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Role of Indian Library Professional Associations in Public Libraries: Its Promotion and Implementation

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Abstract

Public Libraries play a significant role in the development of society. Library legislation broadly means legal permission for establishing a public library system and its maintenance, service, function, and management under any state or national authority. This paper discusses the importance of the public library in India and the role of an Indian library professional association. The evolution and status of the public library movement and the professional association of library and information science discipline in India has been reviewed critically. The study emphasizes on the requirement and successful implementation of library legislation for the development of Indian public libraries. The paper discusses the Indian states which have implemented public library legislation and the role of Indian library professional associations in the promotion and development of the public libraries in India. The purpose of Indian Library Professional Associations in helping these states to implement the library legislation has also been studied.

Keywords: *Public Library, Library Professional Association, Indian Public Library*

1. Introduction

Education plays a significant role in the knowledge society. Hence education is the essential need for all persons to fulfil their personal aspiration, financial stability and in developing their personality which in turn helps them to contribute for the society. Education is for self-empowerment, help to undertake research and solve problems of the society, seek jobs and provide jobs ,etc. Education helps to understand oneself better, it helps to realise one's potential and qualities as a human being. It helps to tap into one's hidden potential, so that he may be able to sharpen his/her skills.

The primary goal of public libraries is to provide the society all the relevant information in fruitful environment free of the cost and best place for lifelong learning. Main feature of the public library is that these are free to use by the society, and provide all types of facilities to the society members without any restriction like caste, religion, age, color, education level, communities etc. According to IFLA/UNESCO Public Library (**Manifesto, 1994)** "The Public Library, the local gateway

to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision making and cultural development of the individual and social groups."

(Biswas, & Datta, 2017) discussed that Literacy rate is good indicator of development of any country. In a developing country like India, illiteracy is mother of all issues and gives birth to many others issue like poverty, child labour, lack of awareness about one's own fundamental rights, unemployment, population explosion, etc.Due to some visionary statesmen and brilliant initiatives, the Indian education system is standing at the development crossroads. The modes of providing education in the Indian society is changing in a big way

2. Library Movement in India

Ancient libraries could be considered as partly libraries and stored most of the unpublished record, which is in present day, viewed as an archive. The important library of ancient period was that of Nalanda University of Bihar in the fourth century AD. The other important academic library of that period was Vikramshila, Odantapuri, Somapuri, Jaggadal, Mithila, Vallabhi, Kanheri, etc. Humanyun converted a pleasure house in Purana Qila in Delhi into a library. Akbar maintained an "Imperial Library". Jahangir is said to have maintained a personal library which moved with him wherever he went. When East India Company came to India, that time the company established the fort St. David Library in 1707 at Cuddalore. In the year 1709, the society of promotion of Christian Knowledge sent out a circulating library to Calcutta, the first of its kind in India. After that various types of libraries were established in India. First librarian of the Imperial Library (now the National Library) Kolkata started the first in-service training program for its staffs in 1901. W.A. Borden initiated training for librarians at the invitation of Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaikwad of Baroda in 1911. **(Wani, 2008),**

3. Role of Public Library in Knowledge Society

Libraries are a backbone of every community. The primary goal of the public library is to provide the best place to fulfil the information needs of the society. Public library is recognised as knowledge centre. Main feature of public libraries is that these are free to use by the society and provide all types facilities to the society members without any restrictions like, caste, religion, age, education level, communities etc. So public library is the most important institution of any society specially in India, where 40 percent of the population is living below the poverty line. A huge investment in public libraries is necessary to create information resource centres for the common people **(Ghosh, 2005).**

4. Library Legislation

The term legislation refers to laws passed by a government. Any organization can't get success without a system. So, legislation is important for all kind of work; to regulate, to authorize, to sanction, to grant with time to time. Library legislation is an act for the establishment, maintenance, and development of effective public library system and the organization and development of a comprehensive rural and urban library service.

Attempts to initiate library legislation are witnessed in the history of libraries since India got its independence. As per the UNESCO recommendation which says, "Public libraries should be created under clear mandate of law for nationwide provision of library services", Dr S.R. Ranganathan committee was appointed in 1948. The Union library bill was drafted for the government, but no action was taken. Then Sinha committee was appointed in 1959 to review public library system. The Model Bill was drafted by this committee. The recommendations of the committee were accepted. At the request of Indian Library Association, Delhi, Dr. Venkatappaiah drafted the Model Public Libraries Act in 1989, keeping in view the recent developments and

experience. This model Act was discussed in the National Seminar on Library Legislation held at New Delhi 1990. In the wake of recent developments in the country such as, New Panchayat and Municipal Acts, after amending the constitution in 1992, releasing of UNESCO Public Library Manifesto in 1994, total literacy- campaign, emerging necessity of information at all levels, the earlier Model Act of Dr. Venkatappaiah was revised as Model Library and Information Services Act in 1995.

At present, most of the countries are providing free use of public library services. Public Library is non-profit organization. So, the public library requires library legislation to operate in a proper way. Library legislation is an act to provide for the maintenance, development of public system. It is the development and organization of rural and urban public library system. Proper library legislation guarantees establishment, development and maintenance of public libraries. Libraries are neglected institution in respect of monetary factor but the enactment of legislation, ensures fund and as well as effective powers. Ultimately library legislation is a vital instrument for development of public library (**Isaac, K. A. 2004**).

5. Objective of the study
- To study the role of Indian Library professional association's contribution in public library development.
- To study the role of Indian library professional association in implementation of library legislation in all the states of India.

6. Status of Public Library Legislation Implementation in India

Since 1947 when India got freedom 19 states and union territories have passed public library act. There are another 17 states and union territories remaining yet to pass library act. Among states, Tamil Nadu is the first state to implement public library act in 1948 and Arunachal Pradesh is the latest state to have implemented library act in 2009**.**

6.1 Library Acts in India

1. Madras Public Libraries Act (1948) (now called Tamilnadu Public Libraries Act)
2. Andhra Pradesh Public Libraries Act (1960)
3. Mysore Public Libraries Act (1965) (now called as Karnataka Public Libraries Act)
4. Maharashtra Public Libraries Act (1967)
5. West Bengal Public Libraries Act (1979)
6. Manipur Public Libraries Act (1988)
7. Kerala Public Libraries Act (1989)
8. Haryana Public Libraries Act (1989)
9. Mizoram Public Libraries Act (1994)
10. Goa Public Libraries Act (1994)
11. Gujarat Public Libraries Act (2001)
12. Orissa Public Libraries Act (2001)
13. Uttaranchal Public Library Act (2005)
14. Rajasthan Public Library Act (2006)
15. Uttar Pradesh Public Library Act (2006)
16. Pondicherry Public Libraries Act, 2007;
17. Bihar Public Libraries and Information Centers Act (2008)
18. Chhattisgarh Public Libraries Act (2008)
19. Arunachal Pradesh Public Libraries Act (2009) **[(2020). Epgp.inflibnet.ac.in]**

7. Role of Professional Associations

Professional associations of library and information science discipline play an important role in the promotion and development of libraries in general. Many national level library associations try to provide good library services for common people. National level library associations have conducted seminars, conferences, workshops to improve public library services. The objectives of the professional associations have been compiled in tabular form for understanding their role in empowering public libraries. (**Biswas & Datta, 2017**).

SL. No.	Name of Library Associations	Objective of Professional/Library Associations	Review
1	**Indian Library Association (ILA); (1933)**	(a) To promote library movement in the country. (b) To enact library legislation in India. (c) Improvement of library services; (d) Promotion of cooperation among libraries and library professionals (e) Promotion of research and bibliographical studies (f) Providing a common forum by organizing conferences, seminars and meetings. (g) Promotion and formulation of standards, norms, guidelines etc. for management of library and information system and their services. (h) Cooperation with international and other national associations with similar objectives. (i) Affiliation with state and other library associations.	(a) ILA has an objective to get the library legislation enacted in those states where it is not still implemented. (b) But no specific objective to empower public libraries.
2	**Indian Association of Special Libraries and Information Centre (IASLIC); (1955)**	(a) To encourage and promote the systematic acquisition, organization and dissemination of knowledge. (b) To improve the quality of library and information services and dissemination work. (c) To coordinate the activities and foster mutual cooperation and assistance among special libraries; information centres, etc. (d) To serve as a field of active contact for libraries, information bureaus, documentation centres, etc. (e) To improve the technical efficiency of workers in special libraries, information centres, etc., and look after their professional welfare. (f) To act as a centre of research specially for library and documentation techniques. (g) To act as a centre for information in scientific, technical and other fields. (h) To take such action as may be incidental and conducive to the attainment of the objectives of the association.	(a) No direct effort to get the library legislation enacted in those states where it is not implemented. (b) No specific objective to empower the public libraries.
3	**Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF); (1972)**	(a) To promote library movement in the country. (b) To enunciate a national library policy and to help for building up a national library system. (c) To provide financial and technical assistance to libraries. (d) To provide financial assistance to organizations, regional or national engaged in the promotion of library development. (e) To publish appropriate literature and to act as a clearinghouse of ideas and information on library development in India and abroad. (f) To promote research for solving problems regarding library development. (g) To advise the government on all matters pertaining to the library development in the country.	(a) No direct effort to get the library legislation enacted in those states where it is not implemented. (b) No specific objective to empower public libraries.

4	**Society for Information Science (SIS) (1975)**	(a) To promote interchange of information in discipline of information science & its subdivision amongst specialists & between specialists & public. (b) To encourage & assist professionals to maintain integrity & competence of profession. (c) To foster sense of partnership amongst professionals engaged in these fields. (d) Society is of the firm opinion that there should be systematic approach in adapting new information technology with cost-benefit analysis. (e) There should also be a plan to strengthen infrastructure viz., to create manpower and maintenance support to the new technology. (f) Society is firmly committed to provide a congenial environment for interaction among information innovation, industry, technology management and services which are socially relevant in the interest of the nation. (g) SIS functions through Executive Committee consisting of experts from different institutions & assisted by various sub-committees for carrying out its program.	(a) No direct effort to get the library legislation enacted in those states where it is not implemented. (b) No specific objective to empower public libraries.
5	**National Knowledge commission (NKC) (2005)**	(a) Build excellence in the educational system to meet the knowledge challenges of the 21st century and increase India's competitive advantage in fields of knowledge. (b) Promote creation of knowledge in S&T laboratories. (c) Improve the management of institutions engaged in intellectual property rights. (d) Promote knowledge applications in agriculture and industry. (e) Promote the use of knowledge capabilities in making government an effective, transparent and accountable service provider to the citizen and promote widespread sharing of knowledge to maximize public benefit. (f) Strengthen the education system, promote domestic research and innovation, facilitate knowledge application in sectors like health, agriculture, and industry.	(a) No direct effort to get the library legislation enacted in those states where it is not implemented. (b) No specific objective to empower public libraries.
6	**Indian Public Library Movement (IPLM) (2011)**	(a) Repositioning public libraries at the community level by re-emphasizing their role as information and knowledge catalysts; showcasing them as inclusive spaces, thereby emphasizing their truly 'public' nature. (b) Improving public library services by envisioning the role of public libraries in addressing emerging knowledge and information needs of the community using relevant technologies and innovative content and services. (c) Improving public library functioning through capacity building of their staff by identifying their capacity building needs in the changing public library scenario and addressing them. (d) Policy advocacy by bringing together all the public library stakeholders through conferences, such as the India Public Libraries Conference (IPLC) and other state and local level workshops; policy advocacy through appropriate platforms and mechanisms to improve their functioning and finances; advocacy for integrating public libraries with appropriate mission mode programme of the Government of India.	(a) All objectives and activities are directed towards empowering public libraries. (b) No specific effort to get the library legislation enacted in the states that do not have library legislation implemented.

The review of the role of professional associations in helping the states and union territories which as of now do not have the library legislation shows a pessimistic picture.

Majority of the professional associations have not committed in their objectives to the upliftment of public libraries. This is contrary to the very basic fact that professional bodies are formed, namely helping ordinary citizen to access the libraries for their information needs. Though ILA has committed in its objective to help the implementation of library legislation, yet not much progress has happened in the last few years. Other professional bodies like IASLIC, SIS, IPLM etc have mentioned in their objectives that they would work for any issue related to libraries but hardly any effort is seen from their side. NKC has worked to some extent in this direction, but as it is defunct now, no headway is made on the recommendations given by its working committee, especially for public libraries. But at the same time, a few professional bodies are striving towards bringing in a change in the public library system, but no specific efforts are being made by them for getting the public library legislation enacted in the remaining states. For example, RRRLF is an important library association for the public library system. It is providing better opportunities for uplifting public libraries. Similarly, the Indian Public Library Movement, is taking a lot of initiatives in improving the overall functioning of public libraries. The overall review is that the professional associations are specifically not doing enough efforts to help in the implementation of library legislation (Morrison, H. 2004).

8. Findings

Critically reviewing of Indian Library Professional Association's support in the promotion and development of public libraries in general it was found out that in order to improve public libraries services many national level library associations need to conduct seminars, conferences and workshop etc. Associations like RRRLF and Indian Public Library Movement are the associations striving hard for the progress of public libraries. The Indian Library Professional's Associations need to give enough effort in implementing library legislation in all the states of India.

- Public libraries are non-profit organizations where funding is the major issue in the development of the organization. Every state has different sources of funding in its public library system. The states in the northern area, public libraries are supported through government funding and the states in the southern area, public libraries are supported through library cess.
- The role of public libraries is to disseminate information to the local general people. In India till now just 19 states and union territories have implemented public libraries out of the total 36 states and union territories. The study shows there is less effort in the implementation of public libraries in the states and union territories of India.
- The study shows the Indian Library Professional Associations need to improve India to be a knowledge society through provisions of knowledge sources like libraries.
- It is found there are different ministries dealing with public libraries, such as Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Social Justice, etc.

An attempt is made to analyze the reasons for lack of implementation of public library legislation based on the review in the next section.

9. Reasons for lack of implementation of public library legislation in India

According to various studies on Indian public library legislation, it was observed that the major challenge was of fund raising or resources, as there was no uniform system. States in south India have provision for cess ranging from 5 to 10% as surcharge while states in North India have no provision for library cess /tax and are dependent only on the government aid. Secondly there is no common direction or coordination for state libraries

functioning. It is observed by the authors that the acts passed in various states do not conform to a single standard. Further, the legislation needs to be implemented at national level for even development and funding for all states. Lastly if central government aid is required then central library fund needs to be instituted. The authors suggested that for improvement in infrastructure it is required to aid automation of library operations and provide access to internet. Training for library staff is also required. The key for libraries to prosper is that they would be publicized proactively. Shaping public opinion and changing policy makers' attitude is of utmost importance. There should be an effort to have more recruitment in under staffed libraries with handsome pay structure. There is a need to increase and update the existing collection. There is also the need to have books and e-resources in local languages and most importantly there is an urgent need of

networking all public libraries and carry out a national census of libraries. This will help to prioritise projects & programs for public libraries.

10. Conclusion

Public libraries are non- profit organizations established for the development of the common people, disseminating knowledge, cultivating reading habits and preserving cultural heritage of the states and running through the funding of government and library cess. In order to enact library legislation in all these states of India, there is need of collaborative efforts of the government and library associations at regional, state and national level. There is a need of effort to be made by these associations to promote public libraries and implement library legislation through various channels of communications and media.

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