CHAPTER V

An Attempt Towards Public Library Legislation in Kerala

Provision of public library service is the responsibility of the State Government as the subject matter of libraries is relatable to entry 12 of the State List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India. Therefore, it falls in the jurisdiction of the State Government to enact Library Laws. But the government can provide public library services without enacting a Library Law, by executive orders. There are several other social amenities and services the Government provides without any particular legislative base.

"As a democratic institution operated by the people for the people, the public library should be established and maintained under clear authority of law, supported wholly or mainly from public funds; open for use on equal terms to all members of the community, regardless of occupation, creed, class or race.

The organization of comprehensive library service in the State through the establishment and maintainance of public libraries is the basic purpose behind every Library Act.

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1 R. K. Rout, p. 7.

For the successful working of a democratic experiment an enlightened electorate is a must. The cheapest and simplest tool for keeping the people enlightened in a democratic set up is the free public library service. Realising this, Japan was the first country in the East to pass a library law as far back as in 1899. Since then all enlightened countries in the world have vied with each other in enacting library laws. There is a genuine and urgent need for the introduction of library legislation in all developing countries as otherwise their all round development would get arrested.\(^3\)

In a democracy like ours, any viable public library service must be founded upon sound legislation, lest the objectives will remain ever unattainable. Very relevantly UNESCO observes: "The absence of provision of library service in many development plans is due to a surprising lack of awareness on the part of expert advisers in other fields concerning recent concepts and developments in library service. In the contemporary world the planning of library and documentation service is a fundamental aspect of educational, scientific and cultural planning of country."\(^4\)

### Reasons for a Library Legislation

Shri R. K. Rout in his book "Library Legislation in India," says:

i. Education and public health are the responsibilities of the government all over the world, provisions of free library

\(^3\)Rout, p. 62.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 6.
facilities also is one of their prime responsibilities.

ii. In ancient times libraries were established by the ruling monarchs, noble men and religious institutions. But the maintenance and continuance of libraries established thus has posed problems. To establish a chain of full fledged library service and maintenance, forever requires continued and steady financial support.

iii. Subscription libraries have also existed and are still existing in our country, but these are again open only to the members and those who cannot afford to pay are denied their use.

iv. Article 45 of our Constitution stipulates that free and compulsory education for children, between 6 and 14 years of age, should be provided by the States. But literacy gained by the children under this article needs to be practiced after they leave school and this can only be done with the help of the establishment of public libraries.

v. In a country where nearly 63% of the people are still illiterate, more reliance on the traditional system of formal education will not at all help eradicate illiteracy. Education including adult education, needs to be made more library-based, for ultimately it is the library which provides openings for self-directed, independent, life-long studies.

vi. For keeping the electorate enlightened, a network of libraries is essential.

vii. Even for accelerated economic development of the country free libraries are required.

viii. Then again for the cultural development of the country also libraries are needed.
ix. Library legislation also becomes necessary for the provision of a sound, integrated and systematic development of a public library network in each state.\(^5\)

In India, the tradition of learning has been strong since ancient times and libraries have always been necessary appendages of learning. The libraries however, valuable as they were, were not instruments of mass education and, therefore, they did not form a part of the public library structure of the country."\(^6\)

During the last thirty years or so, great developments in education and agriculture have taken place to meet the increasingly industrial and agricultural needs and to ensure our social and economic progress under the five-year plan. In view of the above expanding concept of education, and the need for developing industry, agriculture and national economy to meet requirements of the present day society, agencies such as public libraries, university extension services and social education departments are necessary to facilitate learning outside the formal system of education in schools and colleges. The public library is one of the agencies whose primary purpose is to create informed public opinion, both in urban and rural areas. The modern library is no longer content just to circulate books, but it sees its task as that of making people aware of the problems of the community and the world, and of helping them to solve their problems through reading and discussions. As such, there is need

\(^5\)Ibid., pp. 63-64.

for an integrated public library system with the help of a department of public libraries to administer it under clear authority of law of the State Legislature. As observed by Shri B. S. Kesavan, "In no case local bodies in a State should be held responsible for the provision of public library services, as the concept of public services being the sole responsibility of local bodies inherited from the British public library service in India."\(^7\)

R. K. Rout in his book "Library Legislation in India," says that in the structure of an integrated public library system the existing corporate libraries, municipal libraries, block libraries, cooperative societies and Punchayat libraries will be integrated into a system by law.\(^8\)

**Main Objectives of Public Library Legislation**

The main objectives of public library legislation should be:

i. to guarantee the establishment, development and maintenance of an integrated library service through a network of libraries throughout the state;

ii. to create necessary library agencies and to define their powers and functions so that the library system may work along the most effective and economic lines;

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\(^8\)Rout, p. 11.
iii. to ensure efficiency of service through the setting up of a Department of Public Libraries and through the employment of library personnel who are qualified, and competent to organize the services on systematic lines;

iv. to provide for adequate financial support on a progressive basis through library cess and/or through other means.

**Contribution of Dr. S. R. Ranganathan Towards Library Legislation in Kerala**

The contribution of Dr. S. R. Ranganathan to the library movement of Kerala was very great. Dr. S. R. Ranganathan is one of the pioneers of Library Movement in India. In fact he could be called as the father of Library Movement in India. He devoted his whole life to develop a discipline with wide applications; and he succeeded. His Five Laws of Library Science, today do not merely form the foundation of library science, but also of documentation and information science as a whole.\(^9\)

Dr. Ranganathan selected people for leadership in various states. He gave guidance to each according to their abilities and nature of responsibilities - be it Kerala or Kashmir. All men improved through his contact. In 1946 he drafted a masterly plan - a 30 year's

\(^9\)V. Venkatappaiah, p. 48.

programme for the National Library Development of India. In his library development plan, a classic work on the organization of libraries in the country, Dr. Ranganathan provides the result of a scientific analysis of the problems of organization and also a platform for library movement. 11

Everyone today agrees that India is in urgent need of public libraries; libraries which are free for all and are supported by public funds. Such libraries cannot stand alone in the modern integrated socio-political set up. They must form a system closely connected with the set up. The system has to be well planned and firmly rooted in law. With a deep insight Dr. Ranganathan enunciated a state-wide library law to create a legal framework for the establishment of library system in the State.

In order to ensure continuity of library service in Kerala, the necessary library legislation has been contemplated since 1940. In 1946 Dr. S. R. Ranganathan had drafts two Library Bills — one for Travancore and the other for Cochin at the request of the then Dewan of Travancore Sir C. P. Rama Swamy Aiyer and Cochin Education Minister Shri. Panampalli Govinda Menon respectively. 12

Even prior to the attainment of independence of the country, Kerala made earnest efforts towards library legislation. A significant event in this connection was that in 1946 late Dr. S. R. Ranganathan prepared a draft bill each for the erstwhile states of Travancore


and Cochin. But mainly due to strong opposition from bureaucracy, the bill could not be passed by the legislative assembly.

In 1956 again Dr. S. R. Ranganathan drafted a Library Bill for Kerala at the request of E. M. S. Namboodiripad, the first Chief Minister of the re-organized Kerala State. There was opposition for this bill also. But with the dissolution of the Communist Ministry, this attempt to pass the Library Bill did not become fruitful.\textsuperscript{13}

Dr. Ranganathan and many enthusiastic individuals and associations and bodies have submitted Draft Library Bills for many other states and as a result, some State Governments are actively thinking of enacting the Public Libraries Act. Kerala is one of these states which needs to enact a Public Library Bill. The seed for library legislation in India was sown from a 'Model Library Act' prepared by Dr. S. R. Ranganathan.

Dr. S. R. Ranganathan was the secretary of the Madras Library Association. In 1930 he came to Palghat to attend an educational conference. He made about five speeches at that time, and made extensive discussions with those who were connected with library programme. Malabar District General Circulating Library was started during this time. It was due to the encouragement of Dr. Ranganathan and Sri Sivarama Menon that the library association at Malabar started functioning.\textsuperscript{14}


\textsuperscript{14}P. N. Panikar, \textit{Keralathile Granthasalaprasstanam}, Trivandrum, Steps, 1982, p. 25.
In February 1946, Dr. Ranganathan opened the first Kerala Library Conference. It is also known as the First Travancore Library Conference. In the same year he submitted a Library Development plan with a Draft Bill for Cochin as well as Travancore.

By the pioneering and untiring efforts of Dr. Ranganathan, it was possible for the former Madras State to enact a Library Law as early as 1948. Kerala State was formed in 1956 by the integration of Malabar. Until then Malabar was a part of Madras State. Travancore and Cochin were princely states. The three constituents, i.e., Malabar, Cochin and Travancore had different kinds of public libraries catering to the reading requirements of the people in a limited way. The Malabar area of Kerala still enjoys the benefits of the Madras Library Act of Dr. S. R. Ranganathan. Local Library Authorities (LLA) function here. There are three District Central Libraries and over 100 branch and rural libraries managed by these authorities.

**Ranganathan’s Model Library Act**

In 1930, Dr. S. R. Ranganathan presented a Model Library Act for Indian States in the first All-Asia Educational Conference held at Banaras. The Model Act provided for (i) the establishment and maintenance of a system of public libraries and for the comprehensive development and organization of city, rural and other classes of library service in the state; (ii) the Minister for Education to be the State Library Authority responsible for the promotion and organization of a library system; (iii) a State Librarian to be the Head of the Department of Public Libraries; (iv) a State Library Committee
for advising the State Library Authority on matters relating to Public Library Service; (v) a Local Library Authority for every city with a population of 50,000 or more and for every district; (vi) a library cess to be levied by each Local Library Authority at a rate to be determined from time to time; and (vii) the obligation on the part of the State Governments to give grants for providing public library service.15

Dr. Ranganathan’s endeavour for library legislation in the states was very great. He devoted a lifetime to this problem and nearly every Indian State has been in consultation with him at one time or other.

Mention was made about the library bills drafts by Dr. S. R. Ranganathan in 1946 for the erstwhile States of Cochin and Travancore. These were on the initiative of the late Shri Panampalli Govinda Menon, the then Minister for Education in Cochin and the late Dr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, the then Dewan of Travancore.

Dr. S. R. Ranganathan also had appended to these bills a thirty-year library development plan for each of the states.

The Kerala Grandhasala Sangham had requested for a library legislation in the respective regions when Kerala was divided into three princely states (Malabar, Cochin and Travancore). In Malabar, there was a library legislation because Malabar came under Madras

15Augustine (1974)

*Kerala Grandhasala Sangham is a body which had really accelerated the growth of Libraries in the nook and corners of Kerala. The contribution of Kerala Grandhasala Sangham is discussed in the next chapter.
Library Act. After the union of these three regions and with the birth of Kerala State, the Grandhasala Sangham had tried for library legislation.

**Early Attempts**

In 1943 Kerala Grandhasala Sangham had started functioning with Calicut as the center. Their activities were numerous. The attempt for a legislation was one of them. The officials of the Sangham had appealed to Mr. T. S. Avinasalingam, the then Minister of Education for Madras State (Calicut was under Madras Presidency during that time).

The first attempt towards a library legislation in the State can be traced back to the All Travancore Library Conference held at Sri Chitra Thirunal Library, Trivandrum on 3rd and 4th February 1934. The conference stressed the need for a Bill for the maintenance and development of libraries and library movement of Travancore. At the same time they formed a committee. The following members were selected as the members of the Committee:

1. Mr. P. K. Narayan Pillai
2. Mr. M. M. John
3. Mr. N. A. Ravivarma
4. Mr. K. M. Kesavan
5. Prof. P. G. Sahasranama Iyer
6. Mr. E. V. Krishna Pillai

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16Kurian Thomas, p. 69.
7. Mr. N. Kesava Pillai
8. Mr. Malloor Govinda Pillai

Again in 1939 Malloor Govinda Pillai urged the initiative of the Maharaja for enacting a legislation for the spread of library movement in the State.¹⁷

Sri C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer in 1946 requested Dr. S. R. Ranganathan to draft a bill for the then Travancore State. The same year itself, the then Education Minister of Cochin State, Sri Panampalli Govinda Menon had got a draft bill prepared for the libraries by Dr. S. R. Ranganathan. But the changes that occurred afterwards did not allow these bills to become real acts.¹⁸

The All Travancore Grandhasala Sangham which met at Kottayam had passed a resolution to bring library legislation for Travancore State. They passed two resolutions in February 4, 1947 about library legislation. This meeting had thanked Dr. S. R. Ranganathan who prepared the draft bill for Travancore.¹⁹

Kerala Public Library Bill, 1959

In 1959 the first creative step towards a library legislation was made for the United Kerala State. But even before necessary legislation has been contemplated since 1940 in Travancore State and Cochin State for Library Legislation. In 1946, Dr. S. R. Ranganathan had drafted two Library Bills - one for Travancore and the other

¹⁷All Travancore Library Conference, Resolutions, Trivandrum, February 3-4, 1934.
¹⁸P. N. Panikar, p. 252.
¹⁹Ibid.
for Cochin at the request of the Dewan of Travancore, Sri C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar and the Cochin Education Minister, Sri Panampally Govinda Menon. But due to the political changes little could be done on the basis of the drafts.20

R. K. Rout in his book "Library Legislation in India," says that even prior to the attainment of independence of the country, Keralites made earnest efforts towards library legislation. But the draft bill prepared by Late Dr. S. R. Ranganathan for the erstwhile states of Travancore and Cochin could not be passed due to the opposition from the bureaucrats.21

In 1959 Shri E. M. S. Namboodiripad, the then Chief Minister of Kerala State and Prof. Joseph Mundasseri, the then Education Minister, approached Dr. S. R. Ranganathan to visit Kerala and prepare a bill for the public library development. Shri E. M. S. Namboodiripad had written a letter to Dr. S. R. Ranganathan requesting him to visit Kerala as a consultant to advice on the development of the library system of Kerala and the Library legislation to be used as its basis.22 Prof. Joseph Mundasseri, the then Education Minister, also wrote to Dr. Ranganathan to visit Kerala to give advice on Library matters.23

20S. R. Ranganathan, p. 95.

21Rout., p. 227


23Joseph Mundasseri, Letter to Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, April 17, 1959.
Dr. Ranganathan had arrived in Kerala at the request of the Chief Minister and the Education Minister. Dr. Ranganathan arrived in Kerala on Sunday, 5th July, 1959. Dr. Ranganathan had a conference with Education Minister on Monday, 6th July 1959. During this conference the Minister had outlined the problems on which Dr. Ranganathan was expected to work. Dr. Ranganathan also called on the Chief Minister that very day. On Thursday, 16th July, 1959, the Director of Public Instruction, the Deputy Secretary for Education, and Dr. S. R. Ranganathan had a preliminary session on the bill and the other documents drafted in relation to it. Also Dr. Ranganathan had visited a few libraries in the Districts of Trivandrum and Ernakulam, as a random sample. For three days, Dr. Ranganathan had discussions with representatives of the Kerala Grandhasala Sangham. He also had discussions with the Chairman of the District Library Authority of the District of Kozhikode on 19th July, 1959. Dr. Ranganathan says, "At a meeting of the Minister for Education, the Director of Public Instruction and myself, held on 23rd July 1959, this document was discussed."

The Library Bill of 1959 prepared by Dr. S. R. Ranganathan for the United Kerala State had five parts:

Part A is on the general principles governing the design of the public library system of a state.

Part B gives a drafts bill for Kerala State. It is on improvement on the Madras Act in several respects. Kerala is an unus-
ually rural state. Its library structure has therefore, happened to be very different. There was another factor which made Dr. Ranganathan to make the bill different for Kerala State. Practically every urban area of Kerala had a subscription library managed by a private person or a committee, with government aid. There were about 2000 tiny libraries at that time. These 2000 small libraries inevitably led to a dissipation of the library fund of the state as a whole. All these factors have made the Library Bill for Kerala differ from the Library Act of Madras.

Part C gives, by way of example, some Model Rules to be framed under the Act.

Part D explains the first few phases in the implementation of the Library Act. It had been suggested that the integration of the existing innumerable small libraries should be done in slow stages.

Part E deals with library matters outside library legislation.

There was opposition to this draft from the Kerala Grandhasala Sangham mainly because the Bill envisaged to restrict the powers and functions of the Sangham. The Sangham therefore, submitted another draft for consideration by the Government.\(^{26}\)

\(^{26}\)Ranganathan (1968), p. 96.
Attitude of Kerala Grandhasala Sangham towards the Bill of 1959

The members of the Kerala Grandhasala Sangham felt that the Sangham was not getting enough importance in the Bill of 1959. The leaders of the Sangham such as Shri P. T. Bhaskar Panikar and P. N. Panikar with the Kerala University Librarian met Dr. Ranganathan and expressed their feelings towards the Bill. They told him that since Kerala had great number of libraries, Kerala needed a different type of Library Bill than the Madras Library Bill. The members of the Grandhasala Sangham were confident that the same bill could be modified with respective changes in it. But unfortunately the E. M. S. Nambodiripod's ministry was not able to continue further as the Central Government had dismissed the ministry in 1959. Due to the dissolution of the communist ministry this attempt did not become fruitful.

Attempts for Library Legislation in 1960s

Grandhasala Sangham had continued their work in getting a library bill passed even after the failure of the 1959 Bill. But they had to wait for a long time. The E. M. S. Nambodiripod's ministry had come to power again in Kerala in 1967. His ministry had made a draft bill again. This was almost the same old bill. Kerala Grandhasala Sangham had appointed a committee to study this

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27P. N. Panikar, p. 255.
Bill. This committee met the then Education Minister on June 18, 1969 and discussed about the Bill. After a month the sub-committee met and suggested the respective changes that should be made in the Bill. This committee had discussions with the Government on July 15, 1969 and suggested the changes. But the ministry resigned shortly and that was the end of the Library Bill of 1969 also.

Kerala Public Library Bill, 1971

The Bill prepared by Dr. Ranganathan in 1959 could not be presented to the Legislative Assembly due to the premature fall of the E. M. S. Namboodiripad’s Ministry. The succeeding Governments also proposed legislation for libraries but due to one or other reasons, their attempts did not bear fruits. One of the reasons was the differences in opinion among those who were concerned over the pattern of the legislation.

In 1971 the C. Achutha Menon Ministry had brought a Library Bill. The copies of the Bill of 1971 were circulated among the members of the Legislative Assembly.

The Main Provisions in the Kerala Public Library Bill 1971

The main provisions in the Kerala Public Libraries Bill, 1971 are as follows:

i. The establishment and maintenance of public libraries, and the development and organization of a comprehensive rural and

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28 Ibid., p. 257.
urban library service in Kerala.

ii. A State Library Authority as a body corporate with powers and functions like advising the Government on all matters connected with the administration of the Act, co-ordinating the working of the District Library Authorities, superintending and directing all matters relating to library service in the State, and appointing and controlling officers and servants for Public Library System. The Minister for Education is the Chairman and Director of Libraries. Members include nominees of Government representatives of all universities in the State, Kerala Grandhasala Sangham, District Library Authorities, Literary and cultural organizations like the Sahitya, Sangeetha-Nataka and Lalitha Kala Academies and so on. The Kerala Grandhasala Sangham gets the largest representation as a single organization.

iii. A District Library Authority for each of the Districts in the States. It shall be a corporate body with representation in it for those who are concerned with library service in the district. Each District Library Authority shall be responsible for providing library service to the persons residing in the district, and to supervise, co-ordinate and control the library service in the district. It may prepare a District Library development plan for establishing, co-ordinating and spreading library service within the district and implement the same on obtaining the sanction from the government.

iv. Each District Library Authority shall levy a library cess of not more than 10 per cent of the property tax. Government
may make an annual grant to every District Library Authority, of a sum not below the amount collected by way of library cess.

v. The Bill provides for a separate Department of Libraries with a Director of Libraries having the prescribed qualifications, as Head of the Department. He shall be the chief executive officer of the State Library Authority with prescribed powers and functions.

vi. It lays down that all libraries affiliated to the Kerala Grandhasala Sangham in each district be transferred to the District Library Authority of that district, with their assets, liabilities and staff.

The Kerala Public Libraries Bill, 1971, is not free from defects. Criticisms have arisen from all quarters against some provisions or other in the Bill. However, considering that the purpose of library legislation is to bring about an integrated public library system in the State and to make statutory provisions for adequate financial support to such a system, this bill with necessary modifications can form a basis for a library legislation suited for Kerala. It is a paradox that Kerala with its highest rate of literacy is the only State in South India which did not have library legislation for many years.

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30 Augustin, 1976, p. 30
Kerala Grandhasala Sangham was not happy with the Library Bill of 1971. Sangham had requested each and every library of Kerala to study the Bill and to give a report about it. The discussions were conducted on Taluk and District level. In this Bill there was no mention about the Sangham. This was brought as the main defect of the Bill. Also the Sangham felt that this Bill would damage the working of the Sangham if it was passed without any change.

Therefore, on December 7, 1971, the workers of the Grandhasala Sangham, members of the Legislative Assembly and a group of elite met at Trivandrum to discuss about the Bill. This meeting had decided to appoint an eleven member committee with Kainikara Kumara Pillai as the chairman to suggest the changes in the Bill, so that the functioning of the Sangham would not be disturbed.

This committee had worked very hard and suggested the required changes. A copy of the report of this committee was given to Shri C. Achutha Menon, the then Chief Minister of Kerala State. Most of the Malayalam News Papers also point out the defects of the Bill. The Government had promised to bring out a new bill without the mistakes pointed out.

The Sangham was not at all satisfied with the promises of the Government. The Sangham had made a draft bill. M. Prabha was responsible for the making of the draft bill. This draft bill was submitted to the Government on March 1, 1973. But the Government kept quite about it. There was no action from the part of the Government. Therefore, the Sangham had decided to start peaceful agitation to get the attention of the Government. The members of the Sangham
with the leadership of P. T. Bhaskara Panikar, the Sangham President, marched towards the Kerala Secretariate. Finally the then Education Minister, Chakeri Ahammedkutty had promised to bring a new bill for libraries.

But still nothing concrete had taken place regarding the demand of the Sangham for a library Bill. The Sangham had decided to meet the Government again. On February 25, 1974, the representatives from each Taluk Libraries and the members of the governing body had marched towards the Secretariate. The President and the Secretary of the Sangham had submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister.

This time the Chief Minister kept his promise. On March 29, 1974 a draft Bill was prepared in the Legislative Assembly and it was sent to the Select Committee. But unfortunately this Bill also did not become legislation.

Kerala Public Library Bill of 1978: An Evaluation

During the last one decade three draft bills were introduced for legislation, the latest being the Kerala Public Library Bill, 1978. But due to one reason or other the library enactment in the State still remained an unfulfilled promise. The structure of the public library service envisaged by the bill is a unitary one, where there are state central libraries, district central libraries, branch libraries and delivery stations falling one below the other at different levels. The bill provides for taking over the management of

31Panikar, P. T. B., p. 259
the existing 4,200 grant-in-aid libraries and the libraries coming under the local library authorities. This will amount to the liquidation of the present grant-in-aid library system.

The public library system has to be viewed as different from the grant-in-aid library system. And the library legislation should provide for continuance of the grant-in-aid system and for the establishment of a new public library system. The Sangham may be given statutory recognition for the purpose of exercising its present functions. The library authorities, on the other hand, should be made responsible for the public library system of the State.\footnote{Bavakutty, 1982.}

The bill provides only for a nominal state library authority. It insists that the state library authority should seek the assent of the government before any of its decisions are carried out. This provision will make the authority a mere advisory board of the government. An amendment to this has to be made and the whole responsibility of the library service in the state has to be entrusted with the state library authority.\footnote{Kerala Public Libraries Bill, 1978.}

The composition of the state library authority and the district library authority deserves special attention. According to the provisions in the bill, certain categories of interest which do not have any direct relationship with the planning and development of library service are represented, while certain others who would be more useful are kept out. The Kerala Sahitya Nataka and Lalitkala
Academies are given representation in the state library authority. Apparently they have little to do with the library development activities. On the other hand, the Kerala Library Association is not represented in any of the authorities provided in this bill.³⁴

There cannot be any difference of opinion regarding the desirability of having adequate library professional content in these authorities in order that proper planning and organization of library service on modern lines becomes possible. But in the Kerala Library Bill there is provision to nominate only one library science expert.

Taking into consideration the special situation prevailing in the State; it can be easily concluded that there are three major components of a purposive body or bodies to be created for being responsible for the establishment and development of the public library system in Kerala. They are: (1) the government, (2) the Kerala Grandhasala Sangham and (3) the professional librarians. All these three major components should get equal representation to the extent of three fourths, while the representation for various other interest should be confined to the remaining. When the state library authority is constituted with full autonomy as suggested earlier, it is all the more important that the professional content in this body is adequately ensured. While there should be representation for the Kerala Grandhasala Sangham in the State, District and City Library Authorities in their turn should be represented on the corresponding bodies of the Sangham also.³⁵

³⁴Bavakutty, p. 145.
³⁵Ibid
Another important point deserving consideration is the base of the library cess. The bill provides for the levy of a library cess on all persons who are liable to pay property tax not more than 10% of the tax. The financial memorandum appended to the bill has proposed only a rate of 3% against the 10% prescribed in the act. The library cess thus collected would come to 6.5 lakhs only. Together with the matching grant from the government the total library funds of the state would be only 13.0 lakhs. This was against the present annual expenditure towards libraries of the order of about Rs.14.5 lakhs which has been proved inadequate to support the grant-in-aid libraries. If the maximum of 10% library cess is collected, the total amount that would be available will work out to Rs.21 lakhs. Together with the matching grant the total library funds for the State would be only Rs.42 lakhs. Even this amount would not be sufficient for supporting an ideal library service in the entire state. Therefore, cess has to be enlarged. The library cess should be extended and should included surcharge on other taxes, like the tax on goods arriving within the jurisdiction of the local bodies, tax on vehicles, professional tax, etc.\textsuperscript{36}

It was a very unfortunate situation that the Kerala government took so long to pass a legislation in regard to the public libraries. Even the Newspapers of Kerala had heavily criticised the Government for their negligence on this matter. The Janayugam Daily in their December 28, 1970, issue criticised the Kerala Government for not

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p. 146.
taking the appeal of the people for enacting a library legislation in Kerala. This Paper demanded a Library Act and an increase grant-in-aid for the library movement. These libraries had developed due to the untiring efforts of dedicated workers in the rural areas. Every year, at its annual meeting, the library workers demanded for an immediately enactment of an appropriate bill, but it remained as an unfulfilled aspiration of the people of Kerala until early 1989.

In conclusion it may be pointed out that attempts from suitable library legislation have been there in Kerala from 1946 onwards. Still the State could not put a library law to the statute book until early 1989. Two main reasons for delaying the library law were: (i) the difference of opinion regarding the pattern of legislation needed and the absence of a common formula to satisfy all concerned; and (ii) the lack of enthusiasm in the Government to take bold steps in the matter because of the large financial commitment, the establishment of public library system will involve.

The basic objective of library legislation is to bring about an integrated and efficient public library system in the State and to make statutory provisions for adequate financial support to such a system. Though the present Kerala Public Libraries Bill has certain defects, it can with necessary modifications form the basis for a proper library legislation in Kerala. The difference of opinion

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\(^{37}\) Janayugam Daily, December 28, 1970

\(^{38}\) Augustine (1976)
among those in the library profession has been the fundamental reason for delaying the enactment of library legislation in the State.

For establishing a proper library network in a country or state which will be able to discharge its functions effectively, the enactment of public library legislation is a pre-condition. A country like India where democracy is deep rooted it is the prime duty of an elected government to provide well established public library services to all citizens. Considering this vital point in mind eventhough it took a long time, the Kerala Legislature has passed the Kerala Public Library Bill early in 1989.\(^{39}\)

\(^{39}\)K. A. Isaac, Libraries in Distance Education, New Delhi, Ess Ess Publications, 1989.
KERALA GRANTHASALA SANGHOM
TALUK WISE NUMBER OF LIBRARIES

MAP OF KERALA

Affiliated Libraries
As per 1980 Report : 4091
Total : 4200