### **Library Association: Efforts of Prof. P.N. Kaula:**

Prior to 1947, there was only one trained Librarian in the state, viz. Prof. Prithvi Nath Kaula.. He wrote an outline scheme for the development of libraries in the state. He also wrote a book "Kashmir main lmi Inqalab". He also submitted a plan for the development of libraries in the state to the then Prime Minister of the state Mr. Sheikh Mohammad Abdulah in 1951. It bears

an introduction by Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, the then president, Indian Library Association. Unfortunately political developments change the priorities in the state. The Prime Minister of the state had agreed to enact Library legislation, but before it could have been done his government was dismissed in 1953. In 1956 at the invitation of the Education secretary of Jammu and Kashmir, Professor Kaula examined the working of the SPS Library, Srinagar and submitted his scheme for its reorganization and development. Between 1951 and 1964 three attempts were made for the formation of a library association for the promotion of library culture in the state. But due to lack of cooperation from authorities and non availability of sufficient funds there was no success. However on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 1964 a convention of librarians in Kashmir was held. It was presided over by Mr. M.H. Razvi of Jammu and Kashmir University Library. The main outcome of this convention was the formation of an ad-hoc committee consisting of seven members. On the recommendations of ad-hoc committee J&K Library association (JKLA) came into being on 19<sup>th</sup> June 1966(5/). Though this association and the blessing of the State Government and expert advice of the Director of libraries and many philanthropists this could not achieve the high ideals for which it came into being.

### **Randhawa Committee:**

With a view to go into the working of the Directorate of Libraries Research and Museum the then Chief Minister, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, appointed a committee vide Government order no 1867-GD of 1975, dated 18<sup>th</sup> September, 1975 the committee was headed by Dr. M.S. Randhawa the then Vice Chancellor of Punjab Agriculture University, as Chairman and Prof. Noor-ul-Hassan Khan the then Head, Department of Library and information Science, University of Kashmir as one of the members to go into the working of the Directorate of Libraries and also to recommend how the

Directorate could contribute aggressively to promote library services in the State. The Committee submitted its report on 10<sup>th</sup> August, 1976. Some of the recommendations of the Committee are given below:

- a. **Library Legislation:** the committee reaffirmed that Library legislation was the every basis for the development of a public library system that can ensure free library service, adequate funding, and maintenance of proper library standards. It recommended library legislation for the state on the pattern of Tamil-Nadu.
- b. **Funds:** the committee recommended levying of a library cess of 5 paisa per rupee on property tax and provision of regular grants to ensure adequate and regular funding for promotion and maintenance of a standard library service in the state
- c. **Structure of Public Libraries:** In order to have public libraries at different levels committee recommended following structure of the public library system;
  1. **Separate State Central Librans in Jammu and Kashmir provinces;**
  2. **District Libraries in all the districts;**
  3. **Tehsil Libraries;**
  4. **Block Libraries; and**
  5. **Village Libraries.**

The committee also recommended the introduction of mobile library vans in the Central Libraries so that services are offered in remote areas. Besides, the above recommendations the Committee also made various other recommendations for smooth functioning of Directorate of Libraries and Research viz. role, operation and duties. The above recommendations were submitted to the Chief Minister by Dr. M.S. Randhawa, Chairman of the committee. But due to one reason or the other the State Government has not been able to do much to implement these recommendations.

## **PRESENT SITUATION OF LIBRARIES**

Presently public libraries in the state are managed by Directorate of Libraries and Research. The Director is assisted by two Deputy Directors one each in Jammu and Kashmir provinces. The present structure of the Public library system in the State can be categorized as under:

**State Central Libraries -2**

**City Central Libraries- 2**

**District Libraries -14**

**Tehsil Libraries- 50**

**Block Libraries -71**

In 1961, a separate Department of Libraries, Research and Museum was created in J&K and district libraries set up at Srinagar, Anantnag, Baramulla, Leh, Doda and Udhampur. In 1977 and 1982, the Department was amalgamated with Achieves Department and Education Department, respectively. However, in 1986, the Department of Libraries reassumed its independent character as Department of Libraries and Research. In order to promote the culture of book reading, the Department holds books exhibitions, seminars and debates at district level every year.

Furthermore, Research and Publication division possesses around 2,500 manuscripts. These are presently digitized by Indra Gandhi National Centre arts (IGNCA) New Delhi with funding from National Mission for manuscripts. The Mission has their responsibility to digitize the manuscripts available throughout the country for maximum exploitation and global use. Once the project is complete the manuscripts are to be hosted on the server of IGNCA for worldwide exploitation on subscription basis. On completion IGNCA shall hand over one copy of digitized format of these manuscripts to the Directorate of Libraries and Research. So far project team has digitize around 1200 manuscripts comprising of 5,00,000 folios. The

manuscripts in the library mainly are in Persian, shard and Sanskrit languages. The project team started its work in Sept. 2005 for a period of three months and again resumed work in Sept. 2006 and are optimistic to complete the assignment by March 2007.

The Department of Libraries and & Research is engaged in dissemination of knowledge by providing free library and reading room facilities to public in Jammu and Kashmir. The Department runs a chain of public libraries in blocks, tehsils, districts and divisions of the State. From small children to aged people and students to scholars, every section of the society is benefited from the facility. Besides making books on various subjects available to people at public libraries, the reading community is also provided national and local newspapers and magazines to keep them abreast with the latest happenings around the globe. Special Children Corners have been added to central and District Libraries for the benefit of the younger generation. By way of promotion of book writing in the State, the Department purchases books written by local authors on different subjects and in different languages.

The Department has a prized collection of manuscripts, presently housed in the Oriental Research Library, Hazratbal. This treasure of 5824 manuscripts in various languages and scripts like Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Balti, Hindi, Sharda, and Kashmiri, is considered to be one of the richest manuscripts collections in South Asia.

The activity of the Department helps in the promotion of regional languages of the State. The Department has now added to its library collections books on competitive examinations to help the student community prepare for these examinations. There are 139 public libraries and lending depots/reading rooms in the State.

## **AUTOMATION AND NETWORKING OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES PROJECT (PILOT PHASE)**

As a significant step towards modernizing and improving public library services in Jammu & Kashmir, the department of Libraries & Research has started implementation on the automation & networking of public Libraries project (Pilot phase) costing Rs.116.72 lacks. The project was launched by minister of tourism & culture, Nawang Rigzin Jora, on October 28<sup>th</sup> 2011. Under the pilot phase, four main public libraries viz. SRS Central Library, Jammu, SPS Central Library, Srinagar, Oriental Research Library, Hazratbal and City Central Library, Karan Nagar have been taken up for automation and networking. In the subsequent phase, district, tehsil, and block libraries would be added to the network.

On completion, the project would result in the public library facilities in J & K switching over from manual to automated mode and allowing online access to library information. Other public libraries located throughout the state would be taken up for automation and networking in subsequent phase.

The project is being implemented with the assistance of National Informatics Centre, (NIC), and Government of India. It is for the first time that a modern library system will finally take shape in Jammu & Kashmir. For the purpose, state of the art hardware and communication infrastructure have been installed and made operational at these sites with the technical support from National Informatics Centre (J & K). In coming months, the state of Jammu & Kashmir would have its own internet based public library network for library users, researchers and students. The NIC designed e-Granthalaya library management software and digital library software is being used for automation and networking of the libraries. The internet platform through public library portal will enable access to information on public library collection in the state.

The modernization programme will also strengthen the library staff of 140 public libraries in the state to provide services and management of their activities in an efficient manner. As part of the project, two workshops are being organised at Jammu and Kashmir to train public library staff in the use of latest information and communication tools.

## **FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

1. There is an urgent need to recruit the professional and non professional staffs in all the public libraries as various positions are lying vacant.
2. Public libraries should have their own building at the central place of locality for easy accessibility by the users.
3. Public libraries should act as community information centre, and thereby it plays pivotal role in spreading community awareness, government's plans benefits and e-governance programme.
4. ICT infrastructure with wireless capability is required to be added.
5. Skill and competency development programmes like training/ workshop/ orientation and refresher courses for public librarians should be compulsory.
6. Collection needs to be enriched according to the needs of different category of users.
7. Interactive web portal for public library should be developed.
8. With increasing public access to new technologies and social media, the role of public libraries has changed significantly and hence, promotion of every activity should be done through newspapers, face book, whatsapp and twitter.
9. There is an urgent need to involve the communities in the organisation, management and monitoring of public library services.



10. Provision for separate sections for children literature, senior citizens and women should be developed.
11. Library should offer physical and content excess to people with disabilities on the basis of their special needs.
12. Public library should conduct user's surveys for feedback regarding their system and services.
13. Advocacy tools for the promotion of public libraries services should be developed.
14. Social cultural activities like Book club, cultural exhibitions should be organised and consumer health information services should be provided by the public libraries.
15. Fully automation of the libraries are must. Switching over to OPAC has made the task quite easy. Similarly, other library operations like maintaining circulation records, creating indexes, answering reference queries etc. Have become quite easy with the exploitation of this technology.
16. Outreach services have the potential to break down barriers in communication and bring

Unique library services to population. The outreach services are a resource for those who cannot easily access library for variety of reasons. In order to make public library movement a success time has come to take into fold every citizen of society. This can be achieved by providing document in various formats and need based information to senior citizens, patients, prisoners and physically challenged people at their respective places.

## **CONCLUSION**

To sum up, the overall situation of public libraries in J & K is not very encouraging. The study has revealed that all the libraries included in the present research are confine only the routine task of collecting, organising the reading material and are providing circulation services, reference service and OPAC etc. But facing many problems like lack of qualified professional staff, insufficient financial support and infrastructure. In the

present day context, all the public libraries have to supplement their services with the latest information and communication technology gadgets to facilitate informal self education of all peoples in the community, to support the educational, informal and recreational activities and constructive use of leisure.

Hence, public libraries of J&K need revitalization and time is ripe enough for an enlightened action. There is a requirement for redesigning long range planning and financial assistance allocation, The public libraries in J&K need immediate revision and it can be concluded here that state government should take immediate steps to enactment of library legislation and implement the Jammu and Kashmir public library act keeping in view the ICT environment which would definitely develop public libraries across the length of the state. Only then, the next generation of the state would be in a position to compete with others in transforming information society into knowledge society.

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