CHAPTER - IV

LIBRARY : EVOLUTION AND KINDS
4.1 EVOLUTION OF LIBRARY

The development of the fundamentals of library science can best be treated by dividing its progress into three major periods - ancient, medieval and modern.

4.1.1 Ancient Period

The earliest evidence of the existence of a library was found in the library established by Sargon I, the semi-legendal ruler of Akkad in 3800 B.C. In this library were stored recorded experiences of mankind on backed clay tablets. In circa (2500-200 B.C.), Babylonia had libraries practically in all principal cities. These libraries had about 25,000 clay tablets which were classified under various subjects like astronomy, grammar, hymns, legends, divination and demonology.

In ancient Egypt, the Libraries consisted of papyrus rolls including sacred book, works on history, philosophy, science, medicine, stories and satirical and humorous writings. The most celebrated Egyptian library which was founded near close of the 4th century
B.C. was at Alexandria. It had a collection of about 700,000 papyrus rolls. The Alexandria library formed a part of a temple to Jupiter serapis. It had a regular staff numbering more than forty scholars-cum-librarians and it was considered the best organised and administered library of its time. The wars between Egyptians and the Romans brought a catastrophe to the famous library and the entire library was destroyed by the Odosius. The Great Wallace in his book "So you want to be a Librarian" lamented on the destruction of this library and said, "In their pride and anger, the fightings and soldiers perhaps never realised that they were doing irreparable harm not only to their own people but also to those of succeeding centuries."4

The libraries of ancient Rome were established by the Roman out of the spoils from the countries they conquered.5 Rome had private as well as public libraries. Both Julius Caesar and his adopted son Augustus were interested in establishing libraries for the use of their people.

The libraries of ancient India were as old as the Indus Valley Civilisation. This civilisation
flourished in India about 8,000 years ago. The ancient libraries stocked a large number of sylinders, seals and tablets with some inscription on them. From the accounts of professor Gordon Childe, it is evident that these libraries had been housed in well-planned buildings made of backed bricks. In India these institutions were known by different names such as granthagar, pustakalaya etc. From the writings of well-known authors of this period like Sir John Marshall, S. Piggott, M. S. Vats, R. E. M. Wheeler, Ratha Kamal Mukharji and E. Mackay, it is clear that not only pictography but also the art of writings was known to the Indians earlier than it was known to Egyptians. According to Sir John Marshall, the Indus Valley Civilization was in some respect 'superior to that of contemporary Mesopotamia and Egypt' From the writing of these recognised authorities, it is concluded that the Indus Valley Civilisation was highly developed and the highly cultured people had well-organised libraries to preserve the records of the achievements of their wonderfully rich civilisation.

But a sudden end came to the well-flourished Indus-Valley Civilisation and this old civilisation
gradually decayed and went to pieces in course of time. Then came Aryan Civilisation. No reliable evidence was available regarding the nature of libraries of this period.

Next to Aryan Civilisation came 'The Vedic Period'. The literature of this period included the Vedas and Vedangas, i.e. the Upanishads, the Brahamans and the Aranyakas. The existence of these enormous amount of literature indicated that Indians knew the art of writings as early as 2500 B.C. The inscriptions of Ashok proved that the Buddhist texts were prescribed for daily perusal and recital of monks and deity. Hence writing was extensively used in Buddhist India and the reading of Manuscripts was widely practised. From the grammatical sutras of Panini, who fired in India in fourth century B.C., it is clearly revealed that Granthas (books) in manuscript form existed in those days. Panini himself classified the literature of his times into four classes.

The above literature flourished and enriched further by the great scholar of the Maurya Renaissance
(322-150 B.C.) and the Brahamanical Renaissance (150 B.C.). Between 60 B.C. and A.D. 300, the message of Buddhism was carried to China, Java, Burma and Ceylon in the form of Buddhist texts and translations. During this highly cultured age of Indian literature, two great universities, i.e. Nalanda and Vallabhi were founded by Gupta and Maitreka Kings in A.D. 1414 and A.D. 475 respectively. Stone depicting Birchbark, Palmleaf, bhujapatra and Copper plates were used by Buddhist monks and scholars for writings. Facts also indicated that the people of this age were genuinely interested in learning and the use of scriptures. Naturally for the preservation and use of this literature, there were libraries, either in separate building of their own or attached to temples or monasteries.

4.1.2 Medieval Period

During medieval period, the Christians all over the Roman world, with a view to organise and spread Christianity, collected manuscript of the Hebrew text as well as Greek version of the Old Testament. These Church collections marked the beginning of the monastic
libraries. "To the monasteries were brought books that had been saved when the ancient libraries were destroyed and it is due to the patient work of the monks in copying old manuscripts that so much classical literature has been preserved till today." Italy was the first country where, in the abbey at Montecasino, the Benedictine monks established the first monastic library in A.D. 529. Daily reading and study were made compulsory for the monks. Manastic libraries spread from Italy into England, Ireland, France, Spain and even to USA. By the influence of monastic libraries, there were carrels in latest library building in USA. The carrel was simply a tiny apartment which accommodated a single reader, usually opened at one side. It was made of wood resembling a sort of sentry-box. In the monasteries, only the older monks were permitted the use of a carrel. The well-known libraries of England of this period were those of Canterbury York, Warmouth, Jarrow, Whithy, Gluistonbury, Crowland, Peterborough and Durham. In the Islamic world, libraries were established at Bagdad, Cordova, Cairo and Tripoli. Greek manuscripts were eagerly sought for and translated into Arabic.
Unlike Europe, it is in this age in India that the great universities and libraries started coming into existence. Some archeological and literary evidences and the accounts of Chinese visitors like Fa-Hian, Hiuen-Tsang and I-Tsing revealed that since the 4th century B.C. writing was known to people of India. There were books available in manuscript forms and they were kept in classified order. Hiuen Tsang found well-organised libraries and scholars in the monasteries of Nagardhanavihira, Matipur, Svetapura, Tiloshika and Jummo (Patato) where he studied and spent some time. The third eminent Chinese pilgrim I-Tsing stayed in India for 24 years between A.D. 671 to A.D. 695. Following are his comments on the libraries on page 192 of his diary:

Another kind of property held by the monasteries was their libraries. They were stocked only with Buddhist scriptures and their commentaries. If there were gifts of non-Buddhist works, they were sold and the proceeds utilized by monasteries for other purposes.

Nalanda, Vikramasila and Mithila were important learning centres and universities which had well-
organised libraries for the use of their students and teachers. S.C. Vidyabhusan in "Medieval school of Indian Logic" commented:

The University possessed a well-equipped library. It was situated in a special area known by the poetical name of Dharmaganja (Heart of Religion), and comprised three huge buildings, Ratnasagar, Ratnodhadhi and Ratnananjaka of which Ratnasagar, was a nine storied building specialised in the collection of rare sacred works like prajaparmitra sutra and Tantrika books like Samajagutya and the like.  

So far the existence of libraries during the Muslim period is concerned, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad opined:

The Sultans and later the Mughal emperors were also great lovers of books. In fact during the Mughal time it was the fashion for every nobleman to build-up his own library. One was in fact not regarded as an aristocrat unless he had a library of his own. Nevertheless, the benefits of these libraries were confined to royalty and the nobility.

4.1.3 Modern Period

The dawn of modern era began with the invention of printing machine with movable type by
John Gutenburg in A.D. 1454. Since then, there was a great revolutionary change in the history of library science. By the beginning of the 15th century A.D., the collection of books were so high that books were kept in more than one place and the inconvenience of the scattered repositories made the provision of a room for the sole purpose of a library a necessity.

Chains began to fall into disuse in the 17th century when the libraries were revived after their almost total suppression in the sixteenth century. But they continued especially in the parochial and church libraries to a much later date. While the chains themselves disappeared, their influence persisted for a while. In one curious respect the books continued to be shelved with their fore-edges facing the reader and the titles were littered on the clasps or bands with which the boards of the book were fastened.¹⁶

The seminar or department libraries also came into being for the first time in Germany in the beginning of the nineteenth century. There were simply private conferences between the professor and little
group of advanced students for the critical study of the sources of medieval history in the professor's own library.  

By the end of the nineteenth century, the German seminar libraries had grown to such an extent that many of them were dignified with the name of Institutes bibliothemen. By 1893, the Prussian University libraries, Leipzig and Munich, had 114 Seminar libraries with over a thousand titles. The Seminar libraries of England were greatly influenced by German libraries. After the first Public Library Act of 1950, there were 510 municipal and 94 country library Authorities in Great Britain and Northern Ireland operating library services from over 30,000 service points in 1954. Before 1870 the condition of 'Seminar Libraries in U.S.A. was not very satisfactory. Only Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth and Williams had separate buildings devoted exclusively to library purpose. The idea of seminar and departmental libraries were so deeply rooted in the minds of those young men educated in Germany that, John Hopkins preferred to establish the departmental libraries and the central library
afterwards. Sixteen years later, essentially the same system was inaugurated at Chicago. The seminar method of University instruction was first introduced in U.S.A. in A.D. 1869. From Michigan University, the experiment spread to Cornell Harvard, Missouri etc.²²

The modern library movement in India began in A.D. 1910 in Baroda. The pioneer of the modern library movement in India was Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda. He established a public Library at Baroda. Among the other earliest universities, those in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras were founded in 1857. The Allahabad, Banaras, Mysore, Patna and Osmania University libraries were established in 1887, 1916, 1917 and 1918 respectively.²³ Later, the university libraries of Lucknow, Delhi, Nagpur, Andhra and Kerala were founded in 1922, 1923, 1926 and 1937 respectively.²⁴ Between 1938 and 1976, almost all the rest of the university libraries in India including Punjab university library, Chandigarh came into existence. India had her National Library after she won her independence in 1947. In 1948, the Imperial library was renamed by the government of India as the 'National Library!'
During the First-Five-Year Plan (1951-56), the proposal for a national central library at New Delhi was made. Nine state Governments, i.e. Assam, West Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, PE, PSU, Rajasthan, Saurastra, Bhopal and Vindya Pradesh decided to set up State Central Libraries. Under the Second Five-Year Plan (1956-61) the Government of India allocated about Rs.140 lakh for setting up a country-wide net-work of libraries in her 320 districts. In the Third Five-Year Plan (1961-66), the Government of India recognised that an adequate system of libraries is an essential part of any well-organised system of education and proposed to develop all four National libraries at Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Under the Fourth Five-Year Plan, the Planning Commission had appointed a working group on libraries consisting of librarians and educationists of India with Prof. V.K.R.V. Rao as its Chairman. During Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-79) no separate mention was made about the libraries. However, the University Grants Commission allocated more than 25 percent for the purchase of library books and journals. Both in Sixth and Seventh Five-Year Plans,
Government of India sanctioned huge amount of rupees for modernisation of public libraries and introducing computing system, photographic system and different models to the library services. Padmashri Dr. S.R. Ranganathan, the father of modern library science in India, guided the Government in development of library Science. The American Library Association passed a resolution in January 1992 expressing appreciation and gratitude to Prof. Ranganathan for his sincere endeavours in library science. 29

Even today, the library movement in India is far behind the advance made in the Western Countries, notably the U.S.A., the U.K., the U.S.S.R., German and Japan. 30

4.2 KINDS OF LIBRARIES

The foregoing narrations classify needs as (i) human needs of general nature (ii) human needs of academic nature, and (iii) human needs of special nature. On the basis of these needs, libraries are classified into three categories as:
4.2.1 Public Library

The public libraries cater to the overall general needs of the society. These are the libraries of the people. To cover the entire population of a country and its multiple groups, there is need of libraries for the whole nation. Such libraries during the course of the century have emerged in the developed and developing nations.

4.2.2 Academic Library

Looking to the academic needs of the society, schools, Colleges, universities and research establishments, Academic Libraries have been established. The nature of collection of these libraries depends upon the level of education imparted, the subject taught and the needs of the students and teachers connected with them. These libraries operate in the light of
the objectives and policies of the educational institutions to which they are attached.

4.2.3 Business (Special) Library

There are the libraries to meet the requirement of people engaged in the pursuit of a special subject, business or undertaking. The libraries for various government departments, legislatures, judiciary, commercial enterprises, industries and number of special institutes are the examples of this type of library. Thus, these vary from one another and are independent also. These libraries are the major sources of information in the organisation to which they are attached. Thus, a business library looks to the objectives of the institutions they are linked with.

REFERENCES

2. *ibid.*

3. *ibid.*


8. Sharma, *loc.cit.*, p. 17


18. ibid., pp.10-11.


24. ibid.


28. ibid.
