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INTRODUCTION

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References
1.1 Introduction

Libraries have appeared in every civilization where scholarship and learning have been valued. They have a common objective, that is to conserve and organize the resources of recorded thoughts and facts so as to make them available to present and future generations. Libraries are not a new thing on the face of the earth. The rich heritage of mankind can be seen in the ancient civilization. Ancient reading materials in the form of clay tablets, papyrus rolls, inscription on stone, metal, leather and palm leaves are still available.

Consequent upon the advent of printing press, the spread of knowledge was accelerated, thus making available, the materials of knowledge to whomsoever required of them. The importance of learning was felt by all the members of the society, and the learning process gained ground, culminating in the establishment of educational institutions like schools, colleges and universities. To support their learning as well as the arguments and the experiments with nature, one had to look back to understand whatever had been available during the past on the subjects and for furthering of the knowledge based on those facts.

A separate place was provided where the materials were preserved and served to the individuals whenever they approached, and this in turn became an institution and was called ‘Library’ from the earliest times. Shera (1972) opines that 'a Library is a product of cultural maturation. It came into being when societies ceased to be nomadic and became organized, and when graphic records became important to the effective operation
of organized human relationships. There is no record of when, or how, libraries began, but one can assume, from the scattered and fragmentary evidence that has survived, that early libraries were essentially archival storage places for the preservation of records that were necessary for the transaction of business or commerce, the administration of the state, and the communication of belief to succeeding generations.

1.2 Definitions

The compound term: ‘Public Library’ has two constituent terms: ‘Public’ and ‘Library’. After having got a stray idea of a ‘library’ in general, let us ponder upon what makes something ‘Public’. As a background analysis, let us consider a few other compound terms having ‘Public’ as one of the constituent terms. Some such compound terms are: Public Health, Public Policy, Public Relation, Public Undertakings, Public Administration, and, last but not the least, Public School. The inventory may run into quite a few pages which will unnecessary add to the bulk of the present research work. Let us therefore analyse the connotation of the term ‘Public’, based on the analysis of the compound terms indicated above.

‘Public Health’ is concerned with health of the people, i.e. individual members of the society, irrespective of their age, caste, creed, sex, religion, political and other affiliations, physical and mental state, social status and so on. Similarly, the compound term ‘Public Policy’ refers to a policy made and implemented for the overwhelming interest of the society / state / country as a whole. Likewise, ‘Public Relation’ entails the venture of the Government or an organization to foster good relations between the state / organization and the members of general public. The term ‘Public’ in the compound terms ‘Public Administration’ and ‘Public Undertakings’ also highlights the governance for the people and stake / share of the people respectively. The compound term ‘Public
School' is, however, one of such rare compound terms. In India particularly, this component is used to denote a concept contrary to the normal usage and expression of the term, because these public schools do not allow public stake and share in their management. There is a long history behind it; however, it remains a fact that originally the term was used for a school not privately owned or controlled, but, under a variety of influences, the exact meaning and original connotation of the term has changed from time to time and from place to place.

It may, therefore, be conveniently inferred from the foregoing analysis that a public library is a library which is established for use by general public.

After having analysed the connotation of the term 'public library', it may be pertinent at the junction to have a peep into a few useful and popular definitions of public libraries which are presented below:

1.2.1 As given by Advisory Committee for Libraries

The Advisory Committee for libraries (1959), set up by Government of India, in its report has defined public library as, “It is a library i) which is financed for the most part out of the public fund, ii) which charges no fee from readers and yet is open for full use by the public without distinction of caste, creed or sex, iii) which is intended as an auxiliary educational institution providing a means of self education which is endless, iv) which houses learning materials giving reliable information freely and without partiality and prejudice on a wide variety of subjects as will satisfy the interest of readers”.

The definition being well conceived, takes into its fold a wide gamut of public library. However, it appears to be more a description rather than a definition, and yet lacks in explication of service aspect and modern nature of public library.
1.2.2 As furnished by Librarians’ Glossary

The Harrod’s Librarians’ Glossary defines public library as ‘A library provided wholly or partly from public fund, and the use of which is not restricted to any class of persons in the community but is freely available to all. A major agency of enlightenment for adults, providing also for children the recorded experiences of others which will help them to grow into adulthood’.

The definition, though gives a hazy idea of public library, is loosely knitted and appears more a stray thought rather than an envisioned definition.

1.2.3 As noted in A.L.A. Glossary

A.L.A. Glossary of Library and Information Science defines public library as “Any library which provides general library service without charge to all members of a given community, district or region. Supported by public or private funds, the public library makes its basic collections and basic services available to the population of this legal service area without charge to individual uses, but may impose charges on users outside its legal service area. Products and services beyond the library’s basic services may or may not be provided to the public at large and may or may not be provided without individual charge”.

This definition has added a new dimension to, and has emphasized, the service aspect of the public library. It may be said that it has construed the public library as an income oriented institution by accentuating users, thereby giving a negative jolt to the democratic image of public library as a free for all institution.
1.2.4 Poole's Definition

William Poole has defined public library as "The public library is established by state laws, is supported by local taxation and voluntary gifts, is managed as public trust and every citizen and the city and town which maintains it has equal share in its privileges of reference and circulation.

This is perhaps the earliest proper definition of the public library, and it appears that the UNESCO, in its "Public Library Manifesto", has taken some clue from this definition. The pristine nature of the definition, however, corresponds to the period when the definition was framed.

1.2.5 According to UNESCO Public Library Manifesto

While defining the public library, the UNESCO Manifesto for Public Library (issued in 1949 and revised in 1972 and 1994) states, "The Public Library is a practical demonstration of democracy's faith in Universal education as a continuing and life long process in the appreciation of the achievement of humanity in knowledge and culture. It is the principle means whereby the record of man's thoughts and ideas and the expression of his creative imagination are made freely available to all. It is concerned with the refreshment of man's spirit by the provisions of books for relaxation and pleasure. The Manifesto further emphasis that i) the Public Library should be established under 'the clear mandate of law'; ii) it should be 'maintained wholly from public funds'; iii) there should be no 'direct charge' for its any of the services; iv) it should be open 'for free and equal use by all members of the community', irrespective of their age, sex, religion, language, status or level of education".

The crux of the definition provided by UPLM is that a public library is a library i) which is established under the mandate of law; ii) which is maintained and run from
public funds; and iii) all its services should be made available to every one free of charge. No other social institution can perform such a valuable service to the entire population of a given area. It is defined as a continuation school, a training school for democracy and people's university, which shows how far reaching is the influence of public libraries in molding the life of the community. Therefore, the public library should be active and positive in its policy; it should play a dynamic part in leading and shaping community life; it should not tell the people what to think, but it should help them to decide what to think about. So public libraries should guide the people in finding their own way to become good citizens of the world, and endowed them with a deep desire to secure peace and progress.

Most of the Indian Public Libraries would not strictly fulfill the three basic qualifications laid down by the UNESCO. In Indian conditions, we may classify Indian public libraries into two broad categories, viz. i) Government and ii) Non-Government. The Government libraries, though they may not be put essentially under the 'clear mandate of law, are more or less free libraries. Some of these, however, may charge the members desirous of borrowing material for home reading a nominal amount as membership fee or / and as deposit money, from the members. Non-Government libraries are run by various organizations / trusts / philanthropic institutions, etc. Among these, a few may be aided (receiving some aid from Government) and some are un-aided. In order to run their services, these normally charge its members some marginal amount, but consultation inside the library is mostly free of charge. The libraries run by local bodies / authorities, such as municipality, etc., can also be considered as government libraries, as these are maintained out of public fund. We may, therefore, say that a library is a public library, if its doors are open for one and all, and its services are available free of charge or on payment a nominal fee.
1.3 Objectives and Functions of the Public Library

The Robert Committee (1959) has aptly stated that the functions of the Public Library are as follows:

i. "...the essential function of a public library is to supply to any reader, or a group of readers, the books and related materials for which they may ask"

ii. It is the function of a public library not only to satisfy, but also to promote the desire for books...

iii. Also the public library is obviously a suitable centre for exhibitions, lectures, adult education classes and discussion groups; and

iv. A library depends for its success on efficient and enthusiastic librarians, supported by a properly qualified staff, working in suitable premises. Finally, public libraries should be free libraries.

The primary objectives of establishing and running the public library services in the country are to achieve the following purposes:

i. Fostering and promoting the spread of knowledge, education and culture;

ii. Strengthening the forces of socialism, secularism, democracy and rule of law; and

iii. Equal opportunity of free access to the users of rural as well as urban areas regardless of race, colour, age, sex, nationality, language, status or level of educational attainment.

Libraries of all categories (academic, special and public) are used collectively for the following five purposes:
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a. Education;
b. Information;
c. Recreation;
d. Aesthetic appreciation; and
e. Research.

School and college libraries are primarily used for Education, University libraries for Higher Education and Research and Special Libraries are used for Information and research. But public libraries are used for all the five purposes, depending upon the nature and size of their collections.

The State Central Library, Divisional / Regional Libraries, District Central Libraries should function only as research and reference libraries. The services in such a type of libraries include reference, bibliographic, documentation, reprography and online information searching by using national and International databases.

Generally other public libraries like City / Town libraries, Municipal libraries, Block libraries and Rural libraries shall concentrate on lending of material for home reading and organizing cultural activities for all age groups children (below 12 years), young adults (12-18 years) and adults.

The objectives and functions of a public library have been clearly enumerated by Dr. S.R. Ranganathan. He says that the aim and function of a public library should be to:

i. Help the life-long self education of one and all;

ii. Furnish up-to-date facts and information on all subjects to one and all;
iii. Distribute in an unbiased and balanced way all shades of recorded views and thoughts to one and all, and to serve as a help in the discharge of their duties in political field in respect of local, regional, national and international affairs;

iv. Contribute to productive drive by informing to the management of the latest trends in diverse enterprises by ploughing back into the minds of researchers, designers and technologists every piece of relevant new thought promptly;

v. Preserve the literary remains of humanity for posterity as vehicles of culture and source materials for antiquarian research;

vi. Provide to one and all worthy and elevating use of leisure; and

vii. In general, work for continued social well being as the agency in charge of all socialized thought.

ALA presents in a befitting way the important and inevitable functions of the public library as follows:

i. To facilitate informal education of all people in the community;

ii. To enrich and further develop the collection in subjects on which individuals are taking formal education;

iii. To meet the information needs of all;

iv. To support the educational, civic and cultural activities of groups and organizations; and

v. To encourage wholesome recreation and constructive use of leisure time.

In fact these are the minimum standards that one can visualize in the process of a healthy development of the public library.

Declares the following key missions which relate to information, literacy, education and culture and which should be at the core of public library services:

i. Creating and strengthening reading habits in children from an early age;

ii. Supporting both individual and self-conducted education as well as formal education at all levels;

iii. Providing opportunities for personal, creative development;

iv. Stimulating the imagination and creativity of children and young people;

v. Promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievements and innovations;

vi. Providing access to cultural expressions of all performing arts;

vii. Fostering intercultural dialogue and favoring cultural diversity;

viii. Supporting the oral tradition;

ix. Ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information;

x. Providing adequate information services to local enterprises, associations and interest groups;

xi. Facilitating the development of information and computer literacy skills; and

xii. Supporting and participating in literacy activities and programmes for all age groups, and initiating such activities, if necessary.

It is evident from the above discussion that the very objectives and functions of public library service are to enhance the intellectual, moral and recreational phases of mankind. An enlightened citizen is indispensable for a successful democracy. The public library, in all its ways and means, provides the best opportunity for the mankind to be aware of everything which makes one's life worth living and meaningful.
1.4 Role of Public Library in Socio-Economic Development of the Society

1.4.1 Public Library as a Social Institution

Social Institutions are the product of society created to work as a medium for expressing its social process and carry them out through its techniques developed for the purpose. They are caused through the interaction among the people as a vital social need.

The library, being a social product, has in its functioning certain social objectives which are summarized by Dr. S.R. Ranganathan in the following lines:

a. Preservation of documents for posterity;

b. Promotion of use of document of contemporaries;

c. Provision of equal opportunity to all benefit the use of documents;

d. Provision of means for beneficial use of leisure time;

e. Provision of means for the conservation of research potential;

f. Promotion of the productivity drive;

g. Promotion of the conservation of the natural and industrial resources; and

h. Promotion of peaceful co-existence within a community and among nations.

1.4.2 Role of Public Libraries in Education

The post independence era has made the statement, political leaders and educationalists realize the importance of education. This has paved the way for opening more and more schools, colleges and universities in the country. The independent India was in need of intellectuals to elevate the status of the country in the fields of science and technology, commerce and economics. India has to compete with the developed countries in trade and commerce. India has to build its economic structure on scientific principles. Educationists, therefore, have tended to attach greater importance to libraries after
independence. But unfortunately till today the illiterates who form a large majority of the Indian population are virtually excluded from participating in the developmental process of the nation (Kalia, 1965). The formal channel of education like schools has a limited capacity to undertake this gigantic task of eradicating illiteracy. This can be seen from the situation in India where the provision of universal elementary education was included in the Indian Constitution aimed at achieving the goal by 1960. Even after the successful implementation of seven five year plans, the goal remains only partially fulfilled.

The evils of illiteracy need not be overemphasized. At the national level, this has proved to be a major obstacle in fields like agriculture and industry. An ignorant farmer and a labourer in a factory cannot contribute to the development of the country, unless they are provided with education and right information. The tremendous achievement in the field of agriculture and industry will be a distant dream with illiterate farmers and half educated workers. The Royal Commission was right when it said that, ‘we desire to emphasize that illiteracy presents the most single formidable obstacle to rural development (Naidu, 1957).

In the Indian context the public libraries have to play a multi-faceted role. In the words of Savage (1976), ‘the library is establishing itself within the community as an institution committed to helping people to cope with the modern world.’

Public libraries have to play supporting and continuing role to the educational programmes of academic institutions. Formal education only makes a person self-dependent in the pursuit of knowledge. It facilitates the continuation of education through self effort which is available in the form of free public library services. The process of further education is retarded and, what is worse, the benefits of education to the society gets dissipated. In our country, 60 to 70 percent of the students at school and college
levels fail to qualify in their examination, drop out and are thrown back in the society half baked. This colossal waste of national manpower can largely be redeemed if free public library service is made available to them for continuation of their education through self effort. But unfortunately in our country, public libraries have been completely neglected for such a longer period even after independence. Only 15 states out of 28 have enacted the Public Library Act under which they are providing only meager services to the public of that area. At least now the government of India should take the initiative to play its part in the field of establishing a good number of public libraries, in turn they will contribute much to the society and the nation.

1.4.3 **Public Library and Adult Education**

Being a social institution the public library has to play a major role in adult education. It should act as an adult education centre. Besides, for the regular and basic functions, it should perform the following activities:

a. Current and nascent information should be disseminated to the users so that they can keep themselves abreast of time. Information useful to the housewives should also be made available. As far as possible, preference should be given to the procurement of literature advantageous to children, neo-literates while developing the collection of the library;

b. Lectures of eminent personalities from different fields should be organized on a variety of topics. They should be on the topics related to social, economical, political problems such as importance of family planning, necessity of adult education, effects of growth of population on the development of nation, human rights, fundamental rights etc.;
c. Documentary film show on adult education illustrating the benefits, importance, advantages of the adult education should be organized;

d. Most of the adults are not interested in visiting the library. In such cases the Librarian and his team have to take care of such adults: Also Mobile library service should be started for them.

e. Book exhibition should be organized at village level at which all types of books, especially useful for rural people should be displayed.

f. Adult education classes should be conducted from time to time.

g. Clubs for women adults should be established at the village level. It will serve as good forum for the exchange of thoughts and experiences. It will be more beneficial to the members of the club to augment their own knowledge and keep themselves abreast of time.

1.4.4 Public Library as a Community Information Centre

Public libraries are a living force for popular education, culture, information and development of the masses. They are the essential agent for fostering social peace and welfare. They translate the information needs of masses into action. In the modern society, public libraries have been making a great impact in the areas of education, recreation, cultural enrichment, social welfare, political and economic development.

The emergence of Information and communication Technology (ICT) has left no area in the society untouched. Different forms of storage technologies, accessibility of worldwide information through internet and such other similar developments have not only changed the role of public libraries but also their shape and nomenclature. Hence the buzzwords ‘Knowledge Centres’, ‘Information Kiosks’, and ‘Community Information
Centres' and so on. So modern public libraries can’t afford to restrict their scope of activity to four walls and wait for users to come, but have to go beyond to reach the masses and act as ‘Community Information Centres’.

1.4.5 Public Library as an Information Centre

It is rightly said that ‘Knowledge is mightier than sword’ and ‘knowledge is power’. These are the two famous dictums known to all. Knowledge is a power that shapes the social, cultural, ethical, religious, spiritual, scientific, technological and materialistic world of today. No knowledge, except intellect and intuition can be acquired without resources of information. Information is a storage of knowledge as well as its foundation stone.

Information plays a vital role in modern society. Lack of information has greatly affected economy (trade and commerce); denied educational (scientific and technical) opportunities both to young students and to those who are interested in receiving information. So a variety of information is needed by users. Information about local history, local industries and local personalities, etc may be required. A layman might require information for his survival. For example ‘how to deal with a TV dealer who has cheated in the sale of TV set’, ‘how to deal with a land lord, who wants to evict a tenant’.

In developing countries, many users use a public library for the purpose of self improvement. They are concerned with information and education. The libraries encourage and inspire people to read. It provides information about religion, culture, society, health, entertainment and science to the people. A civilized society understands the importance of the public libraries. If the people do not have factual and correct information they will be led by rumours, and inert ideas will wide spread. The library is a place where they get various documents containing balanced information. In modern
society, it is essential that man is provided with correct and up to date information and knowledge.

1.5 Need for the Study

Public libraries play a pivotal role in the socio-economic development of a nation or a society. However, it is found that the structure and functioning of public library system differ from state to state in India. Not much research has been done in this area, which fact makes this study imperative. Though central government has shown keen interest in appointing a number of commissions and committees, to rejuvenate and revamp the public library systems, yet their recommendations have not been considered seriously and implemented. The Karnataka state has enacted public libraries act and has a structure of the public library system, but suffers from obvious lapses and lacunae. The main purpose of this study is not only to ascertain the problems of the public library system but also to work out a strategy to streamline the entire system by means of restructuring the different areas, including services, finance, manpower, infrastructure, legislation and to propose a new structure of public library system for the state of Karnataka in changed environment while keeping in mind some of the important suggestions given in the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994 and 2004.

1.6 Statement of the Problem

Though Karnataka State has enacted the library legislation, and the existing public library system is considered to be one of the best public library systems in the country still the system is facing serious setbacks and problems. There are many issues and areas which need to be revitalized and restructured in accordance with the changing environment of our society, dominated by Information and Communication Technology (ICT). In this regard, nominal efforts are being made to improve the existing system in
terms of services, resources, manpower, finance, legislation etc., befitting the healthy growth of the system. Therefore, it is felt necessary to review the existing system of public libraries in Karnataka and to propose a new structure with added new services so as to make the system relevant to this IT dominated era. Hence, the problem “Restructuring the Public Library System in Karnataka” is taken for the present study.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The present study is confined to restructuring the public library system in Karnataka state. The data collected is from all the District Central Libraries, City Central Libraries and the State Central Library. However, the data providers from their respective positions have shown their reservations while providing a detailed account of data which is a major setback to the researcher. So, it has been complemented and supplemented by other appropriate sources like annual reports and other official documents. The established models and procedures worked out and tested outside are utilized with little modification. The data collection is confined to the years, i.e., from 2004 to 2008, which forms one of the limitations of this study.

1.8 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To assess the existing conditions of Public Library System in Karnataka;
2. To know the quality of services being provided by the Public Libraries in Karnataka;
3. To determine the present status of manpower / personnel working in Public Libraries in Karnataka;
4. To provide a brief outlook of the financing of Public Library System in Karnataka;
5. To assess the IT applications in Public Libraries in Karnataka;

6. To study the problems faced by the Public Libraries in Karnataka;

7. To highlight the pre-requisites for restructuring of the Public Library System; and

8. To provide a model plan for the Public Library System.

1.9 Hypotheses

There are few indicators which encourage the researcher to formulate relevant hypotheses. In the light of the literature published and the decision held with experts, the following few hypotheses have been formulated:

1. The manpower available is inadequate and the professional staff is not appropriately qualified.

2. The public libraries are suffering from poor infrastructure and non-functional library buildings.

3. The financial resources of the public libraries are inadequate to provide better services.

4. The application of information technology in public libraries is very poor.

5. The existing public library system in Karnataka State is suffering from lacunas and lapses.

1.10 Methodology

The researcher has used the following methods for collecting the data and conducted its systematic analysis.

a. Documentary sources and electronic;

b. Questionnaire;

c. Observation; and

d. Interview
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The researcher has made a comprehensive literature search in the field of study. He has tapped a number of online databases and has consulted enormous literature, including published and unpublished sources. He has also reviewed many Government publications like proposal papers, drafts, annual reports, etc., in the field of study.

The researcher has designed a structured questionnaire, covering almost all the major aspects like services, finance, manpower, infrastructure, etc. The copies of the questionnaire were distributed among all the District Central Libraries, City Central Libraries and the State Central Library. The opinion and suggestions for overall improvement has been obtained from the Director, Dy. Directors and Chief Librarians.

The researcher has visited most of the District Central Libraries and City Central Libraries, and taken a lot of pains to ascertain the existing situation and has also made a keen observation. The researcher has interacted with the Sr. Staff personally, and hence the observation and interview methods are appropriately utilized in the process.

1.11 Chapterization

The thesis has been divided into seven chapters. A brief overview of each chapter is given below:

Chapter - I

The first chapter is an Introduction to the research problem of the study. It discusses and explains the different roles, objectives and functions of the public libraries in the society. It also provides a glimpse of the need, objectives, hypotheses, scope and limitations of the study, besides detailing the research methods and techniques adopted.
Chapter - 2
This chapter deals with the Geomorphology of Karnataka State. It also glances at the different aspects like Education, Culture and Economy etc.

Chapter - 3
This chapter explains the growth and development of libraries in Karnataka during different period's, i.e., ancient, medieval and modern and provides information regarding the establishment of public library system in Karnataka.

Chapter - 4
In this chapter an attempt has been made to review briefly the important published and unpublished literature on public libraries in India and abroad.

Chapter - 5
Chapter five throws light on the existing scene of public library system in Karnataka and highlights the areas / sections that need to be restructured and proposes a new structure for public library system in Karnataka.

Chapter - 6
This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of data

Chapter - 7
The last chapter covers the summary of findings, suggestions, and area of further research. At the end a selected bibliography and appendices is provided.

1.12 Summing Up
Public libraries are the pivotal institutes of mass education. In fact they are called common people’s university. However, they are not able to provide the necessary services to the people owing to negligence, improper management and other reasons.
This scenario needs to be changed by taking up immediate measures in all respects. With the aid of modern ICT and improved proficiency of the professionals, public libraries can function as vibrant institutes of knowledge dissemination, which certainly play a dominant role in the socio-economic, cultural, educational and intellectual development of the society.
References


