Chapter–1

Growth & Development

of

Libraries
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GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARIES

1.1 Introduction

The word “Library” has been derived from the Latin word “Liber” which means a book.\(^1\) The word used in many other countries to signify a collection of books, publically or privately, is derived from a Latinized Greek word ‘Bibliotheca’ hence bibliotheque in French, biblioteca in Italian and Spanish, bibliotek in German, biblioteka in Russian and Toshosentsu in Japanese.\(^2\) The library is therefore, a place where books are kept.\(^3\) According to S.R. Ranganathan “a library is a public institution or establishment charged with the care of a collection of books and the duty of making them accessible to those who require the use of them.”\(^4\) According to the New Encyclopedia Britannica which defines “Library is a collection of books used for reading or study, or the building or room in which such a collection is kept.”\(^5\) The definition of library in the Dictionary for Library and Information Science given as “Library is a collection or group of collections of books and/or other materials organized and maintained for use (reading, consultation, study, research, etc.).”\(^6\) The A.L.A. Glossary of Library and Information Science defines “Library is a collection of materials organized to provide physical, bibliographic and intellectual access to a target group, with a staff that is trained to provide sciences and programs related to the information needs of the target group”.\(^7\) The Library of today is more than a building or a room in which books are kept. The contents of a modern library are diverse and most libraries of today contain much more than books. They contain, besides books, graphic and accoustic materials such as periodicals, pamphlets, reports, newspapers, documents, manuscripts, photocopies, musical scores, microfilms, maps, charts, atlases, etc. The library of
today selects, collects and also preserves. Simultaneously, it meets the demands of varying tastes, environment etc. 

1.2 Growth and Development of Libraries

The development of libraries is directly related to the economic, health, and or prosperity of a nation. As economy grows, and becomes complex, then it requires a systematic and sophisticated record-keeping library. This organizes and disseminates information in the services of the economic life of the nations. In this regard libraries emerged a vital instrument as repositories for the records of business and research facilities.

It is an important social condition necessary for the development of libraries. The large size of population and their concentration in urban centers which help in their development is closely linked with the growth of population and the emergence of urban centers. The urban population requires, a well organized information.

We can trace the past of the libraries from the time immemorial. As the art of writing started developing and cultural civilization had a contribution to the gift of knowledge. According to Gates, it is said that Sumerian’s contribution to civilization was writing and that of Babylonian’s was libraries.

Sumerians were the first persons who developed the usable writing system to help thinking as well as preservation of social, political, philosophical system, prayers and sacred legends. They established temples and private and Governmental libraries in 2700 B.C. The libraries organized at Tello have a collection of 30,000 clay tablets. The other civilization that of the Sumerian’s scripts established university libraries in temples. The library of Borsippa is one of the most important examples.

The kingdom of Assyria existed at the same time when Babylonian came into existence. The most distinguished library of the period was founded by the Assyrian king Assurbanipal (668-631 B.C) in his palace in
Nineveh. He established a library with more than 20,000 clay tablets. These tablets were kept in a very systematic way according to their subjects.\textsuperscript{12}

The civilization of ancient Egypt flourished simultaneously with that of Sumerians. The form of the Egyptian book was on the papyrus scrolls, and the instruments for writing were a brush like pen and ink. It is said that a big library was established at Gizoh (2500 B.C). Besides this, a big library at Thebes, which the then king Rameses II established in (1250 B.C.), is believed to have 20,000 books.

The Greeks adopted the consonantal twenty two letter alphabets of the Phoenicians. The introduction of the alphabetic script in the eight century may be regarded as representing a new birth of literacy in Greece. According to whom Aristotle (383-322 B.C) is said to have been the first person to collect, preserve and use the cultural of the past. The most important libraries in ancient Greece were set up during the Hellenistic Age located at the new city of Alexandria in Egypt and in the kingdom of Pergamum in Asia Minor. In Northwest of Asia Minor, Pergamum became a great centre of learning and literary activity. In the 2\textsuperscript{nd} centuries B.C, Eumenes II (197-159 B.C) founded a library, which contained 20,000 works.\textsuperscript{13}

According to Alexander the Great, the cultural idea was kept alive by the scholarly activities of the libraries of Alexandria and Pergamum, consequences in the increased availability of books, the gradual rise and growth of reading public and the production of literature.

The Roman culture rose of the Greek and they used papyrus, parchment, vellum etc. as writing material. The forms of the book in ancient Rome were the roll and covered all fields of knowledge especially philosophy, law, politics, religious and secular literature, science and mathematics. Private libraries became an important feature of Roman civilization. One of the most impressive and revealing examples of a villa library is found in the resort community of Herculaneum, near Naples. In
this library and reading room some 1,700 scrolls were discovered, almost all of them in Greek. The library was handsomely furnished, and shelves were used to store the materials in accessible categories. It remains one of the finest examples of what most have been hundreds of private villa collections scattered throughout the Roman Empire. More than twenty five public libraries flourished in Rome in the 2nd century B.C.\textsuperscript{14}

The development of the codex in which parchment sheets were fastened and bound together, as in modern book, resulted in the spread of libraries throughout the Roman Empire. But during this civilization, a unique new practice was used in respect of the use of libraries. The library was opened for any person, slave or free citizen, who could read. Thus, we can say that in Rome, libraries were actually open to the public. The era of scholarship learning and libraries lasted about for 500 year.

During the modern period, libraries started flourishing in Europe. Italy was outstanding in this respect so far as the number and quality of libraries are concerned. In France, the Bibliotheque (the National Library) which has its origin in the collections formed by the kings of France was greatly expanded and enlarged by Louis XIV (1643-1715). In 1692, it was opened to the public. In England the Bodleian Library at Oxford started from the 14th century. The origin of the Cambridge university libraries goes far in antiquity. The British Museum began in 1753. These three libraries were the most important at that time in England. The public library act was enacted in 1850 and with this the growth of the public library service started there. Germany was the first country to have the finest libraries of the 19th century. Germany had state as well as the university libraries. These libraries were outstanding in their size, contents, and organization. The person of circulating libraries with catalogue, reading rooms and children’s collections were noticed. In America, the Library of Congress was established in 1800 A.D. by the end of 19th century; the public library had become an established institution there.\textsuperscript{15}
1.2.2. Growth and Development of Libraries in India

The story of development of the libraries in India can be studied under three distinct headings:

Ancient Period

India is a country with unity in diversity. The existence of libraries in India is found from very ancient days when India was reputed for her different seats of learning in the various monasteries mathas, temples and Buddhist viharas (monasteries) spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. These seats of learning and centres of culture naturally possessed rich collection of books and manuscripts. These ancient libraries had manuscripts both in Kharosthi and Brahmi scripts inscribed on palm leaves, and other artificial writing materials. Our living testimony of Vedas, the Upanishads and the epics and the Buddhist religious literature indicates, that even at an early date progress in the art of writing was appreciated. Jainism and Buddhism both gave their emphasis upon the systems of organized brotherhoods (Sangam) accommodated Viharas or monasteries in the rock cut halls. The Brahmanical systems also followed suit with similar institutions like Mathas and other regular colleges.

The availability of written material from the 4th century B.C. points out to the definite existence of places for “stoning” and making manuscripts accessible to the class. The Buddhist system of education and learning indicates the essential requirement of libraries. A few notable examples are those attached to the centers of leaning (Universities) at Nalanda, Rajagriha, Odantapuri, Vallabhi (Kathiawar), Takshsila, Vikramasila, Tamralipta, etc. The University of Takshila (now in West Pakistan) in the 6th century B.C. maintained an excellent library. From the list of specialized subjects taught at the University it can be observed that it must have possessed a vast collection of books and manuscripts on those subjects.
The Nalanda University had a well-equipped library. The library attached to Nalanda University centred round Dharmaganja (Mart of Religion) and comprised of three large buildings, called as “Ratnasagara” (Ocean of Jewels), “Ratnadadhi” and “Ratnaranjaka”. Ratnasagar, which was a nine storey building, specialized in the collection of rare sacred works like Prajnaparamita Sutra and other Tantrika manuscripts.

There was a parallel Buddhist monastery on the other side of Nalanda, the Valabhi, situated near modern Wala in Kathiawar (in Gujrat), which was the capital of the Maitraka kings. It was a famous centre of learning, which attracted students even from far of place like Bengal down to the 12th century A.D. This monastery was equipped with a library. Another famous Buddhist monastery was at Vikramasila which was founded by king Dharmpala in the 8th century A.D. The university possessed a rich and extensive library which existed admiration even of its Muslim destroyers (1203 A.D) under Bakhtyar Khilji who seemed to have mistaken it for a fort. There were a large number of books on the religion of the Hindus. On being acquainted with the contents of the books then they discovered that the whole fort was a university.

The University of Sompuri also had its own library. Navodwipa in West Begnal, it was the last famous seats of learning Eastern India reached its height of glory from A.D. 1063 to 1106 as a centre of intellectual excellence as well as its rich library facilities. However, this library too was destroyed along with the centre by Bakhtiyar Khilji. The Nagarjuna Vidyapeeth was situated in South India at Amarawati, on the banks of the river Krishan flourished about the 7th century A.D. Its library housed in the top floor of the five storied building of the university had an enormous collection on the Buddhist Philosophy.
Medieval Period

The growth and development of libraries in medieval India presents an interesting historical scenario, in which we come across epoch of both high and low profiles of development from the periods of destruction and disregard to the time of committed efforts for the development of libraries. Two factors, during this period, had a far reaching influence on the growth and development of libraries in India. One during the period form 800 A.D. to 1200 A.D, the northern and southern halves of the subcontinent came into closer contact and, the other, the growing literary, scientific, religious and philosophical activities which were promoted more after the establishment of the Mughal Empire in India.22

Medieval Indian libraries can be divided into four classes i.e. religious libraries, private libraries, academic libraries and public libraries. Each of these libraries had thousand volumes. In Tanjore, Sarabtoji, the last ruling king of Maratha, made a major contribution, organized a massive collection of printed books and manuscripts, and founded the Saraswati Mahal Library, which is till now one of the finest libraries of its kind.23 We have instances of private collections also in the south and in the north of India. Mahmud of Ghazni maintained a library of more than 30,000 volumes. Mohmud Gavan, a Minister of the Bahamani Sultan owned a library of 3,000 volumes.24 The king Jalal-ud-din Khilji (1290-96) appointed Amir Khusro as the Director of the Royal Library on a very high salary and also conferred on him the title of Muhabiz-i-Quran (Protector of the Quran).

Many magnificent manuscript libraries were established during the Mughal period (1562-1748). One trait common to all of the Mughal Emperors from Babur to Aurangzeb, was that they all patronized man of learning and scholarship, and also maintained their palace libraries.

The first Mughal Emperor Babur (1526-30) was very fond of books and took keen interest in the organization and development of library. He regularly used his library which was located in the Old Fort Delhi. After his
death Humayun took over the charge of the Empire in 1530 A.D., who was also a scholar and a great lover of books. It is said that Humayun fell down from the stairs of the library and died after sometimes with the injury he had received. Lal Beg was the librarian of Humayun’s Imperial Library at Agra.25

Akbar the Great (1556-1605 A.D.), succeeded Humayun. The growth and development of libraries reached at its zenith during his reign. The Imperial Library was located in Agra Fort. Faizi (the brother of Abul Fazal) was the librarian of the Imperial library. The books for the imperial library of Akbar were brought from different places like, Gujrat, Deccan, Jaunpur, Kashmir, Bihar, Bengal and so on to enriched its collection.

During the reign of Akbar a separate department of translation was established which translated the important books for the library. The library contained 24,000 illustrated and well bound volumes. The approximate price of the collection was Rs. 64,63,131.26

Emperor Jahangir (1605-1627 A.D.), further enriched the collection of Imperial library and added a picture gallery to it. The imperial library, he also organized a personal library for his own use containing a number of books on various subjects.

After Jahangir, the Mughal emperors from Shahjahan to Aurangzeb also maintained the imperial library with keen interest. In 1738 A.D., Nadir Shah in his invasion carried away with him the collection of celebrated imperial library. Thus, the Imperial Library of the Mughal emperors met an inglorious end.

Among the other contemporary libraries, the valuable collections of Maharaja Chikka Deva Raya of Mysore (1672-1740 A.D.) and Tipoo Sultan deserve special mention. The decline of the Mughal empire in India form the mid of the 18th century onwards, paved the way for the spread of the British influence.27
Modern Period

The era of transformation of libraries in India began towards the middle of the 19th century. It was the time when there were revolutionary changes in social, political, industrial and other phases of life. During the first half of this century, public libraries were established in the three Presidencies Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. In this period, particularly in the context of academic libraries, the important events are (a) The Charter Act of 1813, (b) The birth and progress of the Fort William College and the Serampore Colleges, (c) Sir Charles Wood’s Despatch 1854; and (iv) The Hunter Commission 1882-83.

The first library in modern India was established in 1784 attached to the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Next to it was the library of the Asiatic Society of Bombay which was established in 1804. The Madras library society was established in 1818 with a library open to the public. In 1830 another public library, the Bombay General Library was established in Bombay.

Besides these various other public libraries were established around this time. The Indore General Public Library was founded in 1854 by Maharaja Tukoji Rao Holkar II. He founded the present Indore General Library in Huzurya Mahal of the Old Palace and provided a donation of Rs. 500 and a recurring grant of Rs. 12 per month for it. The oldest and premier public library known as ‘Kitab Ghar’ till 1866 has had to pass through many vicissitudes during its long and chequered existence. After being shifted from the Palace, the library was shifted to many palaces in the city till 1909 when it occupied the present building situated in the heart of the city “Rajwada Chowk”.

The Connemara Public Library at Madras was set up in 1860 which was started as a small museum library owing to the efforts of a captain Jesse Mitchell and was shifted to its present building during the time Dr. Edger Thurston was superintendent of the museum.
The Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library at Patna, owes its origin to Maulvi Muhammad Bakhsh Khan, who at the time of his death in July, 1876, left a collection of 14,000 volumes. It was opened to the public in 1981 through a “Trust Deed”. In December, 1969, the Government of India, through an Act of Parliament, declared it as an ‘Institution of National Importance’ and since July 1970 it is being governed as an autonomous institution by a Board of Management constituted by the Government of India with Governor of Bihar as its ex-officio Chairman, it is one of the richest public libraries in oriental manuscripts.

Another public library, the Adyar Library in 1886 near Madras with the implicit goal of making it a temple of all faiths, was founded by Col. H.S. Olcott, the first president of the Theosophical Society, with a gift of his personal collection on a wide variety of subjects, relating to Indeology, Indian Philosophy, Mysticism and magic. The library which was opened on December 28, 1886, holds 60,000 volumes and 15,000 manuscripts, 10,000 bundles of palm leaf manuscripts and 5,000 paper manuscripts in various languages such as Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu, Oriya, Bengali, Nepalese and Devangari.

Post independence period (1947) is significant not only from the point of view of India’s political and economic growth, the assertion of her ethos and transformation to a new era of development but also for the growth and development of libraries in India, whether general or the specialized ones.

The Government of India after independence felt the need to have a national library reflect the history and culture of the nation. Hence, in 1948 Government of India passed “The Imperial Library (change of name) Act, 1948” and changed name as the National Library. The National Library is the repository of all books printed in India.

The Delhi Public Library was set up in 1951 by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, with financial and technical assistance
from the UNESCO as a pilot project. The Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) was set up in the year 1972 in the memory of Raja Rammohan Roy. It is an autonomous organization under the Department of Culture, Ministry of the Human Resource Development, Government of India. Its headquarter is located in Kolkata.

Various libraries in the field of social science and the sciences established after independence, to name few are: National Archives of India, Delhi (1947), National Institute of Mental and Neuro-Sciences, Bangalore (1954), Small Industry Extension Training Institute, Directorate of Adult Education, Delhi (1956), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi (1961), Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Bangalore and Indore. Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi, (1969) in the field of social science. The seven IIT's established at Mumbai, Kanpur, Gauhati, Kharagpur, Madras and Roorkee have good libraries. The libraries of science field include NISCAIR, CSIR, Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, DRDO, DESIDOC, SENDOC, NII SAT, TERI, ICMR, NASSDOC etc. And recently with the foundation of INFLIBNET at Ahmedabad of extending activities in the form of UGC-INFONET since 2004, the libraries are moving ahead. A forum or the consortium has been initiated the accessing e-books/e-journals with this new initiatives.
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