



Phases of development of libraries in India

Mohan Babu .K, Chief Librarian, Sacred Heart Girls First Grade College, Jeevan Bheema Nagar, Bangalore, Karnataka State

Abstract

Library in India has developed through a gradual phase & library has been progressed along with the change in educational pattern. Library has grown as a science & revolution in information technology has made library feather in multidimensional ways. But Library is not a new concept to Indians as Indians were aware of the importance of storing manuscripts since the time of establishment of Universities such as Nalanda, Taxila, Vikramasheela etc. Several dynasties funded the preservation of manuscripts in these manuscript treasure houses. They were known by the name of Saraswathi bhandar. This paper focuses on the course of development of library as a science & its growth as a key essential of Information science.

Key words: Indian libraries ancient libraries, modern concepts, library as a science

Introduction: In ancient India libraries were called as Saraswathi Bhandaras . Ancient Indian manuscripts reveal ancient India's concern towards documentation. Except Vedas all the knowledge of eternal India was meticulously documented and preserved in these treasure houses. Indian libraries were called as "Grathalaya", "Pustak Bhandar", or "Saraswati

Bhandar" (Place where the Goddess of learning Saraswati resides).

Phases of libraries development

1. Universities and centers of learning-Takshila, Nalanda & Kasi Universities and centers of learning had a vast repositories of manuscript sin their Saraswathi bhandaras. These universities were very rich in



their systematic collection of manuscripts relating to Vedantha ,mimamsa , agama , niruktha , sukta , vyakarana , tarka , kavya , etc.

2. **King's palaces** -Royal courts always housed manuscripts separately. All Indian kings patronized manuscript preservation. Several of the kings ministers had separate manuscript repositories.

3. **Temples of India**- Almost all the temples of India housed manuscript in a separate compartment. Several temples had adjoin called pathashaala which helped the pupils to learn , write & copy the manuscripts. Copying original manuscripts was done in these learning centers.

Library of Takshashila University During the seventh century BC, Takshashila, attracted students from all over the world and had a huge collection of various texts, not only of Sanskrit, but also of other world languages.

Library of Nalanda University - Library of Nalanda University – was one of the rarest & most copious libraries found in ancient India. It was praised for its accurate collection of manuscripts by Chinese pilgrim Huen Tsang. Nalanda flourished as a world-renowned University between fifth century AD and twelfth century AD. It was estimated that it contained more than 10 lakh manuscripts. Such as great manuscript treasure was lost in a arson & it is said it took 3 months till the whole library turned to ashes & became a debris. (The report of the Archaeological Survey of India 2014.)

Library of Moghuls kings - Libraries in ancient India grew into renewed form during Muslim rule in India . Moghuls Emperor Akbar, even though illiterate, recognized the importance of manuscript collection in this royal residence. He had a library of his own besides he ordered the translation of great Indian epics Ramayana & Mahabharatha.



Library of modern age – Library in modern period is traced to East India company where the officials of the company started collecting rare manuscripts , Company official correspondences , Company letters & Company sanctions , Company transactions in a separate room called as record rooms.

The Imperial Library -The Imperial Library was founded in 1891 by combining a number of Secretariat libraries. The library of the Home Department, libraries of East India College, Fort William, and the East India Board in London were included in this . But the use of the library was restricted to the superior officers of the Government.

Calcutta Public Library -Calcutta Public Library was established in 1836. It was made to run on a proprietary basis. Any subscriber paying Rs 300 at one time or in three installments was considered a proprietor. Poor students and others were allowed

to use the library free of charge for a specified period of time. The then Governor General, Lord Metcalf transferred 4,675 volumes from the library of the College of Fort William to the Calcutta Public Library. These volumes and donations of books from individuals formed the nucleus of the library. Dwarkanath Tagore was the first proprietor of Calcutta Public Library. Both Indian and foreign books, especially from Britain, were purchased for the library. In the report of 1850 it is mentioned that the library has started collecting books in Gujarati, Marathi, Pali, Simhalese and Punjabi. Donations were regularly received from individuals and from the Government of Bengal and North Western Provinces. Calcutta Public Library had a unique position as the first public library in country.

Lord Curzon's library -Lord Curzon is credited with the idea of opening a library on Kolkata purely meant for public use. He wished to make this library



material easily accessible to readers & users. He took a positive decision in merging Calcutta public library & imperial library. This amalgamation was a great event which helped the growth of libraries in India.

Present scenario- The existing libraries are categorized as under public libraries, academic libraries and special libraries. The growth and development of libraries has thus come a long way. (Khurshid Anis - the growth of libraries in India IN library review -1972.After the Independence Government of India changed the name of the Imperial Library as national Library. It was given special status in the article 62 of 7th schedule of the Union list of the Indian Constitution . It was opened for public in 1953

Independent India had several independent states enacting library legislations. Following states have enacted laws for library Khurshid Anis - the

growth of libraries in India IN library review -1972

1. Andhra Pradesh
2. Arunachala pradesh
3. Bihar
4. Chattisgarh
5. Gujarat
6. Haryana
7. Kerala
8. Maharastara
9. Manipura
10. Mizoram
11. Orissa
12. Rajasthan
13. Tamil nadu
14. West Bengal

The duties of the library

1. Besides reading, reference and bibliographic services, books are lent out against security deposit.
2. While inter library loan is extended, the Library acts as a Centre for International loan.
3. Readers' Awareness Programme, Electronic catalogue service, Document delivery service, Bibliographic service, Reference service.



4. Electronic document delivery service, E-directory for e-journals
5. Microfilm / microfiche reading facilities are provided in the Library.
6. Photocopying service from publications in the stock of the Library is provided on payment
7. Consultancy & training services are provided to libraries and librarians.
8. Internet use is allowed to all members during library hours.
9. The Library serves its readers 362 days of the year. It is closed on national holidays.

Present day libraries are faced with several challenges

1. Libraries are reinventing themselves as content becomes more accessible online and their role becomes less about housing tomes and more about connecting learners and constructing knowledge.
2. Create an environment for "collaboration and knowledge co-construction.
3. Printed books still play a critical role in supporting learners, but digital technologies offer additional pathways to learning and content acquisition. Students and teachers no longer need a library simply for access. Instead, they require a place that encourages participatory learning and allows for co-construction of understanding from a variety of sources. In other words, instead of being an archive, libraries are becoming (Ravindra Sharma – Libraries In The 21st Century Vol. 2 An International Perspective Mittal Publications New Delhi 2005)
4. they should become transparent learning hubs
5. instead of becoming silent , dry ,individual spaces libraries have to be made as common learning centers
6. Western countries have experimented their library models on using a combination of paper , books , white boards , I pads, & have created a custom learning environment. (Ravindra Sharma – Libraries In The 21st Century Vol. 2 An International



Perspective Mittal Publications
New Delhi 2005).

7. Libraries have been made a place of interaction with content, technology, space & knowledge sharing. It should imbibe the best of physical & digital worlds technology in learning. (Rakesh Kumar Bhat – History & Development Of Libraries In India, Mittal Publications 2005).

8. While the space does include paper books and physical artifacts, as well as flexible furniture and an open environment, digital content encourages students to explore, play, and delve deeper into subjects they may not otherwise experience

9. Every student has the potential to carry a global library on the device in his or her pocket, the role of physical libraries may become even more important, not just a place to house resources, but one in which to create meaning from them. The libraries of the 21st century provide a welcoming common space that encourages

exploration, creation, and collaboration between students, teachers, and a broader community. They bring together the best of the physical and digital to create learning hubs. Ultimately, libraries will continue to inspire students to construct new knowledge and meaning from the world around them. (Rakesh Kumar Bhat – History & Development Of Libraries In India, Mittal Publications 2005).

10. In the digital age, when information is increasingly becoming available online, there is a propensity to say that libraries and librarians are redundant. This is not the case. Information available online is often of dubious origin and there is still a wealth of information behind pay walls that can only be accessed by those who have paid. We have helped many library users who have only been using search engines for their research and come to the library perplexed because they cannot find the information they want. If anything, the internet has added



to the range of services libraries provide and in turn this has also increased the variety of roles available to librarians.

11. As well as being good communicators with people and active adopters and exploiters of technological developments, librarians need to have detailed specialist subject knowledge to pass on to library users. Librarians provide training to show people how to search for information and evaluate what they find. These information skills sessions are now expanding to include digital literacy's such as how to stay safe online, the use of social media sites and online collaboration tools.

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