It goes without saying that the status of a nation as a whole depends upon the welfare and achievements of the people irrespective of social class, sex or religion. The welfare of the masses depends on their education and mode of thinking. The best way to improve the welfare of the people is to democratize knowledge through a net-work of free schools which are supplemented by nation-wide free library services. Library service is a positive and dynamic force to spread knowledge in every nook and corner of the country. This Paper "Public Library Movement in Kerala - A Historical Analysis" is an attempt to study the history and development of public libraries in Kerala and to bring out the salient features of the public library movement in Kerala.

History of man on earth is the history of knowledge. Right from the primitive society till today, there has always been a constant social pressure as well as an urge to find out something new. Man's search to find out the origin of knowledge and intelligence never ends. In the beginning of human history there was no systematic method of learning and teaching, nor was there any book to read. The enquiry of man to know the origin of knowledge finally lead him to turn to God. Ancient man believed that God is the primary source of all true knowledge.

According to Hindu philosophers, it is God who revealed knowledge to the conciousness of man in the form of four "Vedas."
The word "Veda" is derived from the root "vida", to know, and therefore, Vedas are the source of knowledge. The great Semetic and Christian religions also refer to God as the primary source of all true knowledge. This innate urge to know, irrespective of survival needs, is typical of homosapiens alone. Therefore, a steady and unhindered flow of knowledge and information regarding his own being and the world at large is important for his own existence and mental happiness.

We live in an age in which information and knowledge has become an essential ingredient of all human activity. Today knowledge is treated as a national resource. Once we realise this fact, there appears the need for the effective collection, organisation and transmission of knowledge of past and present for its best exploitation for human progress and prosperity.

Before the widespread use of printing, people lived their lives in what we call "traditional societies," in the sense that most knowledge and culture were handed down from previous generations, passed on by parents, teachers and older members of the community. This is, of course, not the way things are in the modern world. Most of our knowledge and culture does not come directly from our parents and elders, but from published books, periodicals, newspapers, television, radio, cinema and from the extensive contacts modern communications give us with our contemporaries.

Since there was no printing, there was no newspapers, no periodicals, no mechanically reproduced books. In fact copies of books were very hard to come by, because they had to be individually written out on parchment, or on palm lead or on some other cumbersome
materials. In India, it was not till the late nineteenth century that printing caught on and that books and periodicals began to be published. This was perhaps the critical point from which the modernization of Indian society began to take place. As more and more men seek to learn the things that the book can teach and as this hunger for knowledge swells and spreads, a long felt need grows all the greater. The need for more books within the reach of all men! To serve this need, expanding with ever widening boundaries of knowledge itself, is the challenge and dedicated purpose of the public libraries.

In books we have the richest treasures of earth - the excellent output of the best minds of all the ages. Of all the multiplied opportunities our modern era offers us, the most precious is the opportunity to own and read good books. Books are a necessity to modern man. Life indeed becomes more worthwhile, more filled with content, more complete in accomplishment when we spend a little time each day with the world's best society to be found in books.\(^1\)

Through the medium of good books we are enabled to converse with the wise and the great of all ages. The great writers, the historians, biographers, and poets of the past and present, are so many voices telling us what multitudes have said, and done, and thought and what they have gained or lost because of their words, and deeds and thoughts. Whoever is truly growing in taste and culture must

feel an ever-increasing appreciation of the value, the charm, and the power of good books. Through them one comes in touch with the greatest minds of all times, the noblest men and women who have lived. Through them also our own eyes are opened and our souls are inspired.

His Highness the Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwar of Baroda said that, "a library is instituted to preserve the records of the deeds and thoughts of men for the instruction and enlightenment of present and future generations, so that those who are about to take up their own part in the advancement of human race in intelligence, in civilization may start from the basis of achievements gained by countless generations before them."

This statement of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwar, the pioneer of Indian Library Movement still holds good. It was his intention to create a generation who could read, read the best for the benefit of their future and thus the nation on the whole will be benefited. To learn to read is to gain the power to make all other minds tributary to our own. It opens before us a universe that lies hid until we acquire this art. It unseals the past and makes its treasures of knowledge easily accessible. All that mankind has ever thought or accomplished is preserved in the pages of books. To know how to read is to possess the magic key to this limitless treasure. The world would have been in a total confusion and mess if there was no system of preserving the knowledge. Libraries took the responsi-

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2 Ibid., p.17.
lity for preserving and decimating the knowledge.

It has been rightly stated that the road to freedom begins at the door of knowledge. Without knowledge and understanding even the very meaning of freedom is elusive. Today perhaps as never before, one needs the opportunities to read for themselves, to judge and to make decisions and to understand themselves.4

A Public Library in a modern connotation is more a Western product than Eastern. Truly speaking it is a Western idea based on the progress of the society under Western democracy5. It may also be justifiably said that a public library in the modern times has a great part to play in evolving the social life of the common man. Suffice it to say that the contribution of a modern public library towards the cultural, social, educational and in a word, all round progress of the common man cannot be over-estimated. Before continuing any more discussion about the Public Library movement, it is appropriate to define the following terms which would appear in many places in this paper.

Definition and Different Concepts of Knowledge

An attempt to inquire into the nature of knowledge as such is more sophisticated than attempt to gain knowledge. In the


objective sense knowledge is simply and logically the known. It comes in or by knowing in experience of minds or subjects. More actively knowledge is attained or acquired by learning, by study and by research. Knowledge is qualitatively distinct from belief, opinion, understanding and intelligence.

Chambers Dictionary defines knowledge as the sum of what is known. Rational and scientific knowledge is the knowledge that is verified and organized proceeding to generalization, theories and conceptual systems and to predications and verifications.

The Oxford Dictionary of English Language defines knowledge as the intellectual acquaintance with or perception of, fact or truth; clear and certain mental apprehension, the fact, state or condition of understanding. Knowledge is also the acquaintance with facts, truth or principles as from study or investigation. Knowledge is the sum total of what is known.

In general sense knowledge is the fact or condition of being instructed or of having information acquired by study or research.

Sense of fear for the unseen and his inherent faith in the potential of the unknown placed man on the path of inquiry, passing into a series of stages, i.e., faith in the unseen God created religion; rationalism and reasoning gave birth to philosophy; verification and experimentation had led to the birth of science; idea of productivity and of a comfortable life had led to the creation of applied sciences of engineering and technology; imagination, the power to visualize one's thought and put it into writing or spoken out and
intuition created art and literature, etc.6

The impact of Greek thought and culture on the modern world is unmeasurable and profound. The Greeks were the first philosophers of Nature who are credited to have:7

1. Collected, collated and organized facts into systematic and grand schemes of ideas.

2. Rationalized the entire universe without any reliance on or affiliation with magic and superstition.

3. Developed ideas and interpretations which had their own logic and could stand on their own without any invocation of Gods and Goddesses.

The pace of development of knowledge has been hiked up with more and more persons engaged in research and discoveries using increasingly powerful and sophisticated equipments.

The period of Renaissance brought lots of changes in the attitude of man. It was a period of humanism. Man became the master of himself. Men of this period began to find out the store of knowledge and wealth that lay around him unexplored.

The new Renaissance man that emerged was the master of his own destiny. He became a visionary with an insatiable thirst for knowledge so much so that Vigina Woolf could see a God, green with

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envy at man because he had attained the capability of getting at knowledge through reading.\textsuperscript{8}

What is meant by knowledge in this paper, is the recorded knowledge from time immemorial to the present day. The library which the researcher is going to discuss in this paper is the depository of this knowledge.

"Book" - A Definition

Random House Dictionary of English Language defines book as a written or printed work of some length, especially in consecutive sheets of paper fastened or bound together in one volume.\textsuperscript{9} The Websters Dictionary defines book as a set of written sheets of skin or paper or tablets of wood or ivory.\textsuperscript{10} Also in ancient India especially in South India, palm leaves were used for writing and they were joined together with the help of a thread put through the holes made on each palm leaf.

Books are the legacies that a great genius leaves to mankind, which are delivered down from generation to generation as presents to the posterity of those who are yet unborn.\textsuperscript{11}

How true it is that an author can spread his thoughts into the minds of millions who read his books generation after genera-

\textsuperscript{8} Agarwal, pp.38-39

\textsuperscript{9} Random House Dictionary of English Language.

\textsuperscript{10} Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary.

\textsuperscript{11} Sidner
tion! The writing of Homer, the greatest of Greek epic poets, have endured nearly three thousand years without the loss of a letter or syllable, whereas the great places, temples, monuments and cities of his day and of much later times have decayed and perished. The monuments of wisdom and knowledge have remained in books exempt from the ravages of time.

"The world of book is the most remarkable creation of man," said Clarence Day, in his beautiful and off-quoted tribute to books. "Nothing else that he builds ever lasts. Monuments fall, nations perish, civilization grows old and die out, and after an era of darkness, new races build others. But in the world of books are volumes that have seen this happen again and again and yet live on, still young, still as fresh as the day they were written." 12

Library Movement - A Definition

Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, the father of Indian Library Movement denotes library movement as an organic attempt to establish a closely knit net-work of libraries for the use of one and all, each according to their specific needs. The library of today is the "University of the people." It was this movement that brought the establishment of public libraries in every nook and corner of Kerala in a very well organized manner. 13

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12 Ibid., p. 32

13 P. N. Kaula, Library Movement in India, Delhi, Delhi Library Association, 1958, p.19.
Today, library movement aims at the establishment of an integrated national library system with many cultural, political, economic and educational functions. It is not satisfied with the establishment of either a few huge libraries or myriads of small libraries. Library movement is the conscious establishment and maintenance of a network of libraries, to bring knowledge to people — not merely to restricted clients as in earlier days, but to one and all according to need and capacity.¹⁴

In other words, libraries are no longer the sanctum of the chosen few but a hospitable house of knowledge catering to the most elementary as well as to the most advanced requirements of the people. The widening of the library service as a means of self-education as well as an instrument of mass education, is the hallmark of the concept of library movement as it is today.

**Definition and Concept of Library**

Going far back to the earliest use of the term "library," we land upon the obsolete meaning which reads, a place where books were written and preserved. This was the earliest concept of a library. The earliest concept of a library will be discussed later in this chapter itself.

Webster's Dictionary defines library as a place in which books, manuscripts, musical scores, or other literary and artistic

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 58.
materials are kept for use but not for sale. In other words, a library is a collection of graphic, acoustic, and holistic materials such as books, periodicals, newspapers, manuscripts, maps, charts, filmstrips, microfilms, phonographic records, etc., all designed for use. Librarians' Glossary defines library as a collection of books and other literary materials kept for reading, study and consultation. It is a place, building, room or rooms set apart for the keeping and use of a collection of books, etc.

The formation of a library, as distinct from a collection of archives, presupposes the existence of written records or of a literature whether it is preserved on clay tablets, papyrus, parchment or paper.

In fact libraries grew and developed in civilized society when men began to make and keep written records. They prospered when literacy increased particularly during periods of relative peace and tranquility when individuals had both leisure and the means to cultivate the finer arts and improve the common stock of knowledge. Pierce Butler says that books are one social mechanism for preserving social memory and library, one social apparatus for transferring

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15 Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary.


this to the consciousness of living individuals.¹⁸

A library is an important institution which meets the great "Five Laws of Library Science." These five laws are the contributions of Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, the father of Indian Library Movement. The following are the five laws of the Library: ¹⁹

1. Books are for use.
2. Every Reader his book.
4. Save the time of the reader.
5. Library is a growing organism.

Library in addition to being an organized collection of books, is an agency putting us in touch with the sources of information. A Library offers us a given collection of books and sources of information within its wall, it can also assist us to trace books, sources and information that exist beyond its walls. ¹⁹

Therefore, the library is not only an institution which helps the readers within its limited area, but it goes beyond its walls to help the readers in getting the information.

Dr. S. R. Ranganathan said "Library is a trinity of Books, Readers, and Staff." Here the books, readers and staff are the three constituent elements or factors of the library. The absence of any

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one of the three will make the library cease to exist. Each has its own potentiality and it is only a sum of the three that makes a library.

The Communion of these three is most essential if the purpose of a library is to be filled. The Librarian is the matchmaker between the reader and the book. A body without soul is treated as dead and worth discarding. Likewise a library without this trinity is meaningless.

**Definition and Meaning of "Public Library"**

The Librarians' Glossary defines Public Library as a library provided wholly or partly from public funds, and the use of which is not restricted to any class of persons in the community, but is freely available to all. It is a major agency of enlightenment for adults, providing also for children the recorded experience of others which will help them to grow to adulthood.²⁰

The UNESCO's definition of a Public Library is: "An organized collection of published books and periodicals and of other reading

²⁰Harrod, p.524.
and audio-visual materials and the services of a staff able to provide
and interpret such materials as are required to meet the informational
or recreational needs of its readers." UNESCO also says that public
libraries are those libraries which serve the population of a community
or region free of charge or for a nominal fee. They may serve the
general public or special categories of the public.

Public libraries are devices for putting books into action,
for associating readers and books, they build up collections of books
to some prescribed pattern and they organize the books in such a
manner that they are readily available to the readers.

The international accepted definition of a public library
is that it is an institution (i) which is financed for the most part
out of public funds, (ii) which charges no fees from readers and
yet is open for full use by the public without distinction of caste,
creed or sex, (iii) which is indeed as an auxiliary educational insti­
tution providing a means of self-education which is endless, (iv)
which houses learning materials giving reliable information freely
and without partiality or prejudice.

**Purpose and Functions of Public Library**

The success of any institution inaugurated and operated
in the service of the community depends on three main factors: it
must have a purpose; it must have a sound administration to determine
the mode of operation, and after that mode has been geared, it must
be put into effect by capable and conscientious executives. (Like
many social institutions, the public library exists with the task
to convert a savage community into a state of civilization). One of the best statements on the purpose of public library, which by its nature was intended to be of international applicability, was the UNESCO public library manifesto, as revised in 1972; part of which states:

"The public library must offer to adults and children the opportunity to keep in touch with their times, to educate themselves continuously and keep abreast of progress in the Science and Arts. Its contents should be a living demonstration of the evolution of knowledge and culture, constantly reviewed, kept up-to-date and attractively presented. In this way, it will help people form their own opinions, and develop their creative and critical capacities and powers of appreciation. The public library is concerned with the communication of information and ideas, whatever the form in which these may be expressed." 22

It is the objective of the public library to store and circulate information. Today information is being regarded as a national resource, perhaps as fundamental as energy or matter, which affects all


human activities. Information is power. It is indispensable. It needs to be put in the service of the whole community. It is the public library which can provide access to information free of charge for all in the community. It is this way a public library can contribute to the welfare and progress of the community served by it, thereby becoming a social force. It can help in safeguarding democracy, creating political awakening, bringing social awareness and fostering creative leisure activities.\(^\text{23}\)

A public library performs the functions of providing:

- i. Information
- ii. Education
- iii. Recreation
- iv. Entertainment

A variety of information is needed by users. In developing countries many readers use a public library for self-improvement. Since education is a life long process, it would not be accomplished by attending schools and colleges. This could be achieved only through the public libraries.

Another most widely known statement about the aims and objectives of public library is mentioned in the work, 'Public Library Aims and Objectives,' a document prepared by the Public Library Research Group of the London and Home Countries Branch of Library Association in 1971. It begins by setting out four main objectives:

\[^{23}\text{Krishna Kumar, Library Manuel, New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, Pvt., Ltd., 1983, p.74.}\]
1. Education - to foster and provide means for self-development of the individual/group at whatever stage of education, closing the gap between the individual and recorded knowledge.

2. Information - to bring the individual/group accurate information quickly and in depth, particularly on topics of current concern.

3. Culture - to be one of the principal centres of cultural life and promote a keener participation, enjoyment and appreciation of all the arts.

4. Leisure - to play a part in encouraging the positive use of leisure and providing material for change and relaxation.

Ancient Libraries and Earliest Concept of a Library

The origin of libraries, like the origin of speech and of writing, is lost in the early history of man. Unlike speech and writing, however, the beginning of libraries come after the end of the prehistoric era, since the preservation of written records is considered to have begun the historic age. But, all we know is that at certain times, and in certain locations early libraries existed.

One of the purpose for the development of writing was to preserve human communication - to extend its duration beyond

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the sound of the human voice and beyond the memory of mortal man. Hence, it is quite probable that written communications were kept almost from the beginning of writing. Early written forms were often considered sacred, and this caused another reason for their careful preservation. If these early records were kept in an orderly manner, suitable for future use when needed, they then had all the earmarks of a proto library or archive.26

Libraries, literary and intellectual activities and human culture have been growing side by side and parallel to the growth of the society and cultural attainments of the man. It is because of this phenomenon that the human history records the existence of libraries in one form or the other during every period of its cultural heights and attainments. In all the centres of civilization, whether the Indian and Chinese or Sumarian and Babylonian or the Assyrian and Egyptian or the Greek and Roman or the Continental upsurge; we find records and traces of the libraries.27

Sharing of one's own experience has been a natural process. This endless process has been going on ever since the dawn of civilization. First through oral communication, then through recorded communication, then through printing and now through various graphic and photographic as well as other medias. Throughout human history man had been evolving methods for recording his experience through

26 Ibid.

27 Lalita S. Shakle, Basic Foundations of Library Science, Delhi, Metropolitan Book Co., Pvt., Ltd., p.5. (No date).
pictographs, hieroglyphies, clay tablets, wax tablets, papyrus rolls, and many through the modern book.

The early libraries were commonly associated with religious edifices, it cannot be assumed that the temple library was the only or even the most important early form of library. In fact, there seem to have been at least three or four types of graphic collections that contributed to the general development of early library form.

The first of these was the temple collection; the second the governmental archive; the third the business record; and the possible fourth, the collection of family or geneological records. Where religious and temporal rule were in the same hands the first two types of collections sometimes merged into one. In any case, the written records contained facts or information that were meant to be preserved for future use, and for such use a logical order of arrangement was necessary wherever a dozen or more individual items were kept.28

The temple collection might be considered first, since this is the form usually given as an example of the protolibrary. The temple collection began with the copies of the sacred laws, rituals, songs, creation stories, biographies of gods, and later commentaries of religious authorities on all of these. The basic scriptures might be carved on stone, inscribed on leather, or embossed on clay to be baked into imperishable bricks, or written on papyrus and parchment.29


29 Ibid., p.9.
One other factor in the early development of libraries was the official or "copyright" collection of manuscripts. As literary works were produced and copies widely made, assurance of the accuracy, or purity, of the copied text was required. Where such "copyright" collections were arranged and available for use, they became early forms of public libraries.

Another important factor in the origin and early development of libraries was the form of the graphic materials contained in them. In the course of man's history, it is apparent that he has experimented at one time or other with almost every type of known material in his attempts to find the most suitable writing instruments and the most satisfactory writing surface. In his early history man has tried wood, stone, several metals, many types of hides, leaves, bark, cloth, and clay as writing surfaces, and he succeeded fairly well on almost all of them. For writing implements, he has tried chisels, many types of brushes, sticks, wooden and metal styluses, bird feathers and quills, pointed objects of almost every kind, along with various substances such as paints and inks. Generally speaking, however, three major forms of writing materials were used in the ancient world, and these three constituted the great majority of the graphic records kept in early libraries. The first of these, and the most widely used in terms of time and geographical area, was papyrus.

The earliest form of writing is "pictographic," starting with one picture, which, in course of time, developed into a series of pictures in a row to make a picture story. This kind of writing was called pictographic, meaning thereby that the object drawn:
fied exactly the object meant; i.e., it was a picture of the original and no more. A drawing of a man stood for a man, of a boat for a boat and of an arrow for an arrow.30

The next stage is called "ideographic," as instead of pictorial images, man begins to project on an external surface the "ideas" he has in his mind. He represents those ideas with forms drawn from the context of his life, labour, social practice and environment, and thus uses, for the first time, symbols for expression. At this stage of ideographic writing, the picture gradually loses its resemblance to the object originally depicted, and with time and as a result of usage, gets transformed into a pure symbol conveying an idea and bearing little or no resemblance to any actual object.31

We now turn to the third stage of writing which is called 'phonetic.' Here also symbols are used, but each symbol has neither picture value nor idea value; the symbols have sound value only. The letters of our alphabets are known for their sound values alone. The written script in the phonetic stage became purely symbolic, symbolising merely the respective sound values attached to each symbol. According to Renan, this invention was one of the great creations of the human spirit.32

In earliest times there was no distinction between a record room and a library, in this sense libraries can be said to have existed

31 Ibid
32 Ibid., p. 6
for almost as long as records have been kept.

A temple in the Babylonian town of Nippur, dating from the first half of the 3rd millennium B.C. was found to have a number of rooms filled with clay tablets, suggesting a well stocked library. Similar collections of Assyrian clay tablets of the 2nd millennium B.C. were found in Tell - el - Amarna in Egypt. Assurubanipal (668-627 B.C.), the last of the great kings of Assyria, maintained an archive of some 25,000 tablets, comprising transcripts and texts systematically collected from temples throughout his kingdom.  

We may take up here a famous papyrus, known as the Harris papyrus, which is now in the British Museum. It contains the details of events of the reign of Rameses III (1200 B.C.). It is the longest papyrus in existence, being 133 ft long. Whatever its forms, the written material that has come down to us from ancient Egypt is only a fraction of the literature that flourished there before 500 B.C.  

In considering Greek libraries it is usual to begin with those of classical Greece, from the sixth century B.C. onwards. However, it is known now that there was a literate civilization in Greece and Aegean Islands almost a thousand years earlier, and that there were archives or collections of writings at Pylos and Mycenae on the mainland and at Knossos on Crete. Both at Mycenae and at Pylos, rooms have been found in the palaces with large numbers of clay tablets

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34 Marshall, p. 18
in them, some of them in jars neatly arranged on shelves. These two relatively contemporary civilizations had been overrun by less-civilized people from the north by the twelfth Century B.C., and their literans culture disappeared. There seems to have followed several centuries in which the people of Greece and the nearby islands had no written language. By the seventh century B.C., however, a literature society had emerged, and once again a written literature began to be followed in due time by libraries.\(^{35}\)

During the fifth century B.C., the library history of Greece remains vague, but it can be deduced that some types of book collections existed. Plato (427 - 348 B.C.), the great philosopher and teacher of Aristotle, must have had a private library of considerable size. Aristotle is supposed to have purchased some of Plato's books that had been left to Speusippus. At any rate, Aristotle went on to collect one of the largest of ancient private libraries. Aristotle's library of several hundred volumes was probably also used by his students and friends.\(^{36}\)

"The most famous Greek library of all, indeed the most famous of all antiquity, was not in Greece but in Egypt."\(^{37}\) When Alexander the Great had conquered most of the known world during his brief reign (337 - 323 B.C.), the glory of Greece was spread

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\(^{35}\) Johnson, p. 47

\(^{36}\) Ibid., p. 51.

\(^{37}\) Ibid.
far from the borders of the land itself. One of the scholars who was attracted to Alexandria was Demetrius. He suggested to Ptolemy, the ruler of Egypt, that in addition to buildings and monuments, a school, or 'museum' with a well-stocked library might add to the glory of his regime. The results of his efforts was the establishment of the Museum in Alexandria as an institution something like a loosely organized university of scholars. To enlarge the Museum library, copies of all known books in the city of Alexandria were added to the collection, and then efforts were extended to all parts of the known world. Agents were sent to other lands to buy books or borrow them to be copied. 38

Thousands upon thousands of rolls were brought, copied, and compiled for its shelves until the library contained, according to some estimates, over 700,000 rolls. But wars and civil strife continued to plague Alexandria and its libraries. The Museum and its library were in decline by 100 B.C. and in 47 B.C., when Julius Caesar was conquering Egypt, the Library is thought to have been at least partially destroyed. In A.D. 273 the Roman Emperor Aurelian, conquering Egypt, burned much of Alexandria, including the library. 39

The libraries of ancient Rome were a direct inheritance from those of Greece. The earliest Roman literature as the result


39 Johnson, P. 56.
of Greek influence and the earliest books were in Greek. Soon however, there grew a literature which though indebted to Greek models, was Latin in language and Roman in character. A papyrus roll was the standard form of book in Latin in the early period as it had long been in the Greek world. The earliest libraries in Rome, as in Greece, were private libraries such as those of Cicero, Atticus, Scipio and Lucullus. With the reign of Augustus, the establishing of libraries became common. Sulla, when he captured Athens, brought back Aristotle's library with him. Probably the greatest of the Roman libraries was the Ulpian Library, first began by Trajan in A.D. 113 in his Forum.  

In ancient days the books were literally chained and preserved. The emphasis was on preservation of the books. Only a limited few were allowed to use the books. Libraries were not open to all like today's public libraries. Even up to the eighteenth century, the libraries were supposed to have conserved the reading material and make it available under proper safeguards, to the equally well-defined group of people; who were privileged to have access to it. This period was the period of conservation, rigid outlook and mental apathy.  

**Library Goes to Masses**

The new era of transformation of libraries started towards the middle of the nineteenth century. It was the time there were

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40 Marshall, p.62.

41 N.B. Sen, pp. 160-161.
revolutionary changes in social, political, industrial and other phases of life. With spread of the concept of freedom and spirit of democracy, libraries were looked upon as effective instruments of social education.

The public library has been accepted today as an indispensable social agency or institution. It has come into existence in response to certain important social needs. It is the sole agency for the life long self-education of masses. It is founded to meet the various reading requirements of the people at large -- reading for communication of ideas and knowledge, reading for recreation, reading for inspiration and imagination, and reading for the support of one's own self-education. Conceptually, a public library is free to all, regardless of wealth, educational or social status, caste or creed and age or sex.42

Today, the libraries are believed to contribute much to the intellectual and cultural development of the people. The library of today is very aptly called as "The university of the people."43 A public library as it were, a people's university, a varitable repository of knowledge catering generously to its innumerable beneficiaries representing all walks of life. Education is a life-

42 V.M. Augustine, "Role of Local Bodies in Public Library Service," XXV All India Library Conference, Trivandrum, 1979, p.143.

long process. The present system of formal education mostly provides man with specialized training and therefore, is more or less profession oriented. A student or a researcher after passing out of his institution finds the connection with the alma mater feeble, and at times non-existent. In contrast the public libraries stand as permanent agencies that are ever ready to help all in their pursuance of enlightenment.

These institutions, besides helping awareness to grow, generate pleasure for the masses by the effective utilization of their leisure. These are ideal centres for recreational activities. Their contribution in way of self-education and self-employment is simply immeasurable. Above all, these are indispensable weapons for developing countries like India in their crusade against illiteracy and ignorance.44

It is evident that all leading nations of the world, for their success, owe a great deal to the highly evolved public libraries existent in their country. None can overlook the fact that all progress stems from efforts in the right direction and in turn, these efforts owe their origin to awareness. And libraries are the most potent instruments of diffusing this awareness all around.

It is only in comparatively recent decades that the library has been recognized as a necessary institution for the widest possible diffusion of knowledge and for the formation of a social and political conscience; and of the most powerful and progressive instruments

44 Ibid.
of a sound system of education.\textsuperscript{45}

Modern libraries are believed to contribute much to the intellectual and cultural development of the people. The library service serves three of the purposes close to the heart of the nation; freedom of inquiry, freedom of the spoken and written word and freedom of exchange of ideas. In fact, the library of today is very aptly referred to as "the University of the People." It is a University offering to any one who cares to enter, to study and to learn or just to read for the pleasure that books can give.

Today vast shelves of the libraries are filled with the books opening wide doors to new works for those who would explore their pages. What is stored here is the sum total of man's experience, his achievements, his history and his thinking. Here at this University of people, men may choose freely of the wisdom of other men, the people of one land may learn from people of all lands, and the men of one age may study from the men of past ages leaving in their turn, a greater legacy for those of ages yet to come.\textsuperscript{46}

It may, however, be observed here that the nomenclature and outlook of the libraries has been changing from time to time. With emergence of wide literacy and nationalism, there was a tremendous upsurge for an irresistible desire to have all the best in

\textsuperscript{45}B. N. Sen., p. 161.

\textsuperscript{46}Ibid., p. 162
the world in the least possible time. The tradition of learning has been strong since ancient times and libraries have always been necessary appendages of learning. With all this, it may be worth while to record that from 'private collections' (in ancient times) to 'Subscription Libraries' (in medieval period) and in integrated 'Library Service to one and all' (in modern times) is the remarkable achievement accomplished in the course of time.

**Early Trace of Public Library Movement in the World**

A Public Library in a modern connotation is more a Western product than Eastern. Truely speaking it is a Western idea based on the progress of the society under the western democracy. It has already been mentioned that until up to the nineteenth century the libraries served only a selected few, and it was not the instrument for mass education. But in ancient times also we could see the trace of few public libraries even though their outlook was not as broad as today's modern public libraries.

Elmer D. Johnson in his book "History of Libraries in the Western World" says that beginning with Augustus, the Roman emperors took over the task of building libraries in Rome. Actually Augustus founded not one but two public libraries. The first, founded in 33 B.C. was in the Porticus Octaviae, a magnificent structure built in honour of Octavia, sister of Augustus. Caius Melissus was the first librarian and this library survived more than a century, until it was destroyed by fire in the reign of Titus, about 80 A.D. The second Augustan library was the Palatine collection in the Temple of Apollo, founded about 28 B.C. This library, as many later ones,
was divided into two separate compartments, one for Greek books and one for Latin. Pompeius Macer was the first librarian, the successors of Augustus maintained the tradition of founding public libraries in Rome. Tiberius established one in his palace on the Palatine Hill about A.D. 20, and this collection remained in existence until at least third century. The Emperor Vespasian established the fifth public library in Rome in A.D. 71, decorating it with the spoils captured in Jerusalem.

The custom of founding public libraries continued while Rome's power both waxed and waned, and there were reported to be no less than 29 established in the city before the fourth century. The fate of most of them is unknown.

The modern public library movement was first traced in England. Under the leadership of Richard Whittington there was established in London about 1422, a library for free use by the citizens, it lasted for just over a century, until the Duke of Somerset seized it in 1549.48

If England became literate in the fifteenth century in the eighteenth it acquired the habit of reading: in part no doubt of reading for instruction and enlightenment; in part for political purposes; but still more for entertainment and for the sheer delight of books in themselves. For in this century the discovery was made by thousands that books, which had previously been intended ostensibly for study and grave contemplation, could equally be

48 Murison, p. 11.
designed for recreation as a means of passing time. Of course, the change came gradually. "There has always been the occasional books written mainly for amusement, even if it has sometimes worn an allegorical or satirical grab for the sake of respectability; but there had been nothing to compare with the great flood of what Coleridge called 'pass-time' books that are so striking a feature of this century." 49

It was in the early seventeenth century that the first efforts to establish 'popular' libraries were more widely made in England and it is fitting that these efforts should again have been made as the result of philanthropy; for there has been no characteristic more marked in the history of library movement than the generosity of wealthy citizens interested in its aims and progress. The first library to have its stock readily freely accessible to the general public was founded in Coventry, England in 1601. 50

It was the idea of the British elite to start public libraries in every parish. The beginning of the 19th century saw great activities in the provision of popular libraries in England and Scotland. The Public Libraries Act of 1850 was a landmark in the history of Public Libraries in England. 51


50 Murison, p. 19

Now England could proudly say about her great British Museum Library founded by Sir Hans Sloane, as one of the best libraries in the world. The development of public library movement in England helped the growth of many important public libraries in England especially the British Museum Library. This is the same case with the United States of America and her prestigious library, the library of Congress.  

**Library Science - A New Branch of Study**

Library Science is the discipline that encompasses all aspects of library operation. It did not become an identifiable discipline, nor did librarianship begin to emerge as a profession until the later half of the 19th century. Although libraries have existed since ancient times, they were previously related to religious or educational institutions and their direction had been merely one of the duties of members of the organization.

The first modern work on library science, the *Advis pour dresser une Bibliotheque* ("Advice on Establishing a Library"), was prepared by Gabriel Naude, who was appointed by Cardinal Mazarin in Paris.  

Library Science is that discipline which studies and scrupulously tries to find out the need of the society for the accessi-

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53 Encyclopedia Britannica, (15th edition) Vol. 10
bility to human knowledge. In this attempt it tries to be systematic in its pursuit, development and practices. It studies every phenomenon in its field of activity pertaining to explosion of knowledge and its utilization by man with a logical approach and performs the whole study in an academic manner. It is a systematic study of the reading community and its needs; the books and related material and the knowledge explosion through them; as well as the library personnel, their technical competence and role in the face of their ever growing responsibilities to meet the needs of an intellectually developing society in relation to the day to day explosion of human knowledge. It keeps pace with the changing pattern of each factor - the book, the reader and the staff - and finds out answers and solutions to every new situation that develops year after year through the stream of time and current of growth.

The past few decades have seen the development and growth of a new science, hither to unkown, neglected and ignored. Library Science has evolved itself with a serious scientific discipline with its own language and jargon and has carved out a unique place for itself. It has grown from practical instruction for preserving books to the perfect theories of classification, cataloguing, documentation, reference service, etc. This branch of knowledge now offers courses in masters level as well as post graduate level. More recently two other fields of study related to Library Science have evolved:

54 S. N. Agarwal, Perspectives in Library and Information Science Vol. I., Lucknow, Print House (India), 1982, p. 4
Library Automation

This age is also known as an age of information explosion. There has been tremendous growth in information in all fields of knowledge. The rate of information accumulation is accelerating immensely. Today the information and knowledge are not only stored in printed materials but in film strips, phono records, cassettes, microfilms, etc.

As the range and the extent of information increases, so do the problem of identifying, extracting and thus using the information. Computers have come to the rescue of modern man to store and retrieve information. Computerisation has revolutionised the entire library programme such as cataloguing, issuing, checking, etc. We are going to see in the future an entirely different form of information storage, transmission and retrieval system which will be largely "paperless." 55

Source for the Study

This study about the "Public Library Movement in Kerala: A Historical Analysis" has been mainly based on the unpublished documents available at Central Archives, Trivandrum such as the "Royal Edict of Maharaja Sree Swathi Thirunal; the first government grant to the Trivandrum Public Library, Royal Edict of 1834 (1000 M. E.) to start the first English School by Government at Trivandrum

(Archives Record No.134), Royal Edict of 1883 of Sree Visakam Thirunal to start a Public School (Record No.132) and Royal Edict of 1819 of Sree Swathi Thirunal to start a school at Chengannor.

Unpublished documents like the Agreement between the Government of Travancore and subscribers of Trivandrum Public Library to the Museum Bungalow, Notice of 11 May 1854 to Natives and European Community of Travancore, First Government Grant to the People's Library, Trivandrum—Neetu (Edict) issued by Maharaja Ayilyam Thirunal; were also consulted for the construction of this work.

The Committee Reports of Trivandrum Public Library, the Committee Reports of Kerala Grandhasala Sangham and the Committee Reports of many other small libraries were also the original unpublished documents consulted during the period of my research.

The other primary sources consulted for the construction of this research work are the Kerala Public Library Bill of 1959, 1971 and 1978. Also the Report of the Education Commission, 1966, and the Report of the Advisory Committee for Libraries 1959 were among their original documents consulted.

Apart from the original unpublished and published documents, the researcher had adopted a new method in the collection of data. Since "Oral History" is considered as a new technique in the collection of datas, the researcher had conducted personal interviews with eminent scholars and contemporary personalities of the period such as Shri E. M. S. Namboodiripad, the then Chief Minister of Kerala; 1957, Mr. P. V. Varghese, the previous State Librarian of Kerala, Mr. L. U. Vidyasagar, Administrative Assistant, Trivandrum Public Library, Mrs. Sarojini Amma, Senior Superintendent
of Kerala Grandha Sala Sangham, and Prof. M. N. Ramakrishna, Head of the Department of Library Science, Kerala University, Trivandrum. These interviews helped a lot in the construction of the research paper.

The secondary sources mainly referred are seminar papers presented in All India Library Conferences. Papers presented on the jubilee celebration of Trivandrum Public Library, Papers published in the Souvenirs of All Kerala Library Association, History of Kerala by Padmanabha Menon, Survey of Kerala History and Social and Cultural History of Kerala by Sreedhara Menon, the Development of Library and Library Science in India by Subodh Kumar Mookerjee, R. K. Rout's Library Legislation in India and Kurian K. Thomas' Trivandrum Public Library. Lots of other secondary sources have been consulted which are mentioned in the bibliography.

The main body of this research paper consists of eight chapters. Through these eight chapters, the researcher unfolds the history of a popular - Public Library Movement in India.

Chapter I deals with the introduction and definitions of different terms. This chapter also discusses the different concepts of library. It explains how the libraries first became an exclusive place to preserve books, which finally goes to the masses. This chapter also discusses the beginning of library movement in England and elsewhere.

Chapter II explains the public library's situation in the country as a whole. This chapter explains the historical development of ancient libraries in India and its limited role in imparting education to a selected few. This chapter discusses the new era
in Public Library Movement in detail.

Chapter III explains the cultural heritage of Kerala and her contributions to enrich the cultural tradition of India. It also deals with the establishment of early educational institutions (Gurukulas) and libraries in Kerala.

Chapter IV of this research paper describes the establishment of the first public library of Kerala and thus a new era in the social and intellectual life of Kerala had begun. This chapter proves with the help of contemporary original documents that the Trivandrum Public Library as one of the oldest public libraries in modern India.

Chapter V deals with the efforts of Kerala Legislative Assembly in the preparation of a Library Bill for Kerala State from 1957 onwards. Several attempts have been made to bring a library legislation for Kerala, but one way or the other it did not become fruitful. The researcher had conducted interviews with eminent statesmen like E. M. S. Namboodiripade, the then Chief Minister of Kerala in 1957 whose ministry also tried to bring out a library legislation for entire Kerala State.

Chapter VI discusses the beginning of Kerala Grantha Sala Sangham and its contribution in launching a mass and popular education programme. This chapter also deals with effects of the different programmes launched by the Kerala Grantha Sala Sangham.

Chapter VII is the conclusion and it analysis the total development of this popular movement and its effects on the social and educational life of the people of Kerala. This chapter also
deals with possible lessons other states could learn from the history and development of Public Library Movement in Kerala. Also the researcher wishes that this movement even though it is regional in nature, but it should be viewed with a broad perspective, so that our nation as a whole could be benefitted from this movement and it could stimulate other states to launch such programmes for the total development of the citizens of our country.

A summary of the Library Bill of 1959, a glossary of Malayalam and Sanskrit terms are included in the appendix. All other illustrations, maps, graphs, etc., are included in the body itself wherever it is mentioned in the paper for the immediate reference and convenience.