CHAPTER II

PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM
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2.1. Concepts

Orderly arrangement of entities or ideas is a system. No organisation can be successful without a system. For a big social and cultural oriented organisation like public library set up, a well structured system is required. The public library structure which will be suitable for Manipur State is suggested at Chapter 8. The structure is based on the concept, objectives and functions of the public library. It is therefore required to discuss the concepts of public library system, the objectives and functions of public library.

There are various concepts of public library. It is quite natural because it is a library which served the whole of the society which consists various types of people.

One of the most internationally accepted definition of public library is that, "it is a library - (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 intended as an auxiliary educational institution providing a means of self-education which is endless, (iv) which houses Reading materials giving reliable information freely and without partiality or prejudice on as wide a variety of subjects as will satisfy the interests of readers."¹
Curiosity of human being is endless. Maximum of the curiosity can be achieved if he educates himself. Public library being a public property, there is no restriction to use them by any citizen and can judge himself by reading and acquiring the right knowledge. For knowledgeable person there is no barrier of space and time and as such they read more and more. Public library is the only place where they can read throughout the life without paying any fee or of such kind.

There is a great similarity between the concepts of public library and democracy. In democracy every citizen is equally sovereign and has the same right of education. In the same way every citizen can see and consult the refined thought of the priests, philosophers, poets, scientists and so on, collected in the forms of documents in the public libraries. Great many useful ideas of great men could be recorded on tape or documented for posterity which have been conveyed through any media. Therefore, the libraries, where the documents are kept, is of high value.

Public library is a store house of old and new thoughts and a generating house of further new ideas. In fact new findings couldn't be possible without peeping into the existing thoughts. It is a force for inspiration to new thoughts.

Library is the feeder of knowledge and life giver in education, may be formal or informal. The value of society increases when there
is well set up public library in the society. Sharma observes that "the library is an ancient social institution and its origin and growth is closely linked with human civilization." \(^2\)

Public library is the mirror that reflects the personality of the society, where library is situated. It is a means for successful democracy. It enables a society to flourish educationally, economically, scientifically, socially and culturally at all levels and at all time. It is a key to information and public understanding. Well-informed citizen is the real asset of democracy. Public library helps in eradication of illiteracy and extension of education. Prof. Vishwanathan in this regard observes public library as "a centre of communal study, an information bureau, a continuation school, and a training school for democracy." \(^3\)

Earning of knowledge is the birth right of everybody. But in many areas there is limitation of it, say in ancient times though there were libraries in the palaces and temples, the books in the libraries are consultable only by noble-men and priests. In academic libraries and special libraries too only the concerned members of the institutions are allowed to use the books and earned the knowledge embodied in the books. Here the term book meant all short of documents like periodicals, pamphlets, newspapers, micro-cards, microfilms, micro-fiche, films, cassettes, computers, so on and so forth. Public library is the only place where everybody can avail the facilities of acquiring knowledge from the books, talks,
exhibitions etc. for the purpose of education, information, recreation, culture, aesthetic appreciation etc. Alvin Johnson rightly calls a public library as 'People's University.' Leaving aside the old verdicts of public libraries and self-oriented libraries like academic and special libraries to-day we mean public libraries as "a library open to all without the distinction of caste, creed or sex; free of charge, supported by legislation and which houses books and other reading materials for use. "

Librarians' Glossary and Reference book 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. A major agency of the enlightenment for adults, providing also for children the recorded experiences of others which will help them to grow adulthood. " The UNESCO in its public library Manifesto of 1949 defines public library as a "living force for popular education, culture and information and as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and understanding between people and nations. From the educational point of view and sociological significance to the people, a free public library is second only perhaps to the system of formal education. "

Mr. Bryan Luckham observes public library in the following words: "The public library is open to all those who choose to enter. No restriction because of fees or financial status exists. It might be thought therefore that the nature of the public library which uses the library would
be solely a consequences of the decisions made by the potential customers. The public library, however, is a social institution operating in a dynamic environment of aspiration, expectations, and ideologies, manned and controlled by personnel who can modify the character of the service offered is significant, even subtle ways. Further more, it is an environment which can change considerably in relatively short periods of time. 

The relation of the public library with the society is so deep that one can’t exist without the other. Until and unless the stored knowledge in the libraries is retrieved to the users the knowledge will be just like sharp iron tools hidden inside the earth. The knowledge will have no value as the tools are wasted by corrosion. The professionals in the public library should therefore make accessible to all the citizens of the area under jurisdiction to the library collection and make flow of all the knowledge through different medias. The observation of Prof. K.S. Deshpande in this regard is worth to mention. He says: "The public library is a fountain from which the currents of culture, intelligence and enlightenment flow into the community. It is a beehive of activities, so to enrich the life of the community. It is a fountain, not reservoir."

Turning to other concept Public Library System as a system is: "An arrangement or combination, as of parts of elements, in a whole, especially such an arrangement according to some principles." The concept of the 'public library system' encompasses every kind of public libraries such as a state, city, district, branch, village and so on. Every library
in the system are interdependent. The necessity of the public library system arises out of the following reasons:

"(a) it is a co-operative and organic structure in which every unit, however, small, is a rich as the whole system;

(b) it has larger funds which allows for a balanced and even development of public library service over larger areas, irrespective of local variations or imbalances in financial support;

(c) it is comparatively more economical; and

(d) it can provide library services more efficiently and effectively because it can permit introduction of library services based on modern concepts of service and approved standards."\(^{10}\)

Emphasising the need of public library system, Dr. S.R. Ranganathan says: "Public library system is the only possible neutral agency to give unbiased political, economical and industrial information to enable the voters to form their own judgement in helping the progress of the country and keeping vigilance over the performance of the Governments."\(^{11}\)

Unity is strength. If the units in the system are co-ordinated the whole public library system will be powerful and will bring economical efficiency and overall development of public libraries in the state. Public
library system aims at giving free library service to one and all citizen without any discrimination. The moment Public Library System is formed, the so-called library networking will come automatically. In that case every unit through the State Central Library which is the apex of the state library system will get information from National and International sources by means of communication media. Nowadays with the introduction of space satellite information can avail from distant sources in seconds. Therefore, the old verdict public library system became an example of library system in other types of libraries too. To-day there are so many worldwide information systems like VINITI, NISSAT, UNISIST, ISORID, INIS, MEDLINE, AGRIS, NICNET etc.

Today, many people are talking about the population explosion and information explosion. If we examine these explosions closely, it is nothing else but the uncontrollable addition of population and information. If we keep a system of controlling the population and properly used of the information, there will be no such problems. In a very simple example the whole air all around us has the capacity to transmit radio and television but if we don’t have the radio set and T.V. set we could not avail any such facilities. In the same way, if we don’t have a system of public library we will not be able to give the necessary services to the general mass. In short nothing can exist without a system. A system is said to be good only when there is good co-ordination among all the parts. Public library is one of the most important social organisation. It has to give reading facilities and information to all the community in the best possible way.
Necessity is the mother of invention. Library co-operation and resource sharing amongst the libraries in the system is therefore quite necessary. Well organised public library system could ensure resource sharing among the libraries in the system and make enable co-operation with other libraries out of the system in the form of inter-library-loan etc.

Justice, Ekbote observes a library system as "to provide accessibility of service through national, state, district, block and village libraries, deposit centres and mobile libraries together with a pool of resources and services in depth and in variety, used in common by all the outlets. A public library of whatever kind on becoming a part of a system, assumes a new role of being a vital link connecting the base with the full resources of the system and through it, the resources of the state and, if possible of the nation. "

2.2 Objectives and Functions

Public library being a social institution there are various objectives to be fulfilled. The first and foremost objective is to educate every citizen of the country by giving reading facilities, audio visual, talk, film shows etc. It supplements formal education and take a great responsibility for informal education. The so called education generally meant the educational facilities given to the academic institutions. Government spend a lot of money on education. But if one observes minutely, it
is easily conceived that only a few persons that too for a few years in the life-time are associated in the academic institutions for formal education. The public library, however, takes care of all the people to educate throughout their lives. The present public libraries not only give reading facilities to the library beneficiaries but also tried to attract more and more people by educating them the usefulness of the public libraries in molding themselves into intellectuals. Some advanced states realized that public library is one of the best methods of mass education and as such they passed library Acts. Public library is undoubtedly the best institution for life self education. In India there are various programmes of education, planned with an emphasis to one or the other age groups. For example, we have Angalwadi centres, Adult education programmes, General education, Research laboratories etc. Public library supplements in all the educational programmes. Formal education, which is imparted in schools, colleges, universities, research laboratories etc. is not sufficient for one's overall build up of his personality. Non-formal education or self education takes vital role to wipe out whatever lacuna remains during formal education. Education really starts from the birth and ends with death. Public library is the best institution to supplement formal education and also the best means to achieve informal education. Because public library welcomes every citizen of the community to use the documents procurred by the library and also helps the library users to get their desired documents by borrowing through Inter-Library-loan etc. Such objectives can be fulfilled only when there is public library system covering entire area of a nation.
The science of evolution tells us that human being of the present
century are more intelligent than the ancient people. The root cause
is nothing else but the addition of formulated ideas of the ancestors
to the new generation. No knowledge can be built without the foundation
which was laid down by the ancestors. The knowledge which human
being earned from time immemorial are accumulated through different
media. The public library is one of the media which disseminates to
the person who seek to use the knowledge gainfully. The advanced coun-
tries of the world know this benefit. India is also one of the most impor-
tant cradles of world civilization. Many intellectual ideas expressed
in earthen wares, stones, metals, papyrus, leaves etc. are the innumerable
sources of knowledge. The philosophical ideas content in Upanishad,
Vedas, Gita, Mahabharata, Ramayan, epics etc. are known to the world
over. All of them were composed in ancient India. Many civilizations
may grow up or decay. However, written thought of learned scholars
will be never lost. To preserve such valuable thoughts for posterity
is one of the objectives of the public library. So, that the new generation
will reap the fruit of knowledge from the tree of philosophical ideas
planted by the ancestors.

In fact "Public libraries have assumed greater importance than
ever before as the people's university, where irrespective of wealth
and education keep from getting lost as also where amateurs and pro-
fessionals alike should have full and free access for what they need
or like for their daily life."13
Illiteracy is a great barrier to the advancement of a country. In India more than 60% of people are illiterates. The Government of India has taken up many illiteracy eradication programmes. Among them mention may be made of the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP). This was launched on 2nd October, 1978. The programme lost sight of the significance of the public library. But in fact, public library of today has a great role to play in eradication of illiteracy. Different methods are being utilised to attract illiterates, neo-literate, children, physically handicapped persons etc. to the public libraries.

One of the objectives of a public library shall be to advance and disseminate learning process knowledge by diverse means, including the use of communication technology, to provide opportunities for education to all segments of the population and to promote the educational well being of the community as a whole. "Free public library service is the birth right of the people. In the absence of a strong public library base no super structure of higher kinds of libraries will ensure raising the literacy standard of the masses. Public library is not merely a culture of recreation enjoyed by elite classes. Its role has undergone a radical transformation under the impact of growing socio-economic complexity and the consequent rise in the potential demand for information needed by all members of the society."

Public library is a place where culture of different countries and periods are confluenced. Traditional culture of any country can be studied from the cultural heritage of the country. Public library
recreates and enliven the minds of different cultural groups by providing space for discussions, lectures, musical and dramatic performances, folk-songs, dances, films, exhibitions etc. Thus a variety of cultural activities could be clubbed together. Public library can easily encourage the young and the old to make a creative use of their leisure. India is a land of unity amongst diversities. Public library has such similar objective. Public library not only preserves our cultural traditions but functions as a channel of transmission of the same to the present and the coming generations.

Generally, there is fatigue mind in the fatigue body. Recreation refresh both body and mind. A fresh mind can find out many clues within a short time which hundreds of dull minds cannot do. Public library is a recreation centre. Many creative thoughts may be generated in a public library. Even mentally frustrated youth of today may be converted into a good citizen of tommorrow after seeing the calm and quiet atmosphere of the library, the helping attitude of the library staff, the excitement of readers and the compactness of the knowledge arranged in the library stocks.

Local collection materials depicting the culture and activity of the region is a popular demand of today. The public library felt it from the very beginning. Local collection gives priority in public library. If one wants to do research concerning with an area, first of all he/she has to survey the documents of that locality which is collected in the
local library. In this way the researcher will get a wide spectrum of knowledge of the area under his study. Next, the researcher can conduct many people in the library consisting of library staff, students, teachers, scholars, businessmen, professionals, housewives, retired persons, neoliterates etc. The public library has therefore to collect all the documents on the locality and by the local writers. The public library has also to play a dynamic role in procuring information from all sources and has to create and sustain the interest of the community. Sky-scraper cannot be built without proportionate foundation. In the same way for the existence of a Network of public library system, regional or local libraries are required.

Carl M. White laid down the objectives of a public library as follows:

(i) "to accumulate and make available work of the mind, regardless of when or where the work was done;
(ii) to afford access to all responsible intellectual work without interference from political or religious authority;
(iii) to further research;
(iv) to aid formal institutions;
(v) to supply the information the management of practical affairs;
(vi) to promote popular enlightenment and enrich human life.\(^{15}\)

Public library is an information centre. Every document collected in the library is a source of information. In ancient times clay tablets,
stones, metals, leaves, barks etc. were used as writing materials. Libraries could not procure much of such documents. But after the invention of printing press in the 15th Century number of documents increased considerably. To-day with the increase of research activities and development of science and technology, information can be recorded in different media also. The exponential growth of information through different media are so great that the present world is facing the information explosion. Public library is one of the agents which procures and arranges the documents systematically and made available the right information at the right time to the right person. It will enable the person to aware the up-to-dateness of the information he desires and help himself to form his own opinion and develop his ideas in a new dimension. The UNESCO Public Library Manifesto observes "The public library is concerned with the communication of information and ideas, whatever the form in which these may be expressed. It added since the printed word has been for centuries the accepted medium for the communication of knowledge, ideas and information, books, periodicals, newspapers remain the most important resources of public libraries. But science and technology have created new forms of record and these will become an exhibition to the public library's stock. These include print in reduced form for compact storage and transport, like films, micro-cards, microfische, slides, gramophone records, audio and video tape etc. with the necessary equipment for individual use and for cultural activities."

The steady glow of a bulb needs continuous generation of electricity. Education which sharpens the mind also needs continuous supply
of reading, writing, audio and visual materials. Only extensive public library system will ensure and safeguard the acquired education throughout the life. Library is considered as power house of ideas. Because it accumulates documents where ideas are depicted. Supporting this view S.K. Mukerjee says: "Ideas are the things that brought man out of the jungle, language is the vehicle by which ideas are conveyed, print is the invention by which language is preserved. Libraries are the power plants where ideas in printed language are kept ready for everybody's use."17

Every part of a body has its own function. When some parts of the body cannot function the whole body is affected. Similarly, the whole country will not be progressive if some groups of community or areas are backward. Government make many efforts for all round development by giving financial assistance, education, medical facilities, transportation, appointment etc. to the backward community and area. Public library is also one of the agents for educating and informing of the backward community and area. The clientele to be served by public library consist of all members of the community. Poor people of the backward community and area do not know the substantial benefit of the public library. The main causes are poverty of the people, difficult to access into the library, ignorance of the services provided by the library and inferiority complex of the people. The remedy of these factors will be by library publicity and mobile library services. There will be nothing more generous than to make enlighten citizen of all community
in the society without the distinction of rural and urban, poor and rich, illiterate and literate, non-professional and professional. "The library of today acknowledges that knowledge is a public utility which should not be the priviledge of the few, i.e. the elite, the royalty and the rich as it used to be in the pre 19th century." Street light leads passerby the way of their destination. In the same way public libraries leads all people to get their desired knowledge and information. There is no barrier to the knowledge seekers. The objectives of the public library here is that "It must be free of direct charge ; it must be free of physical barriers against access to books (and kinder materials) ; and its stock must be free of any load censorship, creding the reader with the ability to make up his own mind. Such a library is not only a necessary concomitant of democracy, it is an expression of faith in civilization." To make knowledgeable and informative society is the sole objective of a public library. The idea behind this is that well informed and educated citizen is the real asset of a country. Public library is the outcome of this necessity. Popularity and understanding of the need of public library is growing up all over the world. More and more people are assessing the libraries and helping themselves to acquire more and more knowledge for their personal development. Without public libraries many people are feeling themselves as going to a desert where there is no oasis. Many other people who left formal education are feeling themselves lapsed into illiteracy. Public library is required everywhere and everytime for the existence of a lively society.
To sum up the objectives of a public library are:

1. to collect, preserve and organise the documents for promoting, guiding and stimulating of enlightened citizenship;

2. to make known and to inform up-to-date knowledge and reliable information to one and all;

3. to be the perennial source of knowledge of all ages;

4. to be the light house to the knowledge seekers in the vast oceans of knowledge;

5. to be the axis around which the whole universe of subjects rotates;

6. to be the laboratory of cultural and social research;

7. to be a recreation centre and an exhibition arena for creative thinking and exchange of ideas;

8. to be an asylum of those persons who have left out formal education;

9. to be a permanent repository centre of all the reading materials published in the area of the public library and documents written by other people concerning with the area of the library;

10. to be a node of information network and a centre or sub-centre of library resource sharing;

11. to be a shrine of knowledge and an ideal place of secularism;

12. to provide opportunity and encouragement of education to one and all citizen throughout his/her life;

13. to promote and co-operate to set up a public library system in the state by developing reading habits;
14. to be a clearing house for ideas and information of the area under jurisdiction;
15. to take all measures for the promotion of creating, thinking and utilization of leisure time purposefully;
16. to provide opportunities for life long self education to all segment of the community;
17. to promote literacy of one and all;
18. to provide reliable and up-to-date information to the public;
19. to promote scientific and technical transformation of ideas; and
20. to accumulate and relay the deathless messages of the genious people to the new generation for finding the way to heaven.

No objective or aim purpose cannot be fulfilled without proper function thereof. There is inseparable relation between the objectives of a public library with their functions. They are interlinked and interdependent. One cannot exist without the other. There are enormous functions of a public library. The application may however differ from one library to another with the size and capabilities of the library.

According to Dr. S.R. Ranganathan, the father of Indian library movement, public library is a social institution and as such it has to serve the whole community of the society and has to perform the following functions to attain the purposes:
1. It should help the life-long self-education of one and all;

2. It should furnish up-to-date facts and information on all subjects to one and all;

3. It should distribute, in an unbiased and balanced way, all shades of recorded views and thought to one and all, as a help in the discharge of their political functions in respect of local, national, and international affairs;

4. It should contribute to productivity-drive by informing top-managements of the latest trends in diverse enterprises, by ploughing back into the minds of researchers, designers, and technologist every piece of relevant new thought, promptly and pin-pointedly;

5. It should provide to one and all a harmless and elevating use of leisure;

6. It should preserve the literacy remains of humanity for posterity, as vehicles of culture and as source materials for antiquarian research; and in general

7. It should work for continued social well-being as the agency in charge of all socialised recorded thought.

Thus, library has educational, informational, political, economic, industrial, cultural and antiquarian functions.20

The UNESCO in its public library manifesto revised by the Public Library Section (IFLA) has culled out four important objectives and functions of a public library as follows:
"1. **Education** - To foster and provide means for self development of 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 provide materials for change and relaxation."  

Library is the heart of educational institution. Public library which is the centre of continuous self education should be under the continuous care of proper authorities. Perennial flow of knowledge through public libraries to all the citizens of the locality may achieve the governing bodies to support their libraries with proper finance. In support of this view L.R. McColvin defines the objectives and functions of the public libraries as follows:

"1. The provision of public library services should be the responsibility of appropriate public governing authorities and not that of any private or sectional groups;

2. They should be administered, governed and financed by these authorities;
3. They should be freely available for the use of all the people in the community served;

4. They should be as far they can embrace all the needs and interests of these people;

5. They should be free not only financially, but intellectually, i.e. they should be free from bias and purposive objectives; they should afford full, free, unprejudiced opportunity to all who would use them."^22

The functions of a public library have been precisely stated by the Roberts Committee in its report, 1959 as:

"The essential function of a public library is to supply to any reader, or group of readers, the books and related material for which they may ask. This provision should take precedence over all ancillary services and should of course, include a reference library where the reader may consult not only the standard encyclopaedias, bibliographies and other works of reference, but specialized books and journals relating to his own industry or profession or subject or research. It is the function of a public library not only to satisfy, but to promote, the desire for books. Consequently the provision of a children's library with adequate stocks and expert guidance in the choice of books should be regarded as an integral part of the library service."^23

Whenever we want to reach a distant destination we need some means of transportations. In the same way public library has to perform
multifunctionaries to achieve the objectives such as education, information, recreation, culture and so on. For this the public library has to render services to the educational and research institutions, adult educational centres, Nehru Yuvak Kendras, voluntary organisations etc. and organise orientation courses, document exhibitions, lectures, discussion, symposia, film and video shows etc. "If the libraries of a country function on these lines, the then imperishable wealth of a nation, knowledge in books, is not only preserved but also used for the benefit and prosperity of a country. They afford an opportunity for enhancing the dignity and well-being of the common man. Such institutions are vitally needed to enrich human personality and to arrest the degradation of man into a functional unit."²⁴

Whereas the other types of libraries give library facilities to a particular groups of readers who are mostly educated. Public library is the library where library facilities is to be given not only to the literates but also to the illiterates and neo-literate by using different methods, such as:

(i) to read out the contents of the documents at stated hours of the day so that every individual even though they can't read can understand the thought content in the documents;

(ii) to narrate the stories of voyages, expeditions, inventories, discoveries and stories from the classical books;

(iii) to explain the proverbs used by different people and to give the abstract of long passages;
(iv) to produce maps, charts, graphs and cartoons to make known the public the desired information;
(v) to give room for interactions of ideas amongst the library users may be literate, illiterate or neo-literate;
(vi) to arrange jatras(plays), dramas, films, videos etc. so that they may educate themselves without reading; and
(vii) to arrange talks, symposia, exhibitions etc. from time to time.

In a country like India where there is high percentage of illiteracy, the above functions of a public library should be taken up on large scale and swiftly. The greater the public library facilities in a country, the more will be the literate public.

For quite a long time India was under the domination of the British empire. Almost all the people of the country were busy in the struggle for independence. There were no functional public libraries in the country in the true sense of the term. There were no net work of the public library system for providing free and equal facilities to all the people of the country. Education oriented library systems were not introduced. There were hue and cry all over the country in the tussle for independence. This period was described as the dark age in the Indian history by the historians. India regained its independence only on the 15th of August, 1947. There were many necessities at the time of Indian independence. Education which is the most important factor for making an enlighten citizen has come into existence here and there. The function of library in education is just like the
manure which helps in the growth of plant. The foundation of education cannot rooted without functional libraries in support of the education. The important role played by libraries in education has been realising by all, may be laymen or learned persons. Indeed no one can deny the important functions played by a public library in the refinement and upliftment of education of the people in the country. To-day public libraries are considered as power houses which can generate knowledge to one and all citizens of the country. The functions of the public library should be continuous not occasional. As a result of this, public libraries are now considered an essential adjunct par-excellence for any kind of education.

Public library being a social institution the functions should also be adaptable with the society. Both are interdependent. A living public library requires to make an effort to determine how it can meet the demands of the readers in different fields of science, education, culture, information, and so on. Public library is a multipurpose social institution. There are various ways and means by which the librarian can help the individual or group of individuals to get the service from the library. The librarian has to study the interest of the readers. Though there are some common functions of a public library applicable to all people in the society there are some more special functions applicable to only some groups of persons in the society. Say, for example, what will be the use to give several information about sea fishing to the people who dwell in the hilly regions. What is the necessity of giving information about minerals to the
persons who are cultivators by profession. If the librarians does not study the interest of the users, some of his services will be just like giving of comb to the Boudh monks. The functions should be oriented towards the interest of the users in the society. It will bring the awareness of the public of the utility of the public library. Then and there the library can proceed to the other advanced functions of the modern age.

Public libraries, were thought of in the earlier days as mere store houses of books. Those were the days when only formal education was more or less considered as real education. There was limited literature for study because the production of literature or growth of knowledge was very slow, because of the copies of reading material was of handwritten. Thanks to the printing press which was probably invented by "John Gutenberg of the city of Mainz in Germany sometime between 1440 and 1450." 25

The production of literature in various disciplines have been increasing all over the world. The modern public libraries have greater role to play in dissemination of information. The demands of the library users are changing fast due to fast developments in all fields of subjects. To-day, the number of literature which have been increasing in different disciplines are so great that it is beyond the capacity of an individual to digest them all and librarian is facing problem to select the pinpointed, exhaustive and expeditious information for his clientele.  This difficult situation of overflooding information
or knowledge is known as information explosion or knowledge explosion. It is nothing else but the revolution of knowledge. So the functions of the public libraries have to change, the duties of the librarians have to change and the approach of the knowledge or information seekers have to change. To-day, public libraries are no longer mere reservoirs of knowledge and information but the power house from which the current of knowledge and information generated to whosoever it requires. The librarian is no more a mere custodian of books but the master of masters who can guide, educate and inform every citizen of the country to become a master. Therefore Librarian has to equip himself with the new trends of the subjects, new techniques and new methods of rendering services to the readers. Otherwise the outdated functions performed by the library will be useless to the readers. Little learning is said to be dangerous. The same may be true in this age of information explosion if the librarian is not read and trained well. If the librarian doesn't help the clientele at the right time the library users or information seekers may lose right track at the cross roads of information. There are various ways and means of giving the right information to the right reader. Therefore, a librarian should know how to handle the different machines like computer, micro card/fische readers, projectors, reprographic machines etc. He should also use the new techniques of the library and information science for saving the time, money and energy of the readers. The modern sophisticated equipments can store and retrieve information more effectively and more quickly. The dearth of information, space and time barriers have also been removed by
the present telecommunication system. Space satellite is the Indra Lok (Heaven) of the modern age from where everything which is happening in day to day world can be received and transmitted the same information through various media like T.V., Computer, Radio etc. For this a network of information system is required. Otherwise we will not be able to get such marvellous facilities of the present world. Therefore, the library professionals should get the necessary training. Then only he or she will be able to perform the library functions effectively. Up-to-date staff is required for disseminating of up-to-date information.

A functional public library should eliminate any sort of obstructions to the access of knowledge by the library users. All anti-social elements which hampers the functions of the public library should be uprooted and be planted saplings of information for building a rehabilitation centre for such social groups of people. A public library is said to be living neither by the marvellous building of the library nor by the huge collections but by the essential functions performed by the library staff to its readers.

The important functions of the public library may be summed up as follows:

(i) to make public awareness of the use of the public library by organising library extension services like book exhibitions, talks, symposia, film shows etc. and by conducting library orientation programmes;
(ii) to give maximum library facilities to one and all people without the distinction of nationality, religion, caste, creed, sex, age and physique;

(iii) to select and acquire the best documents for best reading for maximum number of users and to reject the sordid, censurable and harmful literatures;

(iv) to preserve the imperishable documents for the present and future generations;

(v) to provide guidance to the library members how to use the catalogues, how to borrow books, how to use the reference tools, how the documents are arranged in the stacks, how to use abstracting and indexing journals so on and so forth. Dr. Shrinath Sahai says "In this age of literature-explosion, regarding with purpose has assumed greater importance and the library has to function as an intellectual clearing house in the community by providing reading guidance to the people so that they may enrich their lives." 26;

(vi) to collect information from all possible sources like T.V., radio, computer, films, books, periodicals, newspapers, pamphlets, speeches etc. and to analyse and classify them for giving only the right information to the right information seekers;

(vii) to encourage library networking, co-operation, resource sharing and to act as an agency of national integration in the quest of knowledge and information;

(viii) to promote research on the locality and by the members of the library in various disciplines;
(ix) to assist to all the illiteracy eradication programmes and be an essential adjunct to general education;
(x) to motivate the public by giving the ways and means of solving the day to day problems faced by them and to make known the research findings for developmental purposes. "The role of the library becomes important here as an agency to inform and enlighten the new techniques and methods developed in the fields of their interest." 27
(xi) to steer the adults towards the intellectual world and make them strong and healthy pillars of the nation's soul and culture;
(xii) to create a congenial atmosphere of reading, writing, thinking and talking;
(xiii) to read out and to explain or to give the substance of contents in the documents to the illiterates and neoliterates at convenient days and hours;
(xiv) to arrange various cultural programmes such as dramas, one act plays, folk songs and dances, musics, games, film shows etc.;
(xv) to transform news, facts and ideas, in the greater form like pictures, charts, maps etc.;
(xvi) to provide scientific and technical know how instructions;
(xvii) to inform scientists, engineers, doctors, industrialists etc. of the articles which may be of value to them by issuing abstracts, indexes, photocopies etc.
(xviii) to be a state repository for books and newspaper published in the state;
(xix) to be a centre of the state public library system through which all the works of the state is made known and available to the rest of the country;

(xx) to seek the truths from the old literatures and utilise them in the light of the present needs;

(xxi) to aid the teachers in keeping abreast of the latest trends in their subjects;

(xxii) to provide services necessary for the success of informal programmes of education;

(xxiii) to open the doors to the wide world of knowledge, content in the documents in the library;

(xxiv) to be partner in conservation of knowledge and ideas, teaching, research, and interpretation of the results of research;

(xxv) to protect documents from their natural enemies like fire, water, insects, fungus, dust, moisture, sunlight and erroneous readers;

(xxvi) to be a match maker agency between documents and users;

and

(xxvii) to attract the attention of the readers to the new arrivals and make desirous of reading more and more.

2.3 Role of public library

Public library is a prime agency for overall advancement of a society. Nobody will deny the important role played by public library in the success of democracy, in the eradication of illiteracy and
on the social and cultural upliftment of a nation. Public library is the keeper of our history and culture. It does not leave any page unturned in the quest of knowledge, which is the source of all power. A nation can easily be assessed by seeing the literature she produces. Because all phenomena of life of the nation is reflected on the literatures. Public library is the place where such literatures are collected. So naturally a public library will enlighten the public how a nation could be flourished because of what and why a nation was decayed from what reasons. It helps the people to choose the right way of doing things and can flourish themselves. Public library is the central point of all the public organisations. "Its role lies in the creation of thinking people, cultivated men and women gifted with disciplined minds, high intellect and moral calibre, nurtured in a climate of freedom of thought and expression and capable of holding opinions independently arrived at to shoulder stupendous responsibilities." 28

The present day public library is the provider of universal knowledge and upto-date information to all people in the society. There is no barrier in the access to the library. P.B. Mangla says: "Public libraries play a vital role in a country's programmes for development and national reconstruction, particularly in areas such as spread of education, dissemination of information, utilization of the leisure time in purposeful activities as well as in programmes for its overall socio-economic development, has been well accepted and even well demonstrated in developed as well as developing countries all over the world." 29
2.3.1 Public library for the eradication of illiteracy and improvement of standard of education

The role of public library in eradication of illiteracy and improvement of education can never be underestimated. Illiteracy is one of the greatest stumbling block in the national development. Generally illiterate persons have inferiority complex. All the scientific and technical changes are alien to them. They are mentally handicapped too. "Millions of rupees are lost in industrial accidents caused by workers who cannot read and comprehend machine instructions or safety procedures. Hiring illiterate has proved to be a risky business. They offer the potential for accidents that can threaten both profits and lives. Absenteeism, low productivity and poor quality product are the fell out of an illiterate work force. The number of illiterates in this field is staggering 60% of the total work force of 244 millions in India. Even in organised sectors have not realised that there is positive connection between literacy and quantitative and qualitative production. As the Indian work place accelerates into the era of high-tech, routine jobs that illiterates have traditionally handled with little difficulty are disappearing."\textsuperscript{30}

Literacy is the open sesame to the wealth of knowledge. It sharpens the mental power and leads towards the civilized way of life. Public library is one of the best agency for raising the percentage of literacy. Because public library is the store house of knowledge open to all people.
Library is the heart of education and public library is the pivot of continuing self education. Education of any kind cannot be successful without library and library exist for education. Prof. R.L. Mittal rightly says: "Education bereft of library service is like a body without soul, a vehicle without an engine and an edifice merely a collection of bricks without cement. Education and library service are twin sisters and one cannot live apart from the other."

Though the importance of formal education needs no further emphasis, yet this alone cannot fulfill one's education. Informal education or self-education which is the continuous process of education also occupies a very significant place in education. Therefore, real education consists of both formal and informal education. Formal education is rendered by educational and research institutions and informal education is received by self from the community in general and from the public library in particular. Thus, public library plays a great role in education may be formal or informal. The public library is an educational institution in the broadest sense of education.

Education is the process of gaining knowledge. There is no limit of knowledge and sources of knowledge. Public library is the place where knowledge of different kinds from different sources are acquired for dissemination to users. Knowledge is the means of achieving goals. Knowledge is changeable from time to time and from place to place. For acquiring up-to-date knowledge constant education is required. There are sufficient educational institutions
in the modern age. But they are for a particular course of studies and for a limited time. Public library is however besides helping the students when they are in educational institutions also help all the people when they are before or after the formal education. Education is the source of individual’s enlightenment, mental happiness, self reliance, moral and spiritual delights. In short, it activated the whole community of the society.

In democracy majority carries the vote. Percentage of India’s people are illiterate. So naturally the representatives of the people elected by the ignorant illiterates will not be satisfactory in the running of the government. So, education is the prime necessity for producing literate and intelligent people in the country. Mentioning the importance of education in the country’s future. D.S. Kothari says "The basic of the education is to promote powers of the mind, acquisition of special skills and advancement of knowledge, but above all, to generate in the young generation a sense of purposefulness and maximum dedication, confidence in themselves and faith in the country’s future." 32

India so far have taken up various programmes of illiteracy eradication programmes and education extension services. Amongst them the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) is the greatest. Huge amount is also spent in this programme. "The Union Government had approved a Rs. 600 crore scheme. It is perhaps, the largest outlay for any single sector in education. A target coverage of 65 million
people in the age group of 15-35 was fixed for 1982-83 with another 35 millions for the year 1983-84. 2 lakh centres were opened under the Minimum Needs Programmes all over the country with a coverage of 58 lakh population as in March, 1985. The aim was to convert 100 million adult illiterates into literates with improved skills. The functional skills, social awareness and literacy were part of the programme. This programme relieves the adults from the hazardous of illiteracy which they have missed in their childhood. NAEP also saves many people from lapsing into illiteracy.

In spite of so many efforts of the central government for the National Adult Education Programme the outcome is not so much satisfactory. The main cause is correctly stated by Justice Gopal Rao Ekbote in the following words: "Although it is contemplated to utilise the services of all possible agencies, unfortunately no particular role has been assigned to public libraries which have been functioning in large numbers all over the country. An aggregate of such neglect and constraints on the spread of universal education has left a vast number of people in the country educationally, and consequently, economically under privileged. It is not clear why public library do not figure in adult education programmes."

2.3.2 Public library for the social and cultural advancement

Human being by nature lives in society. "Culture is the sum-total of the people's endeavours in different fields of life." The
word culture has been variously defined, some have identified it as a code of conduct of social behaviour. If a man is kept separately from society for quite a long time he will behave like an animal and there will be no culture. Etymologically, the word culture has been derived from the Latin Cultura which means cultivation. "In brief culture is formed, shaped and moulded according to the inherent tendencies and mental outlooks, subject to time, place and circumstances factor which forms the basis of its entire political, social, religious and economic activities and are expressed in its arts, sciences, literature, industry and crafts, which in turn reflect the rise and fall of that nation as and when it advances and derogates from the path of progress."36

History recorded all the memorable past events. Library conserves and preserves them for posterity. Therefore, public library which is accessible by all public plays a very significant role in conserving the culture of different countries for moulding and shaping the people in the society in the advancement of culture. In the words of A.K. Mukherjee: "Development of a nation, historically, is reflected in its cultural achievement; and development of libraries, a cultural signpost of any nation, is conditioned by a popular urge for social, economic and intellectual improvement; and to a large extent by the size and organisation of the social order in which the libraries have to function. Library is a part of the general cultural scene."37

"The culture of a country is known by the number of intellectuals it has given birth to and the position they have held in the
society. History of the great cultures reveals that great advances in culture have been made by those people who have sufficient wisdom, valour and drive. With the change of time a culture may also change. But the knowledge and thought of the genious people which are recorded in documents and collected in the libraries will never perish, instead, it will enlighten the path of other in days to come. Public library in fact has considerable influence on the transplantation of cultural heritage of the ancestors for further growth and development. A functional public library is therefore a mirror that reflects the social and cultural life of a country.

Public library is accessible by all individual in the society for their intellectual and cultural advancement. Commenting on the role of public library in society, J.K. Khanna writes: "Library is actually the mind of society it reflects the social aspirations. The modern society now expects man to be self-governing, truth loving, a believer in the unity of means and ends and non-violence. He should be well-oriented, generous, tolerant, reverant, a champion of freedom of thought and expression, a citizen of the world, imaginative, aware of beauty, and desirous of making the world, safe for democracy, liberalism, parliamentarianism and humanitorism. When we expect such magnificent moral, social, cultural and political values of the society in respect of man as individual, we realize the full potentialities of the library as an agency in society which only can deliver the goods."
From time immemorial people used to keep records of their ancestors in any possible form in a safe place. History proved that libraries have been developing with the advancement of civilization. Refinement of society is culture and culture is the source of civilization. To make a cultural society the training of mental, aesthetic, moral, and spiritual are required. Public library is the society's cultural training centre. Well informed and intelligent persons are required to maintain its culture. Culture is transmitted from one group of persons to another group of persons and from one generation to the next. Mentioning the role played by public library in the communication of ideas for the advancement of culture. J.H. Shero says "Library is an important element in the total communication process, both in the case of individual and in society, and its emergence was evidence of social maturation. The more sophisticated the society, the more complex its social organisation, the more it needs libraries." 

Public library is the only conservatory of the cultural heritage of a society and helps the living generation in finding out facts and ideas for expanding its horizons of knowledge and new inventions. As the society and culture are changing the library functions are also to be changed from generation to generation. The public library system is therefore, must not only transmit the cultural heritage, but also aid in preparing the new generation for adjustment to the new changes. The relation of public library with the contemporary changing society has become very deep. The changing society needs a different public library system and therefore forces certain changes
in its functions and structure; and as the society increases the quantum of planned change it think desirable, it calls upon its public library system to help in the cultural advancement of the younger generation.

In consistent with the changing of society the role of the public library has also to change. To-day the role of the public library "lies in the creation of thinking people, cultivated men and women gifted with disciplined minds, high intellect and moral calibre, nurtured in a climate of freedom of thought and expression and capable of holding opinions independently arrived at to shoulder stupendous responsibilities. This remarkable function of training the mind and spirit of man enabling him to work for the social, cultural, moral and material advancement of society is the basic function of library social pursuits."41

Different cultures of the world are confluences in the public library. It also acts as a cultural exchange centre. To-day many public libraries provided space for cultural exchanges by collecting documents on culture of different countries of the world and by arranging practical performances. It creates friendship amongst the different cultural groups on one hand and advancement of their own culture on the other. When a synthesis of all culture is formed that aggregate will bring the best of all moral values and will eliminate selfishness, wickedness and lust for power.42 The major roles played by the public library in the social and cultural advancement may be summed up as follows:—
It collects, preserves and transmits cultural heritage;

It is the nucleus of all social groups and their cultures;

It teaches civic sense which is the prime of culture; and

It gives vivid picture of different cultures with suitable
descriptions.

Public library, in short, is the best vehicle of social and cultural
transportation for advancement.

Literature is said to be the mirror of a society and its culture,
then public library is the frame of the mirror. Just like an adjustable
frame and the picture of Mona Lisa. Public library reinterpreted or
reflected the ancient cultural traditions suitably with the changing
pattern of the society. Lack of this adjustment or social harming
means decay of civilization and no cultural advancement. In order
to build an advance society with full of intellectuals, a well set
up public library system is required. Cultural aesthetic is the symbol
of civilization and books in the public libraries are the interpreter
of culture to all the investigators. Public libraries is the messenger
of ancient cultures. A public library without the books on social
and cultural heritage will be just like fetching of water in a hollow
pot. Such books depicts the foundation of all subject and inspired
the youngsters the courage of search. The librarians in the public
library must evolve a comprehensive role in enhancing cultural heri-
tage of different countries and of different periods for furtherence
of knowledge and advancement of culture.
2.3.3 Public library for the success of democracy

Public library plays a vital role in the success of democracy. There are many similarities in the definitions, objectives, and functions of a public library with democracy. They are interdependent with each other.43

The term democracy derives from the Greek words Demos the people and Kratos power. "It is a government by the people; also a community so governed."44 All forms of government in general and democratic form of government in particular aims at the education of every citizen of the country irrespective of the place of birth, caste, creed, sex and age. Because democracy as defined by Abraham Lincoln is a "government of the people, by the people, and for the people. No democracy as such can be successful without the education of the people. No education can also be successful without library. They are sine-qua-none. The dictum of democracy that is justice, liberty, equality and fraternity may be achieved only when there is a web of public library set up covering both rural and urban areas.

Educated and enlightened citizens are absolutely required for the success of democracy. Because in such form of government every citizen is directly or indirectly involved in the welfare measures of the state. "In democracy the citizen has the responsibility not only to choose his representatives in the legislature intelligently but also to watch that these representatives discharge their duties in the best
interest of the electorate . . . To exercise his rights and duties in a proper and effective manner, each voter should have access to public libraries to obtain correct, and good knowledge about various aspects such as - (i) facts about his own country, (ii) policies and programmes of the different political parties, (iii) the systems of government in other countries and (iv) social, political and economic developments in the world.45 In the democratic form of Government every citizens has the same to the access of knowledge and information. This is nothing else but the goal of the public library. Knowledgeable and informative persons are required for the effective running of democracy. Gopal Rao Ekbote rightly says, "In a democracy every one enjoys sovereignty and if democracy is to be a participatory democracy then it becomes inevitable that every one should be educated and informed about what is going on around him. It is only then that he will be able to exercise his franchise wisely and effectively play his role in all developmental activities of the nation. Reading will free a citizen of his narrow attitude and outlook and will lift to a higher plane. Education is an effective media to transfer the social ethos on desired lines and improve the economic lot of the people. Science and Technology is making rapid advance and if the people do not keep pace with such advancement they will be left behind in the technological and economic field. Reading on a wide range opens one's windows to outside of the nation and also to the whole world of knowledge."46

There are various forms of government in the world. Out of them Democracy is the only form of government which aimed at the
education of every citizen of the country irrespective of religion, caste, creed, sex, age and physique. Because no democracy can be successful without the education of the people. No education can also be successful without library. Though India is a democratic country it is backed by a large illiterate electorates, who do not know how to use their franchise. That means India's democracy is yet to be matured by giving proper education to one and all citizens. Public library is the only institution which can guide and educate the whole society throughout the life. Public library is attributed with all the qualities of disseminating knowledge and information to the masses. Our beloved Prime Minister late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru rightly says: "A library is the window to the knowledge of the world." Knowledge should be freely distributed to one and all, is one of the most important principles of democracy. In the same way to distribute knowledge and information to one and all citizens without any discrimination is the motto of public library. Lacking of this means tyranny and chaos of the whole democratic society.

For being a perfect man, he has to earn a lot of knowledge from his ancestors as well as from his contemporaries. Public library is a place where imperishable knowledge is preserved, raw informations are cooked and communicated of the ideas to the public pinpointedly, exhaustively and expeditiously. In fact, knowledge and information are of no use unless they are recorded, preserved and retrieved to the users. A well stocked, well-staffed and well-managed public library
is the prime necessity for the success of democracy. "The advent and advance of democracy, the extension of the horizons of education and our modern age of progress; as well as the explosion of literature have made the library as the hub of our socio-economic, and politico-religious life."47

India since independence has been trying to literate every citizen of the country by different systems of education. Libraries supplement to all the systems of education. After analysing the various roles played by the libraries, now the government realised that mass education can never be achieved without the upliftment of libraries as a whole and the public library in particular. As a matter of fact public libraries provide all types of reading materials for self-education, recreation, information, culture and knowledge. Provision is also made for neo-literates, illiterates, children, physically handicapped persons so that the whole society of this democratic country may become good citizens and they will discharge their duties for the welfare of the country as a whole. If the public libraries are properly managed it will guide the literates as well as the neo-literates to utilize their leisure time by consulting documents of their interest and the country will be peaceful by producing educated persons. The success of democracy may be measured by seeing the people their rate of literacy, standard of living, mutual understanding and co-operation amongst the citizens. For this democratization of education with well equipped and well or organised libraries are essential. There is nothing more generous than imparting
of knowledge from the storehouse of knowledge i.e. the libraries to one and all citizens unceasingly. Therefore, a definite public library system be designed for smooth running of the mass education of the people.

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