CHAPTER I

RURAL PUBLIC LIBRARIES - THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The current modern era is generally referred to as the information era, as Man is depending upon various types of information for his day-to-day living. As the services of information are varied and widely distributed, there are now global networks for receiving and disseminating information. Satellites, computers, tele-information networks are some of the developments in recent past in this direction.

In the context of rural India, because of the widely distributed population in as many as 5.5 lakh villages and the fact that the average rural population is simple, semi-literate and ignorant of sophisticated information technology, rural libraries remain the major sources of information. Especially the isolated and scattered villages in India can only be serviced by libraries in meeting the information-requirement of its people (Viswanathan 1961: 132-133). Library
is assuming more prominence and importance in view of its varied role in various situations as an agency for lifelong self-education; a centre for information/documents on all subjects including local, national and international affairs to serve economic, political and social welfare; a location for proper use of leisure; an organisation for advancement of culture; and as a means for preservation of literary heritage for posterity (Krishna Kumar, 1982: 4).

To understand the objectives of Libraries and the services undertaken by them, it is absolutely necessary to define the term 'Library' and the diversity of demands made on it, in its concern with the activities of collection and dissemination of information.

DEFINITION OF LIBRARY

The term Library is derived from the Latin word Liber, meaning a book. In English, the Library means a collection of books gathered for purposes of reading, reference or study. The word was used for the first time in this sense by Geoffrey Chaucer in one of his prose translation. As explained
in the Encyclopaedia Britanica (1978: X-856), Librarie in French denotes a bookshop as well as a publisher of books. Subsequently, around 15th century, Library was used as a term to indicate a place for collection of books.

Definitions of different conceptual contexts are offered to explain the term Library. An all-inclusive definition for library is quite elusive as is the case with most of the concepts in Social Sciences. A simple definition of library means it as "a collection of books and other materials" (Atkinson, 1974: 13).

A more detailed definition of Library explaining its form and function has been given by Sahai. According to him:

"Library is a collection of written or printed material. But it is not simply the accumulation of reading material just by accident that makes a library, in fact the collection should be made effective to achieve definite aims and purpose. This implies that certain techniques of organisation and administration have to be applied in the library to convey its contents conveniently and quickly to the readers". (Sahai, S.N., 1973: 4).

According to S.R. Ranganathan, Father of Library Science in India, a Library is:
"a public institution or establishment charged with the care of a collection of books, the duty of making them accessible to those who require the use of them and the task of converting every person in its neighbourhood into a habitual library goer and reader of books" (Ranganathan, S.R., 1940: 25).

Thus library can be considered as an institution concerned with the collection of books and other materials intended for the use of information seekers or readers. The purpose and functions of Libraries are envisaged in the 'Five Laws of Library Science' by S.R. Ranganathan (1931) as explained hereunder.

Five Laws of Library Science

The First Law of Library Science states, "Books are for use". The term book should be interpreted broadly to stand for document. The basic aim of a library should be to maximize the use of books and documents. "Every Reader his book" the Second Law emphasises on the reader or the 'user'. A user is the prime factor of a library. The existence of the library is to satisfy the information requirements of the reader.
The Third Law prescribes: "Every book its reader". The emphasis is on a book or the reading material. A librarian should know about the world of books and try to find out readers for every one of these. He should find out who will benefit most from a given book and thus the librarian is expected to act as a canvassing agent for each book.

"Save the time of the reader", the fourth law emphasises on the effective utilisation of the time of the reader. A user must be assumed to be a busy person and his time precious. Therefore, his time must be saved.

"A Library is a growing organism", the fifth law suggested by S.R. Ranganathan, implies that the library must have a dynamic growth. Accordingly, the Library must grow in terms of the documents collected, readers served and the services rendered. The said growth must take into account the changes in the requirements of the users and the society.
INFORMATION MATERIALS

The basic and important function of Library is to collect and preserve all types of materials that contain information and make them available to the users. Reading materials such as Books, Journals, Magazines, Newspapers, Pamphlets and Manuscripts form the major components of a Library.

McGarry (1981: 68) listed the following as the other forms of library information materials in addition to books and journals:

a) Sound/Audio Recordings,
b) Visual Images (Still),
c) Visual Images (Moving),
d) Visual images with sound,
e) Artifacts,
f) Programmed materials,
g) Microform material,
h) Information Kits, and
i) Tactile materials.

Since information materials of a library are intended for the use of Library, the materials
procured by a Library vary along with variations among the Library users. The information service should correspond as closely as possible to the needs of the users and to satisfy the interests of them.

**TYPES OF LIBRARIES**

Classifications of Libraries are based on different criteria such as operation, the specialised functions, ownership pattern. For instance, *Encyclopaedia Americana* (1981: XVII - 324-326) classified Libraries into:

1. National Libraries,
2. University Libraries,
3. Special Libraries,
4. Public Libraries, and

On the other hand, the *Encyclopaedia Britanica* (1978: X - 860-862) divided Libraries into:

1. National Libraries,
2. Public Libraries,
3. Special Libraries,
4. Private Libraries, and
5. Subscription Libraries.

The above two classifications of Libraries
thus considered the area of operation, nature of specialisation and nature of ownership as the basis for classification of libraries.

We can also re-classify the Libraries into various categories depending on ownership, region, purpose etc., as indicated in the following Chart:

**CHART 1**

Classification of Libraries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Classification criteria</th>
<th>Type of Libraries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1.      | Ownership              | 1. Public Libraries,  
|         |                        | 2. Private Libraries,  
|         |                        | 3. Co-operative Libraries |
| 2.      | Area of Operation      | 1. National Libraries,  
|         |                        | 2. Regional Libraries,  
|         |                        | 3. State Libraries,  
|         |                        | 4. District Libraries,  
|         |                        | 5. Local Libraries |
| 3.      | Nature of Service      | 1. Specialised Research Libraries,  
|         |                        | 2. University Libraries,  
|         |                        | 3. College Libraries,  
|         |                        | 4. School Libraries |
Libraries, as per ownership and control, have been classified as Public, Private and Co-operative Libraries. Public Libraries are those which are established, managed and controlled by the Government, either directly or indirectly. Private Libraries are generally established by persons or group of persons or Trusts committed to the cause of education, extension and diffusion of information. The Libraries, which are managed and run by the subscriptions pooled from a group of individuals can be considered as Co-operative Libraries.

The second classification suggested is based on the Area of Operation or Jurisdiction of the Library. Accordingly, there are National, Regional, State, District and Local Libraries. The National Libraries cover the needs of entire nation. It acquires all the books published in the country in addition to important foreign publications. Regional Libraries look after the needs of a particular region. Both the National and Regional Libraries are maintained by the Central or Federal Government.
State Libraries maintained by the State Governments are located at State Headquarters. These Libraries serve the needs of the people at State level. The District Libraries are located at District Headquarters while the Local Libraries are located in villages and towns. They are managed by State or local Governments serving the needs of the people belonging to that particular area.

As per the nature of services, Libraries can be classified into Specialised Research Libraries, University Libraries, College Libraries, and School Libraries.

A Special Library is the one which is specialising in a particular subject or group of subjects or in a particular form of documents (Krishna Kumar, 1982: 62). The Special Libraries undertake exclusive services for advanced-research and specific consultant requirements.

The University Libraries are part of the University structures and functions and supplement the action to achieve the objectives of the Universities, as noted in the following statement.

"The well-administered University Library directs its activities towards the fulfilment of these functions. By accumulating and organizing books, manuscripts, journals, and other materials, the University Library serve as an invaluable aid in the conservation of knowledge and ideas and as an active force in the teaching, research and extension
programmes of the University. Through direct assistance to the members of the faculty and research staff and through the service of members of the Library staff as instructional officers, the University Library participates in the interpretative function of the University, through its many bibliographical and other reference services the Library aids individuals of the instructional and research staff who are engaged in the preparation of materials for publication" (Wilson and Tauber, 1982: 25).

The basic function of College Library is to serve the needs and requirements of the teachers and students in reading, study and research. The major distinction between the College Library and the University Library lies in the fact that the University Library lays emphasis upon research.

A school Library can play a very vital role in helping the early educational system to achieve its goals. Though the School Library is limited for the use of a limited number of pupils, its role in promotion of educational standards is unlimited (Krishna Kumar, 1982: 17). Hence, it has been described as:

"..... the soul, the core and the pivot around which the academic life in the school revolves". (Trehan, 1980: 3).
The School Library is not only considered important for its role in shaping a child but also in promoting reading habits so that it supplies future clientele to the Public Libraries and enables them to become intelligent, productive and patriotic citizens (Wilson, 1933).

Having examined some classifications and types of libraries in general, a detailed discussion is made hereunder on Public Libraries as our topic of research is concerned with Public Libraries.

**DEFINITION OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Offered definitions of the Public Libraries indicate many variations. In the simplest terms, the Public Library has been defined as "People's University" by Shrinath Sahai (1973: 159). Joeckel considered the Public Library, basing upon the condition, that it provides "free Library service to the people" (Guruswamy, 1984: 84). Free service has been the distinct feature of the Public Library even to Gates (1968: 191).

The concept of the Public Library according to Gardner. (1971: 212), depends upon three principles,
An elaborate description of the Public Library has been offered by Khanna. According to him:

"A Public Library is established under the clear mandate of law. It is maintained wholly from public funds. A Public Library levies no direct charge (fees) from its users for any of its services. It is open for free and equal use by all members of the community, regardless of race, colour, caste, creed, religion, age, sex, nationality, language, status or level of educational attainments" (Khanna, J.K., 1987: 30).

A Public Library as per the above definition is established, funded and maintained by Government and is freely open to all the public.

Public Libraries are supported financially out of the taxes collected either by local Governments or States, as explained by Mookerjee and Sen Guptha. Accordingly the Public Libraries are:

"Funded by the people and enjoyed by the people and is established by law and maintained at public expense out of local rates and sometime by State taxes" (1977: 47).
Thus a Public Library in general can be conceived as the Library established by law, financed by public resources, maintained by the State and used universally by the people free of any charge.

**PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN INDIAN CONTEXT**

Library Movement in India is relatively new. The Movement in favour of Libraries picked up only after the introduction of formal education during the British rule. The need for strengthening Public Libraries was felt and recognised by the Independent India. Advisory Committee for Libraries explained the status of Public Library as:

"A Public Library is provided by the local authority and financed for the most part out of its funds. It is governed and administered by the local authority or a committee wholly or largely appointed by itself. It charges no fees from its readers and yet is quickly and easily accessible and its doors are open for free and equal use by all members of the community. It facilitates for self-education of one and all. It houses the world's best thought giving reliable information in an unbiased and balanced way, on as wide a variety of subjects as will satisfy individuals personal, professional or political aspirations" (Government of India, 1959: 31).
While the Indian Advisory Committee felt that the Public Library is to be established by the local authority, Government of Andhra Pradesh was more specific in defining the Public Library with reference to its establishment, finances and uses. The latest Act on Public Libraries in Andhra Pradesh defines Public Library in the following terms:

"a) A Library established or maintained by a Zilla Granthalaya Samstha, including the branches and delivery stations of such a Library.

b) A library established or maintained by the Government and declared open to the public.

c) A library established or maintained by any local body or Cooperative Society and declared open to the public.

d) A library declared to be eligible for aid and receiving aid from the Government or from the library fund, and includes any other library notified by the Government as a public library for the purposes of this act", (Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1985: 1.).

Thus the Public Library in Andhra Pradesh is a library established and maintained by the Government or Zilla Granthalaya Samastha (District Library Authority) Local (Self Government) body or Cooperative Society or any other library notified by Government as Public Library and declared open to all the public.
ROLE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Public Libraries are indispensable in collection dissemination and diffusion of information. Information in the context of modern society, is power, growth and development. It is the Public Library which can provide access to documents or information free of charge for all the people in the community (Krishna Kumar, 1982: 73-74).

Public Library has a specific role in promoting educational, informational, political, economic, industrial cultural, and antiquarian functions (Ranganathan, 1961: 21).

About five decades ago, the Public Libraries were conceived as instruments for spreading freedom and peace, as evidenced from the following forthright statement:

"To permit and encourage men to grow-up and achieve maturity in an atmosphere of freedom that they may feel that life has something to give them and they something to give it. A world well provided with free libraries would be a world of happy, sensible peaceful, constructive men and also a world of immense variety, excitement and adventure", (McCooUin and Linel, R., 1942: 9).
Public Library has been considered as an institution for promoting democracy through continuous and lifelong education, as per the manifesto of UNESCO as noted below:

"The Public Library is a practical demonstration of democracy's faith in universal education as continuing and lifelong process, in the appreciation of the achievements of humanity in knowledge and culture" (UNESCO, 1972:129).

A recent version of the role of Public Libraries shows the community-oriented approach in which Libraries are expected to cater to the needs of people as well as the communities. Library is, accordingly, regarded as a means for positive social transformation as per the statement of an UNESCO document:

"It is axiomatic that a Library should be adopted to the environment it is designed to serve; that its contents should reflect the needs of a community; that its techniques should be suited to its users; and that its service should accord with a clear, pre-established programme. These are fundamental truths that every librarian must know and take into account. It is essential that he should, for example, know the social structure of the community with which he is concerned, and especially the problems involved in the transformation of its culture, since it is the task of the Library to take a part in the process." (Houle, 1951: 103).
The discussion made so far touches the macro-level role of the Public Library. At micro-level, Public Libraries perform functions that provide information, education, recreation, and inspiration for development through extension (Krishna Kumar, 1982: 75).

RURAL PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Rural population is distinct from the urban population because of its small size and low density (Larson, O.F., 1968: 582), dependence on land and agricultural economy (Malefit, 1974: 121), closed interactions (Mandlebaum, D.G., 1962: 140) and social relationships dominated by tradition (Srinivasa, M.N.). On account of its social, cultural and economic uniqueness, the village requires a Library which can extend a different set of services in tune with the requirements of rural population. As expressed by Guruswamy (1984: 185), the Libraries should re-orient their objectives in tune with the social requirements from time to time. In this context, the services to be undertaken by the Rural Public Libraries are to be differentiated from other Public Libraries.
While collection, dissemination and diffusion of information remains the major function of Rural Public Libraries on par with other Libraries, the Rural Public Libraries have a complex task of providing information to mostly illiterate and semi-literate population. Therefore, the Rural Public Libraries have additional roles in reaching the illiterates, educating them and giving them extension education for promoting development of the rural community. The following can thus be identified as the major functions or services of Rural Public Libraries:

a) Educational services;
b) Services for different age groups;
c) Services for different sexes;
d) Vocational and economic extension services;
e) Services for the weaker sections; and
f) General extension services.

**Educational Services**

Library has been conceived as an institution supplementary to the formal education (Benge, R.P., 1970: 337) and as a means of informal education (Guruswamy, 1984: 185) for those deprived of formal
education. Even for those who had formal education, as the process of education is never complete, Library serves as an instrument to pursue life-long education (Shrinath Sahai, 1973: 159).

Thus the services the Library can extend in the sphere of education can be meant for the illiterates, neoliterates and literates in the context of Indian villages.

**Services for the Illiterates**

As per 1981 Census, India consists of 437 million illiterates, representing 63.77 per cent of the total population. The literacy situation in rural areas is still worse as 84 per cent of the rural population are illiterates (Government of India, 1988). In view of this massive illiterate population and educational and information needs, the Libraries in rural areas need to provide exclusive services to the illiterates.

In rendering education and information service to the rural illiterates, Libraries, located in village can make use of audio-visual methods. The community radio-sets and the community television sets already supplied to the villages could be used effectively
in this regard, (Government of India, 1986: 32).
Further, visual information products produced exclusively for the benefit of illiterates can be acquired, indexed and used by the Rural Libraries to benefit the illiterate population.

**Services for the Neoliterates**

The neoliterates, as a whole, do not possess the ability to read, comprehend, follow instructions and notice details to such a degree as to be classified as functional literates. It was felt that most of them lack confidence and feel hesitant to take up a book and read it.

Keeping in mind the skills and abilities of the neoliterates, books in plenty should be printed and provided to them exclusively so that they can improve their skills and abilities further.

**Services for the Literates**

A civilised society presupposes literate and educated community well-versed in the intelligent use of leisure which includes utmost use of Libraries. "Where there is civilization, there must be books
and where there are books there must be Libraries" (Sahai, 1973: 5).

The Public Library provides full of opportunities for enhancing the dignity and wellbeing of the individual human being, who can pursue his studies according to his own religious and political conviction without any hindrance. Public Libraries are a necessary complement to all educational services, providing material essential for the utilisation of the capabilities developed by education and opportunity for their development by the individual.

**Services for different Age Groups**

Depending upon the age of the people, the services of Public Libraries can be grouped as follows:

a) Service for children;

b) Service for young adults;

c) Service for adults; and

d) Service for aged people.

**Service for Children**

Children are the future stars of the society and, therefore, they should be served with great
Library service for children are organised in a variety of ways depending on the size of the system.

Among the variety of group-programmes for children, pre-school story hours have become increasingly popular in recent years. Some Libraries hold book-discussion clubs for different age groups. Television and radios are increasingly utilised for book-discussions and story-telling programmes in Libraries.

The Children's Libraries should be adequately stocked with suitable books, magazines and audio-visual material for children, these Libraries should be opened during hours convenient to them and should be adequately staffed and should be manned by Librarians who have received training in children's librarianship.

To develop human resources in proper perspective, all children should be exposed to the world of books. The only place where this could be possible is the Library (I.L.A. Bulletin, 1979: 128).
Service for Young Adults

This category consists of young people who are either school students or school drop-outs, and those who were not lucky enough to go to school. Their main problems are being (a) a place to study, (b) passing of examination, (c) getting a job or (d) earning a trade. Although the Libraries cannot obtain employment for young people, they can guide them in deciding what they wish to do. In this connection, the carrier-corner in Library with the latest information on job-opportunity in various fields and training facilities would prove utmost useful.

Here, the Librarian helps teen-agers to continue to develop reading interests that will carry over into adulthood. Librarians concerned with young adults, conduct specialised programmes to encourage them to utilise the Library. Geared to the interests of young adults, such programmes might involve discussions on books, films, popular music and current social issues.

Service for Adults

Democracy presupposes mass education. Unless adult mass, constituting the major part of
the total population, are educated, democracy may not survive long. The rapid changes of modern life requires new knowledge, skills, understanding and attitude. To live confidently and comfortably, to cope with changing problems, and to achieve potential satisfactions which are all about them, adults must understand the change and its consequences. The Libraries should provide information and assistance to adults to understand and meet situations which changes have brought about.

Adult education activities include such as night-schools, lectures, group-discussions, film shows etc. They are to be provided with picture-books, books with bold letters, films on health, family planning, agriculture, industries, insurance and other aspects of rural development, recordings and other learning materials, so that the illiterates can be pushed to realise their defects. This section of people by means of their instrumental studies can become neoliterates; so gradually literates. It supplements the formal schooling.

Here also, the Libraries should co-operate with other Organisations meant for adult education
programme. It is a fact that the local Adult Education Centre has taken the responsibility of teaching alphabet to the adult; instead of duplicating the same function, the local Library may take up programmes of continuing education by regularly providing them suitable reading materials. It should also motivate the illiterates to join the literacy classes.

Service for Aged People

Libraries are paying increasing attention to the needs of senior citizens. After reaching retirement age, many people turn to a Library for help in planning the future. They seek information on such subjects as recreation, handling finances, health, and travel. Librarians may prepare book-lists for senior citizens and hold meetings where older persons can discuss their interests and problems. Most Public Libraries make books in large print available to people with failing eyesight, a serious problem with the aged and elderly people.

Service for Women

Knowledge enables women to act competently and with confidence in the social and economic reality of their life and shape it to some measure. Thus
education is one of the basic factors for the advancement of women; given the limited schooling opportunities, the social and economic costs of formal education, and the social and economic attitudes for educating girls, specially in rural India, the role and responsibility of Rural Public Libraries in educating women becomes very important and sensitive. Public Libraries are agencies for life-long continuous education. This is particularly true in the case of women, who are relatively less educated and are denied opportunities for education. Majority of the women in rural India are acquiring skills and proficiency to secure gainful participation in the economic system. Naturally, the formal educational system is not capable of meetings these problems because of its rigid structure. The problems are moreover, not common for all groups among women and in different regions.

Public Libraries are well-suited to meet these problems. The information and service of Rural Public Libraries may be designed to cater to the varied and ever changing needs of women. Rural Public Libraries are, therefore, the nucleus of institutional base for educating women.
Service for the Disadvantaged

There are many disadvantaged persons in the society that are deprived of services extended to normal people. The prominent among them are the blind, physically-handicapped and the sick.

To dispel darkness, to create hope and aspirations and to enable the blind to be self-reliant, the Public Libraries should be committed to the cause of the blind, literally and metaphorically.

As the blind cannot read the conventional books, these books should be produced in a special media like Braille talking books and cassettes or any other convenient form and must be made available to the blind through Public Libraries.

Extension Services

Against the backdrop of colossal backwardness of rural India, extension services of Public Libraries assume greater importance. The objective of extension service of a Library is "to encourage reading and to create and stimulate good reading habits" (Krishna Kumar, 1982: 77).
It can be argued further that the extension services of Libraries must enable the readers to gain social awareness and functional knowledge (Krishna Kumar, 1982, 77) so that he/she can discharge his/her duties as a citizen and render his/her part in socio-economic development of his/her community and country.

With the intention of creating social awareness and functionality among the readers, Rural Public Libraries may take up the following programmes, as suggested by Krishna Kumar, (1982: 77).

1. To organise reading circles;
2. To offer a meeting place for local organisations involved in rural development activities;
3. To arrange public lectures by eminent persons;
4. To disseminate information through drama, puppet-show, musical concerts, film shows etc.;
5. To arrange for celebration of local festivals and national days;
6. To organise exhibitions and demonstrations;
7. To conduct reading sessions for the illiterates; and
8. To organise story-hours and discussions for children.

The extension services of Rural Libraries thus, in general, should aim at the socio-economic upliftment of the rural population and in particular the economically, socially, culturally and educationally backward sections.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Libraries in India are found to be in existence historically since the Medieval Ages. The First Library in modern sense was established in 1784 in Calcutta and was made Public in 1820 (Shrinath Sahai, 1973: 42). The first Library in the State of Andhra Pradesh started functioning since 1839 at Rajamundry (Letters from Madras, 1946: 117). The first Library Association was formed in 1914 in Madras Presidency in the form of Andhra Desa Library Association. Despite the long historical past of the Libraries, Library science, as such, remained under-developed
in India and studies related to the Libraries continue to be extremely limited. Studies based on field-research are almost absent. Having this deplorable situation in view, the present study has been attempted.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on the Library vis-a-vis the community are almost absent in India. The observation made by Shrinath Sahai in 1973 is still valid even after two decades. The observation states:

"In India, on such an important problem (field studies on Libraries), little attention has been paid and no significant work has been done", (Sahai, 1973: 7).

In a recent survey of literature on Libraries by Vijayakumar (1981), an extensive study on publications concerned with Libraries in Andhra Pradesh was made. It was observed that there were as many as 194 works carried out in between 1915 and 1981. The works have been classified and presented in Table 1, by the present researcher. Based on facts, one might come to conclusion that none of them have touched even the fringe of the utilitarian aspects of Library vis-a-vis the communities in Andhra Pradesh.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Main area</th>
<th>No. of works</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Library History and Movement</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Library organisation and administration</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Classification and cataloguing</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Reports, Library Associations, Library services and references</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Biographies and Directories</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Bibliographies, catalogues</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Library publicity and general information</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Library legislation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>General periodicals</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 194
The first field-study linking the Library and community was conducted by Sahai (1973). It was based upon a study of a sample of 300 respondents drawn from three Libraries in the city of Patna, Bihar. The major observations of the study are noted below.

- Majority of the users are casual visitors of Library while only 24 per cent visit daily.

- While information collection is major cause for which the visitors come to the Library, a good number of visitors attend the Library to meet their social needs.

- Only 27 per cent of the users prefer to read at Library while the majority prefer to read at home.

- Above 52 per cent of the readers preferred to visit the Library in the evening while only 6 per cent have preference for the morning visits.

- Nearly 60 per cent of the readers visit the Library to improve their knowledge; and

- About 61 per cent of the respondents prefer non-fiction books.
Stating that the Library profession did not study the impact of the Library on the community, Sarada (1986) conducted a study on Rural Library Services in India. The study was based on a comprehensive analysis of Pendurthi village in Vishakapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. The study attempted to bring out a picture of information needs of the village and the role of a Rural Public Library in meeting the information-needs of the people of the village.

Basing upon field investigation, Sarada has concluded the following:

- Books on fiction occupied the lion share in the collection of the Library.
- The books available in the Library did not match the occupational-needs and socio-economic requirements of the community.
- Library was used only by 10 per cent of the population.
- The Rural Library totally neglected its informational and cultural functions.

The following statement of Sarada summarised the findings of the study:
"The materials and services of the Library are non-responsive to the community. Book-lending, provision of reading facility, and medium of reference service to the motivated readers which have been the traditional function of the Library do not click to the rural people", (Sarada, 1986: 176).

Inspite of the two trend-setting studies mentioned above, research in applied-aspects of the Library did not undergo any radical change in India. In the recent past researchers, however, started paying attention to some of the applied-aspects of the Library. But even these latest works were mostly theoretical without any supportive data-base from the field. The study of Naidu and Panda (1989) on the Library services for disadvantaged, Sangam and Konnur (1989) on the extention services of Public Libraries, Sahoo (1990) on the role of Library on mass education, Kari Siddappa, et. al (1991) on public relations of Public Library system are some of the studies on theoretical lines.

In the most recent past, the role of Library on various requirements of communities have become subject matter of discussions. They include areas such as Public Libraries vis-a-vis post-literacy programme (Varalakshmi, 1992), eradication of illiteracy (Manorama
Srinadh, 1992), Users services (Naidu, 1992), Community information service (Sarada, 1992 and Rao, and Chandra, 1992). Once again it is observed all the above mentioned studies were based on theoretical explanation rather on the observation on the field. The present study thus can only be considered as an explorative study and aims in broader perspective to fill the gap in research on applied-aspect of the Library and to analyse the situation on the basis of primary data.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Analysis of Rural Public Libraries with specific reference to their infrastructure, services and the users is the overall scheme of the present study. In analysing the theme, the study aims at understanding the extent of the present services offered by the Rural Public Library to their users keeping in view the information needs and requirements of the users. The specific objectives of the study are listed hereunder.

1. To analyse the history of Rural Libraries in Anantapur district keeping in view the Library Movement at macro level i.e. at the level of the State and the Country.
2. To study the situation of Rural Public Libraries in Anantapur district.
3. To examine indepth the level of infrastructure of a set of Rural Public Libraries with specific reference to the information materials, physical facilities and personnel.
4. To analyse the socio-economic characters of the users.
5. To study the user practices, and their opinions on the services offered by Rural Public Libraries; and
6. To analyse the role of Rural Public Libraries in promoting the information and developmental requirements of the users and the community.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological aspects of the present study are presented hereunder with specific reference to the area of the study, sample, tools of data collection, mode of analysis and the format of representation.
Area of the Study

Anantapur district of the Rayalaseema region in the State of Andhra Pradesh is the area for which the study is pertained to. This district has historical significance with reference to general as well as Library Movement. Currently, the district is well known for its drought prone-ness, socio-economic and educational backwardness, environmental degradation and political neglect. The district, however, happens to be the centre of significance in the past two centuries, as it served as the headquarters of the district administration for the entire region, and for the past 100 years as a centre of higher learning.

Library Movement in Anantapur district dates back to 1883. Reading rooms, Newspaper clubs and Libraries were in existence in the district for more than a century. The district has the distinction of producing prominent personalities who shaped the Library Movement throughout the State. Libraries in the private, cooperative and public sector have come into existence in large number. Due to financial constraints, the initial momentum could not, however, be sustained resulting in the closure of many Libraries.
During the last four decades, there have been attempts to revitalise the Library Movement and strengthen the Library system.

The present backward condition and subsequent development-thrust given to this area by the voluntary and public agencies make Anantapur district as a suitable setting for this kind of study.

It will also present an ideal scenario in which the Library can become a means and an instrument for the development of the community.

The Universe and the Sample

At present, Anantapur district consists of 88 Libraries. Of the total number of Libraries in the district, as many as 72 are classified as Rural Public Libraries.

The present study is conducted at different stages and thus different samples have been considered to suit the requirements of the study. As far as general information about the material, personnel and physical facilities are concerned, the entire universe is taken into account and information is gathered from all the Libraries in the district.
In order to have an in-depth understanding about the services offered by the Library, three Rural Public Libraries are selected for case studies.

The three Rural Public Libraries selected for case studies represent the three geographical and administrative divisions of the district (see map). They are at different stages of development as they were established at different periods namely the pre-Granthalaya Samstha period, the period immediately after the establishment of Zilla Granthalaya Samstha and the recent period.

Each Library is subjected to study with reference to the availability of books, periodicals, newspapers, physical facilities and members served.

In order to obtain the data concerned with the users covering demographic, social, economic, information-needs and the utilitarian aspect of the Library, 324 users are selected as sample respondents. The respondents are drawn from among the areas of three Public Libraries selected for the detailed study. The selection of users was carried out on the basis of convenient sampling. In the absence of any available list of Library-users, persons visiting the selected
MAP. 1

LOCATION OF THE SAMPLE RURAL PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN
ANANTAPUR DISTRICT

1. Anantapur
2. Bukkarayasamudram
3. Bathalapalli
4. Kothacheruvu

ANANTAPUR DISTRICT IN
ANDHRA PRADESH

ANDHRA PRADESH IN INDIA

S.K.U.LIBRARY
Acc. No. 140070
Call.No.
Libraries for a period of seven consecutive days have been considered as sample respondents.

**Tools of Data Collection**

Data on the study are collected from both Primary and secondary sources. Information from primary sources is collected through questionnaire and schedule; questionnaires were mailed to all the persons in charge of the 72 Rural Public Libraries. The mailing addresses were gathered from the office of the District Library Authority. Initially, only 15 per cent of the questionnaires were returned. The second round of the questionnaires were sent along with an executive order issued by the Secretary of the District Library Authority and accordingly the compliance increased up to 80 per cent. To seek certain clarifications for some of the responses and to get information from the remaining Libraries, a one day workshop was called for by the researcher. The workshop was organised during the Library Week Celebrations on 20.11.1992 on the premises of Zilla Granthalaya Samstha. The workshop fulfilled the twin objectives of 100 per cent of compliance to the questionnaire and for obtaining clarification for some of the responses.
Information from the users is obtained directly by administering a schedule at the respective Libraries. The schedules were administered by the researcher with the help and cooperation of the concerned Librarians.

The records and annual reports of the Zilla Granthalaya Samsthana and the State Library Authority and the records and registers of the three selected Libraries formed major sources of secondary data. Literature on Library Movement in Andhra Pradesh and especially the back volumes of "Sadhana", a regional weekly were consulted for restructuring the history of Rural Public Libraries in Anantapur district.

Mode of Analysis

Analysis of the current study is carried out comprehensively for all the 88 Libraries in the district. The Libraries in the district were classified into the Urban Public Libraries and Rural Public Libraries for the purpose of easy comparison. The analysis at district level proceeded further basing upon variables such as the books and other Library materials, facilities such as building, accommodation, furniture and equipment, Library personnel and users.
In analysing the selected Rural Libraries, variables such as the Library material, infrastructure, accommodation, timings, furniture and equipment, personnel and users are considered. The relationship between the Library and the user is studied with reference to the user variables such as age, education, occupation, economic status and social status in comparison with the available reading and information material. Because of the complexity of the data, the statistical analysis is made by using percentages and averages only.

Format of Presentation

The report is presented in six chapters. The first chapter i.e., the present one consists of introductory aspects of the study with specific reference to theoretical and methodological issues.

The history of Library Movement in India, Andhra Pradesh and Anantapur district is traced in the second chapter.

The third chapter is concerned with the analysis of Public Libraries in Anantapur district and consists of basic information relevant to the location, Library materials, building, furniture, staff and borrowers.
The fourth chapter deals with an in-depth and detailed analysis of the selected Rural Public Libraries, presenting a picture of the library materials, facilities, personnel, and users.

Profile of the Library users with reference to their demographic, economic, and social characters as well as the users usage practices and their opinion on the existing Library materials and services form the central issues of discussion in the fifth chapter.

The sixth and last chapter deals with summary, conclusions, observations and suggestions pertaining to the study on the Rural Public Libraries.

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