Analysis and Findings

Library and information centres are the assets for a country as these are the repositories of information and knowledge considered as the national heritage. It is an established fact that these days the library and information sources are vital for all sectors of national activity. The availability of information, expeditiously and pin pointedly, supports all decision making process at all levels. Relevant information accelerates the pace of national development. An informed citizen is an asset to a democratic system of government, the proper utilization of information can improve the quality of life of the citizens and also make them aware of all the events to take proper decisions in their activities.

During the past 60 years, UNESCO has done some honest effort and loud thinking, followed by sincere action plan prepared from time to time in several parts of Asia (particularly in India) in the field of libraries and documentation services. UNESCO has realized the basic fact that in all the developing countries, there is a lack of awareness in making use of the enormously available information. UNESCO has taken an initiative, which is still in the process of reforming and bring in the desired changes. In order to maintain and improve high level of literacy and reading habits among people, and to keep them constantly aware of the right sort of information resources, numerous field projects and publications of
UNESCO are there to assist them. The book development plan is a pointer to this direction.

It is not an exaggeration to say that, the public library development in developing countries has not taken up as that of Europe and North America. It is far lagging behind.

There is no doubt that within the limits of its constraints, Delhi Public Library (DPL) has done a sterling job in achieving the first aim of its establishment. However, it has largely failed to inspire the establishment of similar services elsewhere in India. Only about one tenth of India is now covered by public library services. Part of the difficulty lies, the fact that the responsibility for provision of public library services lies with the State Governments, rather than with the Central Government. By and large state Governments are generally reluctant to pass Library legislation. As a result in spite of many efforts, it has not been possible to see library legislation for not more than few states. Only thirteen states have passed public library act so far. Even where public libraries have been established, their prevailing ethos is often custodial and restrictive. It is pathetic to note that even now in some libraries the librarians themselves have to pay for any book lost.

The reason doesn't lie in the lack of initiative on the part of UNESCO. Probably, it is due to the fact that proper enthusiasm was not reflected by various agencies including the government and library professionals representing by library associations. In some states where library legislation has been in enacted, the initiative came from state library associations. Since the successful implementation of Delhi Public Library pilot project, proper
initiatives should have come from government and other bodies. What is needed is a new stimulus, and pilot projects to offer the best possible stimulus.

Also Indian librarians are mentally more concerned with technical service rather than reader service. Therefore, any amount of help and sponsorship will become futile unless we enhance the service aspects, which increase the satisfaction of users needs and demands. Satisfied users build the bright image of the library services in the society. Therefore, there is a need for a serious rethinking in the country that library services be given a reorientation so as to attract a large number of the enlightened readers as well as to convert the non-library users to regular library users. Periodical survey of potential and actual users and use of the libraries and information centres will give directions to prepare an objective plan which may draw attention for the consideration of sponsoring bodies like UNESCO to consider the proposals for further expansion of the services and facilities. The study projects a kind of disheartening picture that there is no life in the library activities and no periodical reporting is attempted. As a result the UNESCO has failed to understand the situation and come forward to help the programmes further in India.

There has been a general lack of efforts by the library professionals and the educated citizens to convince the Central Government of the vital educational role of a public library service. When a major national five-year adult literacy programme was launched by the Central Government in 1978, no mention was made of public libraries development in the total activities.
In the field of scientific documentation, INSDOC emerged out of potential influence by the practical and pragmatic policies through its programme of seminars and training that Pakistan, Thailand, Korea, Indonesia and the Philippines set about for establishing their own documentation centres with UNESCO assistance and it is a matter of some gratification that part of the personnel for these centres were trained at INSDOC.

Perhaps there is one area where UNESCO’s effort is most successful. INSDOC during its long 50 years of existence has by far successfully fulfilled its mission. Even in this case also, the lack of strengthening the S&T documentation system after the initial phase of UNECO’s assistance has resulted in non flourishing of the centre in subsequent years. As a result, it is notice that INSDOC as a national institution is closed by merging with another organization of CSIR family. However the experience of INSDOC should has been taken as a base to develop documentation system in other areas. So to say the documentation tasks of INSDOC should be widened by extending its activity to the documentation of social science literature related to science and technology research.

Though sectoral information systems have been establish under NISSAT programme, many sectors are still taken care of. It points out the fact that there is a lack of proper plan to develop national information infrastructure in S&T as a whole.

An effective and efficient documentation units (local documentation unit) need to be organized in every national laboratory and research institution, state or community owned
industrial establishment, governmental body for meeting the information needs of the staff.

These days of ICT environment, the totality of the activities and infrastructure as a cohesive unit will ensure provision of information to the user community. Even if the documentation activities was organized at national level with UNESCO’s assistance, this did not percolate at local level to meet the information needs of the industries and also the general mass which is basically the objectives on which UNESCO provided the initial assistance.

To some up, it is observed that the UNESCO’s cooperation and assistance were mere pronounced during the first two decades after independence, after which it was gradually reduced. It might be due to initiative and vis-a-vis of planners and policy makers in those days. It is disheartening to note that such initiative was lacked in the subsequent years. Further, the policy makers of these early years recognised the importance of libraries in the developmental process. During the initial years, Indian National Commission (INC) representations were from the National Library Associations in the Commission. Subsequently, the non-inclusion of librarians in the commission points out the underestimation of the role of librarians in this process.

**Suggestions**

1. The lack of in-depth studies on UNESCO’s library related activities has resulted in gaps in public knowledge on the subject. The present study is based on historical method and also that of oral history as sufficient data for quantitative
analysis was not available and could not be digged within the time constraints and the scope of the study defined by the investigator. Hence a study using quantitative data on the same subject with emphasis on ICT application is suggested for further research.

2. Further, information is especially scarce on the internal operations of the organization and on the inside story of the various projects. We know very little about the personalities involved in the planning and executions of the various library education programmes. Research in these aspects of UNESCO would be highly desirable for a better understanding of its history and its contribution. Unfortunately, their study is impeded by the restricted access to international documents.

3. In the field of fellowships, a sociological study of the Characteristics of fellowship recipients, and a follow up inquiry into their career patterns would throw some light on the effectiveness of this programme. Such studies however could be feasible only if UNESCO provides the pertinent data and financial assistance.

4. Gauging the impact of UNESCO’s various educational and training efforts would be the most urgent, and at the same time probably the most difficult research task. This is uncharted territory for which first the criteria, methods and tools of measurement would have to be developed and then they would have to be applied to a few representative countries. The case study method would seem to be the most manageable approach here.

5. To judge the value of the UNESCO library manuals as instructional aids, a world wide survey could be conducted
to see where they are used, by whom and for what purposes. UNESCO's role as a disseminator of contemporary library thought and practice could be assessed through a bibliometric study and subject analysis both of the contents of the UNESCO Bulletin for Libraries and of the Library related monographs, series, and reference works put out by the organization.

6. Then there is the whole web of relationships to explore among the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions the International Council on Archives to UNESCO and similar other agencies. Tracing their influence on the organization would throw light on the background of many UNESCO projects.

7. To conclude, the human resource – more than one billion (1,02,87,37,436 India census 2001) of them have the potential to become a source of great strength for India. The essential investment in their education, supported, maintained and continued by a universal free public library service could become the cornerstone of social and economic growth, which could make a vital contribution to India's national development and prosperity. Delhi Public Library has sown a seed long back but it is yet to harvest it profitably. UNESCO funds for libraries are limited and cannot always meet demand, which are growing rapidly. UNESCO's resources must be supplemented by the country's own resources, but whatever assistance can be given by international organisations, it is the concern of the country itself to lay the foundation for a permanent structure. So, it is the time for India to rise the occasion and plan for the strategic movement and initiate UNESCO to provide more
support to prepare the Indian Library and Information Network on sound lines so as to meet the challenges of the emerging knowledge society.

8. Finally, it would also appear to be of considerable interest, and ultimately of great value, to investigate the mechanism of the transmission of ideas and proposals of national library education organizations to UNESCO with a view to gaining more input from the grass roots movements in the world.

**Conclusion**

It is observed that UNESCO's initiative were more on scientific and technical documentation and information infrastructure, as a result we find that, UNESCO support came for establishment of national documentation centre, scientific and technical information system in the country at the national level and development of S&T information manpower. Compared to this, the involvement of UNESCO for the development of public library system and services at the national level is too meager. This points out that more initiative from the Govt. of India was taken for development of S&T information system in the country rather than the development of public library and information services. Even in the world summit being initiated by UN, representation from India is more from scientific and technological community rather than other fields including library and information science. It is needless to mention that unless the general mass is educated and provided with information support, in which the public library services has to play a major role, the goals of achieving the benefits of information society will be a far cry for the country like India. The
realization that library and information service is an important component of a information society. The World Summit of information society realized the importance of the role of libraries. At the behest of IFLA, the WSIS (World Summit of Information Society) took the cognizance of the role of Library Science on Information Society. However it is observed that during the last conference at Tunisia in 2005, not much representation of librarians from Govt. of India was there. This indicates to the fact that much more initiative is needed at the government level for the development of library and information services in the country which will invite the attention of the international agencies like UNESCO. Everyone should understand that information is a key resource for all-round development of society. To achieve the goal of a knowledge society, information plays a vital role wherein libraries are the key players in the process. UNESCO needs to concentrate more and more in all fields especially education, science, culture, communication, library and information keeping in view the requirements for the development countries like India. Greater support from UNESCO is required for conducting regional training on information management, bringing out newer versions of software packages by UNESCO for distribution in India, and utilization of cyber space concept and linking of countries resources through information highways for enhanced information exchange.