2.1. ORIGIN OF THE BRITISH COUNCIL AND THE LIBRARIES

The British Council has been involved internationally, since 1934, organizing libraries with a broad range of book and information activities designed to improve cultural relations with other countries. The system of libraries established and maintained by the Council is among the most extensive in the world.

The Royal Charter of Incorporation granted in 1940 by King George VI to the British Council defined the organization’s aims and established its structure. It further ensured the council’s independence from the Ministry of Information. The main features of the Council’s operations had been defined in the Royal Charter as follows:

1. ‘To make the life and thought of the British peoples more widely known abroad and to promote a mutual interchange of knowledge and ideas with other peoples’;
2. ‘To encourage the study and use of the English language’;
3. ‘To enable students from overseas to undertake courses of educational and industrial training in the United Kingdom’; and
4. ‘To bring other peoples in closer touch with British ideals and practice in education, industry and government and thus to make available to them the benefits of current British technology and to offer them opportunities of appreciating contemporary British work in the fine arts, drama and music.’

During the last 70 years various changes have taken place in the policy and functioning of the British Council. Since it was felt that the British public library was an institution designed to promote, and essential to democratic individualism, it was decided by the British Council that setting up good British Council Library in a foreign country was the best possible demonstration of how it can give it’s own people freedom, truth, tolerance and understanding. Thus, the British Council libraries were modeled on the British public libraries and established around the world. The British Council have offices in 220 towns in 110 countries. ‘The British Council has touched the lives of millions of people around the world for over 70 years’

British Council India

In 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru made a proposal to the Council to set up libraries in India. The first Council libraries were opened in India and Pakistan in 1950, at Agra, Calcutta, Madras and Karachi. Four Regional officers were established in Madras, Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta.

AIM:

“The aim of the British Council in India is to win recognition in India for the UK’s values, ideas and achievements, and nurture lasting, mutually beneficial relationships between India and UK.”

The libraries established along with these officers were called Regional Libraries and encouraged by their success, eight branch libraries were opened in 1960, two in 1979 and recently, one in 2000. The branch libraries, now called British Libraries since 1973, is jointly administered by the British Council and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. The four regional libraries and the eight British Libraries mentioned below table (Appendix-A) form the library and information network of the British Council/British Libraries in India.

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Regional Libraries. **Year of Est.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Year of Est.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chennai</td>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranchi</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiruvananthapuram</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhopal</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmedabad</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandigarh</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

British Libraries. **Year of Est.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Year of Est.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangalore</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patna</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pune</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucknow</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranchi</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiruvananthapuram</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmedabad</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dennis Gunton, Head of the British Council’s library and information service made the following remark with regard to the co-operation between British Council and ICCR in the year 1979. “There are now eight British Libraries in Lucknow, Patna, Ranchi, Bhopal, Ahmedabad, Pune, Bangalore and in Trivandrum. These libraries are unique in being jointly run with the closest possible collaboration of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations and it is a mark of the success of that co-operation that when Mr. James Callaghan, the former British Prime Minister, offered Shri Morarji Desai two new libraries in Ahmedabad and Hyderabad, they were willingly accepted.”

The British Council in India had also taken some hard decisions to close some of its libraries when they were found less popular. The British Library at Ranchi opened in 1962 was closed on 1995. Recently in 2002 a decision was taken to close the libraries in Lucknow and Patna started in 1961 and 1960 respectively.

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4 Gunton, Dennis (1979) - ‘A farewell address’. *Souvenir xxv All India Library Conference, Trivandrum, 1979.* (ed.) by C. A. Augustine., p.21
Before going into the functioning of the British Library Thiruvananthapuram, it would be better to have a glimpse of the Library Movement in Kerala. The Travancore King encouraged the library movement and the Public Library in Thiruvananthapuram was started in 1829. The principality of Cochin followed suit, in Malabar region also such movements were active. The Madras Library Act was beneficial for such a movement in Malabar. Combining the three regions of Travancore, Cochin and Malabar, the Kerala State came into existence in November 1956. By that time these Malayalam speaking areas had already established more than two dozen libraries. Eight years after the formation of the state of Kerala, the British Council Library started functioning in the capital city of Trivandrum. Thus, the British Council Library began to attract people who had already acquired the habit of reading. The people of Kerala in general and the educated people in Trivandrum in particular, began to derive great benefit from the British Library. The reason being that the English language which was the window to the world people began to have more and more intellectual intercourse with the outside world through the English books from the British Council Library.

On 1st April, Wednesday 1964, a British Council branch Library was inaugurated at Trivandrum by the then Governor of Kerala Shri. V. V. Giri, The Vice Chancellor of the University of Kerala, Prof. Samuel Mathai, The British Deputy High Commissioner Mr. W. J. Peterson, Mr. H.P. Croom Johnson, the Representative of the British Council in India and Mr. R.M. Anty, Regional Representative of the British Council, Madras who participated in the function.

The Library had an initial stock of 8,000 books and the members had the facility of requesting books for the Library and the annual subscription fee was Rs.5/-. Any one above the age of 18 years was eligible to become a member. The Library was open on all working
days from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm and 4:30 pm to 7:00 pm. In the inaugural speech the Governor made particular reference to the various works undertaken by the British Council and praised it as the unofficial Ambassador of Britain in other countries. He said in his speech, In my view, the work undertaken by the British Council has a broad objective. The library here does not merely give our people an opportunity to study more, learn more and spend their leisure usefully and profitably, but it is symbolic of the realization of the need for eradicating the evils that fetter the human mind”.

Ever since its inception, the library has made a steady growth in its stock and services. The library has a policy of keeping only the latest books by weeding out the outdated and mutilated books. And the stock is also maintained in proportion to the membership. On an average, 550 people visit the library and 800 books and 200 periodicals and other materials are issued per day.

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations and the British Council jointly manage the British Library, funded by the British Council. The library’s functioning is influenced by the various policy decisions adopted by the senior management of the British Council in India and also the policy decision taken by the senior management at the headquarters in London or in Manchester in UK.

2.2.2. BUILDING AND LOCATION

The library, from its inception in April 1964, is functioning from the same building owned by the local YMCA. The building was an auditorium of the YMCA and it was nicely adapted for the library. The building roof is made of tiles and it is more than 70 years old.

The library building is in single floor and the main library in one big hall. The bookshelves are arranged around the wall of the main hall, thus giving an impression to any one who enters the library that they are surrounded by books. The high ceiling, arches and pillars in the main library hall really give a Victorian touch. The walls and ceiling are painted with white paint and it further adds to the serene ambience inside the library. The library is fully air-conditioned.

9 Kerala Kasmudi - (Thiruvananthapuram) 3rd April 1964. (Press clipping)
10 The Indian Express, (Madurai) Thursday, April 02, 1964. (Press clipping)
and the service points are located at the entrance in the main hall and it is very accessible from the point of view of the customers and their journey inside the library.

Seating arrangements are provided separately for serious reading as well as leisure reading. The Children’s section is in a separate room with entrance from the main hall.

The library also has a lecture hall, which can accommodate almost 50 participants. Lectures, film shows, seminars and other activities are organized regularly.

Since the library is situated in the heart of the city very close to the Govt Secretariat, it is easily accessible from the main road and also from the railway station and main bus station and this is very convenient for out-station members who frequent this library regularly for various information needs. Most of the educational institutions and Govt offices both Central and State are located very near the library and this is very helpful for students and employees of these organisations to visit the library. (Appendix C)

Since the library is functioning from the same premises from its inception it is very helpful to locate the building. Even though the library is in rented premises, because of its popularity, it has become a landmark in this Capital city.

2.2.3 TARGET AUDIENCE

The library has its own priority of members to be served and they are known as the Target Audience. The target audience mentioned in the India Country Plan are the target audience of the British Library, Trivandrum. British Library is all about people! Libraries are dead without people. They belong to the following five categories:

1. Opinion formers and decision makers

These categories of people are in very high position either in the private sector or in the government. They are the opinion creators and/or policy makers or decision makers. Top echelons of bureaucracy like Joint Secretary and above in the State and Deputy Secretary and above in Central Government, General Managers and above in the key Private and Public sectors, diplomats etc. belong to this group and the type of service envisaged for this group is pro-active information service.

2. **Influencers and Multipliers**

These categories of people are very important in the sense that they can influence others and also their influence has the multiplying effect, e.g. Journalists, academics, Vice-Chancellors and Head of the institutions, School teachers, teachers of important educational institutions, managers of leading NGOs etc. Both the above categories are identified as T1. Normally there is a selected list of T1 for each library and those who are not in the list are considered as T1 like.

The Council is also concentrating on Network of organizations like the professional organization, NGOs, or organizations like Associations of English Teachers etc. and this category is identified as T2.

3j. **Young Professionals**

This third category of people is very important and they constitute the majority of the membership population. They are considered to be in the age group of 20 to 35 years and belong to all major professions like Law, Medicine, Engineering, Management or other professional spheres.

4 **Professional and PG Students**

This is the fourth category of audience the library is aiming at. They are the students doing their post graduate programmes and/or undergraduate programmes in some professional courses. The younger group in the age group of 18-35 which belong to students and young professionals are the main target group of the British Libraries in India. This group is identified as T3.

5. **General Public**

This fifth group is very wide section of people belonging to different categories and age groups, like businessmen, housewives, retired people, undergraduate and professionals above thirty six etc. This is also a big group and they also form a good number in the total membership of the library.
2.2.4 MAJOR POLICIES

LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT

services of the highest British professional standards to influence and support the present and future leaders in India’s development.”

MEMBERSHIP

Subscription

The library offers four types of membership to its targeted audiences. But others, who apply for membership, are also not denied of the library’s services. (Appendix D)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Annual Subscriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Rs. 650.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Rs. 1000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Rs. 3500.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Facilities for Customers

Eligibility: Individual members can borrow three books and three back number periodicals. They are also eligible to use all the other facilities provided by the library.

Family members can borrow six books and three back numbers of periodicals including three children’s books.

Institutional members have the facility to borrow 20 books 20 back numbers of periodicals and 2 videocassettes at a time.

The subscription fee is, in fact, subsidised from funding from the British Government.

Now “the opposition to user charges on ‘morality’ or ‘right of access to information’ grounds is viewed with scepticism”. The point... ‘to emphasize is that slowly, by accretion,
fees are becoming an accepted fact in the library world’.\textsuperscript{16} Rather than opposing all user fees in principle, a more appropriate and productive course of action’ is required to assess the fee charges.\textsuperscript{17}

It is said that the management of the British Library believes, that before a pay or charge system can be instituted, there must be an intelligent valid foundation supporting it’.\textsuperscript{18} The present policy of the British Council is that while making available the services, ‘an economically viable/theory of access’ is to be kept in mind.

\textit{Loan period}

The normal loan period is three weeks. Heavily reserved books are allowed to be kept only for a period of 10 days. Members are allowed to renew the borrowed books which are not reserved, for a further period in person, over phone or in writing.

\textit{Overdue charges}

The library charges an overdue charge of Rs.2/- per book, periodical, or CD-ROM per day.

\textit{Reservation}

Members have the facility to file reservation for books, which are not available on the shelf at the moment and also the latest additions, which are on display. Customers are also encouraged to make reservation for books of their preference when book exhibitions are organized in the library. Such exhibitions are frequently organized, invariably with an object of highlighting the importance of a subject or an area of study.

\textit{Working Days}

The Library works six days a week from Monday to Saturday and the working time is from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\setlength{\itemsep}{0pt}
\end{thebibliography}
2.2.5. SERVICES OFFERED BY THE LIBRARY

“The British Council Libraries are the most visible manifestation of the British Council Division in India, using modern information technology. The libraries have become key access point for information about Britain”.20

‘The library and information network of the British Council provide reading and reference facilities and undertakes pro-active work in order to serve identified priority groups effectively’.21 The library has developed a menu of services taking into consideration ‘the services on offer should be those most appropriate to the needs of the users’.22 ‘The British Library in Thiruvananthapuram is a one stop shop for information.’23

The library offers the following services for its members:

1. Lending
2. Reference
3. Periodicals
4. Current awareness services
5. Proactive information service
6. Online information service
7. Internet facility
8. Study in UK Information
9. Information about UK examinations
10. Scholarship Information
11. Association of British Scholars
12. Visa Information
13. British tourist Information
14. Photo copying service
15. Library Extension Activities

20 British Council Division, South India (Chennai) - Building Bridges, - Accessing information.
23.Interview with V. Bhuvaneswari on 20th Jan 2006. Ms. Bhuvaneswari is the Head Library and Information Services South India. British Council Division Chennai
2.2.5.1 LENDING

Like any other library the main activity of this library is also lending of books, periodicals, CDs etc. These lending materials are acquired by the library based on the book selection policy in force, which is decided by the senior management. The present lending stock consists of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material Type</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books (used by Adults)</td>
<td>23,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s books</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodicals</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDs</td>
<td>- 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
<td>- 250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The collection consists of books from a very wide range of subjects and the level ranges from specialized one to simple books for laymen. Since the main objective of this library is to provide the latest books published in the UK book market, to the people of Kerala, the library systematically orders and maintains a steady arrival of books on its stock from UK.

In addition to books, the library has also acquired other materials like CD-ROM and videocassettes. In keeping with the advancement in technology, a library should go for materials other than books. In this regard, the British Library is in the forefront among the libraries in Thiruvananthapuram.

“The CD-ROM medium has proved hugely popular among library users. It has established itself with remarkable speed as an essential information retrieval tool and can be said to have fulfilled many of the high expectations which libraries had of it when the first products began to become commercially available in mid 1980”.

Now a days, many books have accompanying CD-ROMs especially IT books. The library has made it a policy to acquire more and more CD-ROMs as individual titles along with books.


The library also acquires videocassettes for educational purposes. The growth of video lending in libraries is not for the purpose of entertainment, but for educational purposes so as to instruct and stimulate the mind. In this respect the British Library helps the educational institutions by providing them sufficient and suitable audio and video materials.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
YOUNG LEARNER’S SECTION

ITALRC Section

This special section was inaugurated on July 9 by the Minister for IT, Government of Kerala. It consists of more than 2500 books on IT published in UK, and in India. This collection is augmented taking into consideration the demand for IT professionals and the non availability of standard books for developing this skill. An observation showed that this is a busy section and the issue records show more than 80 per cent of the books are on loan at any time. This section also contains self-teaching CD-ROMs, which members can borrow instead of a book. There are terminals in this section and members can use the CDs inside the library to learn computer programming.

*The Hindu* in an article titled *Having a Ball with IT* wrote “the IT Learning Resources Centre offers members an unprecedented update of the information technology world. The books that the resource center will stock cover topics relating to software, hardware, networking, web design and communication tools”.

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‘The ITLRC will facilitate the library and members to learn and improve IT skills and its applications and to explore new avenues in IT. The ITLRC will have around 2,000 latest books in IT covering software, hardware, networking, web design, communication tools, and periodicals and CD-ROMs’

Management Section

The collection of books on management is another specialized section and it also contains more than 2000 books spreading over the modern management areas. This section is also much used by professionals as well as post-graduates and under graduate students of Management studies. The books range from conventional textbooks to the latest developments in management like bench marking and activity based costing.30

Books on India

The library recently started a new section known as the India collection. This section consists mainly of books published in UK about the various aspects of Indian history, social life, politics, economies and other areas. A good number of Indian books are also added to the stock to make the collection more comprehensive and meaningful. It consists of ‘books penned by foreign and Indian authors... books dealing with topics ranging from agricultural and veterinary science, fiction, geography, history, literature, law, politics, social development ... religion and public administration.31 The Press in Thiruvananthapuram acclaimed this venture.

Since the library aims at the continuous professional development of its customers, naturally professional subjects like Medicine, Engineering, IT, Management, Law, Technology dominate the lending collection.

Another notable feature of the lending stock is that many new and developing subject areas like Biotechnology, Biomedical technology, Information technology etc. are represented

in the stock. Since there is no alternate book available in India, this is considered as an advantage for its users.

2.2.5.2 Reference Service

Students professionals and members are given assistance in their use of this collection. Reference collection consists of a core collection of books mainly encyclopaedia, dictionaries, almanacs and few subject books on different subject areas. The staff at the desk assists members in finding out information. “The most important among all services is the personnel service the client gets from the staff” The two service points where personnel service is needed are the reference counter and the issue counter. With the increasing availability of electronic information services and the emergence of the web and digital libraries, an obvious question arises: is there a need for such personalised services? On observation, one will find that in the British Library more and more customers are searching the web on their own for information.

2.2.5.3 Periodicals

This consists of a core collection of British periodicals and newspapers selected on the basis of usage and members suggestion. These are at present numbering about 60 titles. The latest ones are on display and back volumes of a few titles are kept for reference. The majority of the back volumes are on circulation. The steady increase of the cost of periodicals has forced the library to reduce its subscription list.

Every year before reviewing the subscription list the library conducts a user survey to assess the usage of the journals and basing on the survey results and suggestions from its members, the library systematically reviews its annual periodical subscription list.

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Since the periodicals are received direct from UK, there is very little time lag in its receipt. As a policy, the library subscribes only for General periodicals on any subject so that more people can use these journals compared to a specialized one which will have only a very few readers. The latest issue of journals are displayed effectively on slopping display shelves and it is arranged in alphabetical order by title. This seems like the most logical approach.  

2.2.5.4 Current awareness service

The library provides current awareness service to a very few selected category of its members as well as non-members.

2.2.5.5 Proactive information service

The library provides proactive information service to a few selected categories of people. These are mainly very influential in the Government. Subjects like, Law, Education, Governance, Democracy etc. are the priority of the British Council and the library tries to send information to the above category of people proactively about what is happening in the UK in these areas.

2.2.5.6 Electronic Resources

One of the main library and information service objective of the British Council is to provide high quality, relevant, reliable, up-to-date and affordable electronic library and services to support learning, teaching, research and information provision from and about the UK, accessible to and fully exploited by all our customers with the emphasis on our target audience.

The term e-resource (electronic resources) refers to information resources that are available for the users via online which they can access through the cyber center in the library premises or remotely from anywhere.

The following e-resources are currently accessible in the library premises as well as through remote access:

- Full text e-journals databases-EBSCO, Emerald and Infotrac.
- E-learning resources - Ashridge VLRC (Virtual Learning Resource Centre)
- On-line reference resources - Britannica on-line, know UK, Oxford Reference Online and OED (Oxford English Dictionary)
- News and current affairs online resources - Infotrac, Newspaper databases, EBSCO’s regional business news.
- e-image collections - EBSCO’s images collection.
- All India Library Catalogue (Online catalogue of the physical resources).
- British Council portals: Education UK, Learn English, Animating Literature etc.
- There are also some more free services like books renewals, reference enquiries, books suggestion request etc.\(^\text{41}\)

Each member is given a unique ID and password. With this they can access the e-resources through remote access.

2.2.8.7 Internet Facility

As Duncan puts it, ‘the importance of the web cannot be underestimated. Its underlying technology has provided a platform for all manner of information systems and services, from electronic delivery of journals to the development of Internet. The convergence of information system has been brought about largely by imaginative use of this single technology and it has changed the way librarians manage their services’.\(^\text{42}\) The internet browsing center and the IT learning resource center were inaugurated at the British library on 9th July 2001 by the Kerala IT and Industries minister.\(^\text{43}\)


The members are provided with a cyber cafe with six terminals in a prominent place in the library near the reference section for use. There is no charge for using this facility and members are provided every day half an hour. It is given on first come first served basis and there is facility for registration.

The statistics maintained by the library reveals that per day more than 60 people use the Internet. On observation, it came to light that members normally use the cyber center for sending e-mails finding out information for their study, job opportunities, and some time advanced search in their area of research. It is also used for searching the electronic databases the library has acquired for its members. The demand for the terminal is very high and many who register their names are not able to get the facility on time.

‘Indeed the growth in usage of the Internet, however measured, is now so rapid that it is virtually impossible to quantify - statistics are out of data soon as they are produced.’ So, the library has decided to acquire more computers and add more terminal for the use of the members.

A Select Committee appointed to go into the charging system for internet in UK, has suggested that ‘charge should be dropped for the use of multimedia and networked resources which is now seen as core services in Public libraries alongside books’. The British Library also does not charge any special fee from members for these services.

There is also the facility to take print out or download information on a floppy or CD-ROM. For this, members have to pay a small fee for the stationery used.

The Hindu wrote in an article “Going the ‘Cybrary’ Way’ with the concept of value addition these days, from a computerized index, audio-visual facilities for cultural activities and a host of educational services, the British Library here is taking tentative steps on the cyber highway...... members feel that the cyber comer will probably be more useful, especially to students”.

2.2.5.8 Study in Britain

Counselling

There are very many aspirants in Kerala who want to pursue their study in Britain The library renders service, which is actually an education counseling and information service. Group counseling and individual counseling are provided for apprising students and parents.

On every Saturday, group counseling and presentation about study in Britain is provided by trained staff members between 2 and 3 pm.

Materials

A comprehensive collection of information about various accredited UK educational institutions are kept in the library for the use of prospective students. It includes post-graduate and undergraduate prospectus, videos etc. gathered from UK institutions. They are properly arranged and kept on the shelves on pamphlet boxes.

There is also a core collection of reference books, which contain information about various courses, duration of the course, eligibility for admission, fees information etc. which are kept in the library. There are also special books, which gives information about a particular subject and the various courses available in various institutions in UK.

Information sheets giving subject specific information is also available. These sheets are periodically updated. There are also a large number of handbooks available for this purpose. Assistance is also provided to students in filling applications to help in the proper submission of the applications with all the required documents to the universities.

UK University representatives also visit and make presentation in the library. They also do counseling based on which admission on the spot is offered.

Pre-Departure Briefing

The library also offers pre-departure briefing to candidates who are about to depart to UK. In the briefing, they are given an idea about how to live in UK and what are all the things that they need to take care while in UK. Sometimes, the library also arranges for talk by one or two study fellows who have returned from UK, who can share their experience with these students who are about to go to UK.

Due to all these services, more and more prospective students come to know about the British education and every year, there is a steady increase in the number of students joining the UK universities from India.48

All the above assortment of services are developed and provided by the British Library basing on ‘The aim of the British Council is to promote Britain abroad and to provide access to British ideas, talents and experience in education and training, books and periodicals, the English Language, the arts, the science and technology’.45

2.2.S.9 Information About UK Examinations

The library provides information about various UK examinations. The regional office at Chennai is actually responsible for the marketing and delivery of UK examinations in the four Southern States. Some of the popular examinations are IELTS, BEC, YLE, Cambridge Career

Awards, PLAB and many examinations conducted by various professional bodies and institutions. Although a majority of the examinations are conducted at the regional office at Chennai, a few examinations are conducted at Trivandrum, Kochi and other British Library centers. This section also has necessary study materials for various examinations, which the library members can also refer to prepare for the examinations.

2.2.5.10 Scholarship Information

The library provides information about various scholarships like Commonwealth scholarships, Cheveningscholarships, Shared awards, Nehru centenary British Fellowships and many short duration programmes. They also distribute application forms for various schemes.

2.2.5.11 Association of British Scholars

The Association of British Scholars is an organisation working very closely with the British Library. It is an organisation of people who had been to UK either for study or training and most have worked/visited some institutions in England. There are 16 Chapters in India and the mission is ‘to strengthen the Indo-UK relationship through networking, sharing information and social, cultural and intellectual activities’.

The Thiruvananthapuram chapter was formed in 1987 and it was originally known as the Association of British Council Scholars (ABCS). It was for the whole of Kerala and in 2003, a new chapter was formed at Kochi. This chapter, in close association with the British library, organises social cultural and educational events while concentrating on Science and Technology related events. The events are organised in the British Library or in outside organisations. The All India ABS organised more than three meetings and the Director of the British Council in India is the patron of the organisation. The regional chapters are represented by the Regional Director of the British Council. In 2001, a website was launched and a ‘job club’ was launched in Dec 2002.

53. Interview with Dr. Oomen V. Oomenon 16 Jan. 2005. Dr. Oomen is the President of the Association of British Scholars, Thiruvananthapuram.
2.2.5.12 UK Visa Information

Normally, the UK High Commission and Deputy High Commission provide this information. Taking into consideration the difficulty of people to go to Chennai for this type of information, the library as part of customer care has decided to provide this from the library. In addition, visa applications are also stocked. Recently, a Visa Facilitation Office was started at Kochi. Information is also provided about the various UK websites which gives the relative information regarding visa, travel etc. Non-members can also avail this service.

2.2.5.13 British Tourist Information

As part of its information provision, the library gives information about UK tourism and keeps reference books about UK tourism information like Hotel, Accommodation, Road map etc. They also stock and distribute British Tourist Authority brochure and pamphlets, railway route maps etc.

2.2.5.14 Photocopying Service

The library has a paid photocopying facility center. Members can photocopy articles and pages without violating the copyright regulations. Full time photocopying facility is available during the working hours.

2.2.5.15 LIBRARY EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

2.2.5.15.1 Seminars and Lectures

The extension activities provided by the library are very popular. The library normally organises seminar, discussions, talks etc. in areas like Health, Population, Good Governance, Environment, Empowering Women, Law, and Human Rights etc. These are areas of priority for the UK Government as well as the Government of India. These activities give an opportunity for non-library members also to visit and see the library. Normally the major activities are organised on holidays while small functions are held in the lecture hall even on working days.
2.2.5.15.2 Book Exhibition

The Library periodically organises exhibitions of books. These exhibitions help members to have an idea about what is added to the stock and they also get an opportunity to see all the books at a glance. Once they are put in circulation they cannot see them together. Other than library members, the common public who are interested in the various disciplines also visit the exhibitions, since it is widely published in the media. The catalogue prepared for this purpose and the visit to the exhibition help the staff and librarian of other institutions in their book selection. Another important aspect of the book exhibition is that it generates the reading habit.

2.2.5.15.3 Culture Cafe

In order to create a focus to present and develop the artistic talents of the members and also to learn and sharpen skills like debating, public speaking, poetry writing etc. the library has recently started a ‘culture cafe’.

Under the culture cafe, there are different groups like poetry group, debating group, drama group, public speaking group etc. They meet regularly on the dates decided and conduct their activities.

The culture cafe is aimed at developing the personality of young students who are in the age group of 18 to 25 years. They need not be library members, but aspiring young people who really want to develop. No fee is charged for membership of the cafe.

2.2.5.15.4 Film Shows

The Library organises film/video shows in the library periodically. These shows are also targeted against young children and young professionals. The videos range from Shakespeare plays to customer care. The management videos, which the library normally acquires, are very expensive training videos produced in UK. Video shows are arranged with proper publicity. Some times, special shows are arranged for special groups on request.


2.2.5.15.5 Activities in Other Towns

The British Library, in Association with other organisations, often arranges book exhibitions, scholarship information and lectures about study in Britain in other centres. They have organised such activities in Quilon, Nagercoil, Kottayam, Eranakulum, Trichur, and Calicut. Such activities are appreciated a great deal since there is no provision in these cities to get such information.

2.2.5.15.6 Know your Library Session

As part of a user education programme the library organises know your library session on every second Saturday. Anyone can attend the session. The various services offered by the British Library and British Council are explained to the participants and then they are divided into groups and taken around the library to be briefed about the arrangement of books on the shelves, and use of the catalogue etc.

‘At the time of enrolling new members, it is always advisable to say a few words to the members regarding the services offered, classification system, how to consult the catalogue, the arrangement of books on the shelf, reservation facilities etc.’

2.2.6 BOOKS SELECTION POLICY

According to David Spiller former Head Information Resources unit British Council “Books selection requires a high degree of organisation”. The Book Selection Policy of the British Library Trivandrum is the same as the British Council libraries in India. The stock and service are aimed at the target audience mentioned in the country plan and its aims and objectives.

The main aim of the Library is to provide a lending stock of sizable number of British books and periodicals including adequate reference books. This stock should include books on British studies and specialized information in all subjects of council’s priority.

The following statement of Rabindranath Tagore is very valid here ‘………………………… a library is one that keeps books on every subject, but only select books not one of which is there only as an offering of worship to number, but each one of which stands on its own merits.’

The services of the library include promoting the British printed word through exhibition, other bibliographical information exercises and personal contact with the local book trade. They include multimedia materials like tape, CD-ROMs, Films, video films etc. and the ultimate aim is to provide an effective and efficient information service and be a model for good library practice.

2.2.6.1 CORE COLLECTION

Every council library should include an adequate core collection of books covering essential information on British life thought, culture, history and institutions, i.e. it must be able to provide at least basic information on the whole range of British studies, which should include information on Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as on the Commonwealth as a whole and such Individual Commonwealth countries as one deemed applicable in local circumstances. Collection development goals intend to create a library collection that supplies information needs, including support of specific interest subjects.

2.2.6.2 BALANCE OF STOCK

Apart from this core collection, the balance of stock should depend upon subject priorities determined by the aims and objectives of the library, the significance of the British contribution to a particular subject and local demand.

Authorship and Nationality of Authors

In the field of British studies the essential criterion is the subject matter, the nationality of the author is immaterial so long as the book makes a constructive contribution to British studies. The recent decision is to reduce the size of the stock in the areas where they are not in high use. British authorship is a pre-requisite for works of imagination (eg: Fiction, poetry, drama), and normally for all books, the subject matter is not necessarily to be concerned with British studies. The exceptions are reference books of International scope and books, which contain significant contribution of British studies.

The Library may also include books about the local country (India) and its relation with Britain.

Problem Areas: There is a general policy that the library will not acquire books, areas which are politically very sensitive and also controversial.

Fiction: This is an integral part of English language and literature and it is naturally included in the stock. Normally the standard works, classics and the best contemporary writing and award winning titles are included.

Children’s Books: It is not usually the council’s policy to acquire childrens’ books but in India childrens’ books are acquired targeting the future citizens of India and also to create an appreciation in their mind about Britain and its contribution.

2.2.6.3 OTHER STOCK SELECTION POLICY

1. It is important to buy British books i.e. Books by British Authors, published in UK.

2. English language and literature including fiction should be treated as important part of the collection by ensuring works by Commonwealth authors of standing.

3. Books on India: There is good demand for books on India and it is appropriate for libraries to procure such books by British authors.

" Interview with P. Jayarajan, on 6th January 2004. Mr. Jayarajan was the Head Library Information Services (India), British Council Division, New-Delhi.
4. Reference Stock: The size of the reference stock should be reduced and it should not be more than 5%. Internet should be used increasingly to find information.

5. Electronic sources: It is necessary to be very selective in the acquisition of multimedia products.

6. Very Specialized: Normally the libraries do not buy very specialized materials since its usage is limited. (E.g. Instead of a very specialized textbook in medicine, it goes for a general book in medicine which many doctors can use).

7. Paperbacks: Buy only paperbacks editions when available.

8. Expensive books: Avoid as far as possible purchase of very expensive books.

2.2.6.4 BOOK SELECTION TOOLS

In India the British Libraries use the following tools for book selection

1. Advance book list supplied by suppliers.
2. Bookfind
4. Specific Bibliographies form suppliers
5. Members’ suggestions
6. Bibliographies prepared and circulated within the library network in India.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION

1. More senior staff should involve in the book selection process. However the librarian is finally responsible for the quality of the stock.

2. To improve the quality of selection and reduce errors, a book selection team is created in the library.

Book issue statistics generated by the computer is used as a guideline for the proper selection of books on various subjects and judicious spending of the allocation.

Interview with C.R. Valsalakumari. 5th March 2004. Ms Valsalakumari is the Asst. Librarian, British Library, Thiruvananthapurum (She is in charge of collection development.)
STOCK EDITING

When we think about stock editing Tagore’s views about the size of the stock of a library comes as a good reminder ‘libraries are possessed with the passion for accumulation. Three-quarters of their books do not come into use - their over grown proportions even thrust into a corner the specially selected few that are meant for being actually used’.92

The library has a regular stock editing system and a minimum 10% of the stock is renewed annually.

Books, which are out-dated, mutilated, worn-out, books which are not used for one year or more, are withdrawn from the store. This again is clone under the supervision of the senior staff.

‘A change in the policy and purpose of a particular library service will require a change in library collection. Clientele to be served may also change.’63 This statement is very relevant with regard to the British library since their target audience often changes.

“Withdrawal of books is the most difficult of bibliographical process requiring considerable reserves of experience and an excessive bibliographical background”.64

“It is worth summarizing at this point, the three standards of the policy for provision in the India libraries:

a) Materials, which support target users professional/work-related needs.

b) Materials, which target users, will read for pleasure.

c) British Studies

Virtually all material selected for the libraries should fall into one or other of these three categories”.65 Recently, books on India known as the ‘India collection’ is also added to the above mentioned standards.

94 Spiller David, op. cit. p.28.
2.2.7 LIBRARY SERVICE STANDARDS

The British Library has adopted minimum service standards in serving its customers. They are listed below:

To provide

① A clean, comfortable and welcoming environment.
② Safe drinking water, well maintained toilets. Comfortable seating, adequate lighting and air conditioning.
③ Perfect shelf order every morning which will be maintained by cleaning and shelving all books and periodicals left on the tables thrice a day.
④ Adequate and helpful bay, shelf and directional guiding.
⑤ Formal/ informal briefing on the use of library.
⑥ Provide opportunity for feedback on the library from members.
⑦ An effective procedure for complaints and suggestions.
⑧ As part of customer care, not to close the library consecutively for more than four holidays at a time.
⑨ Quick and prompt service by ensuring that waiting time for members at any service point does not exceed three minutes.
⑩ Acknowledgement of written enquiries within five working days.
⑪ Efficient staff who will be helpful, welcoming, polite informed and easy to identify.
⑫ Staff will be on duty at all service points five minutes before the opening of the library to customers.

Physical Facilities: LIS Standards

© Signboard: A prominent signboard, as per standard, visible from a distance and which is to be repainted at least once a year.
© Exterior: Place healthy plants, if space permits, ensure a clean and well-maintained exterior.

© Opening Hours: Display prominently library-opening days/hours outside, to be visible even when the library is closed.

Entrance area/ Lobby:
- Have a clean and functional desk/counter,
- Telephone and fresh flowers,
- Notice board
- Neat and clean area, clean before opening,
- Doors to be cleaned every day.

Reception
- Prominent signboard
- Trained staff always on duty,
- Chairs for seating.
- Replenish stock of application, flyers every morning.

Business Hours
- All public areas should be fully ready well before the opening hours.
- Staff should be at stations before library door opened for public.

Health & Safety
- Ensure fire/security equipments are in place,
- Should be checked/ serviced - once in a month.
- Ensure pest control mechanism in place
- Should be carried out once in three months.
- Drinking Water: Provide clean and good drinking water
- Shelves: Should be clean and dust free.
Toilet

- Should be clean and neat including walls
- Should be cleaned at least twice daily,
- Provide with running water,
- Maintain the flush in working condition,
- Provide neat/clean towels, tissue papers etc.
- Provide exhaust fan.

Floor

- Neat and clean,
- Sweep daily.

The above mentioned quality standards are very relevant with regard to the customer relations and finally their satisfaction. This satisfaction leads to increase in use of the library by more and more customers.

2.2.8. FUNCTIONS OF A LIBRARY

Today, the public libraries are offering various kinds of services to the common man and their services are influenced or changed from time to time due to the demand of the people they serve. Various statements by UNESCO and other organizations have legitimised these functions. The core functions\(^6\) are derived from these statements and they are in the area of Educational, Social, Cultural, Economic and Political life of the people.

2.2.8.1. Social Functions

The most important social function of the library is to preserve the information and knowledge of the society for the future citizens. A Library being a social institution, it grows with the growth of the society and simultaneously helps the very growth of the society.\(^7\) The


public library is considered to be a place of social interaction where people meet and interact with each other. The library provides books, which helps people understand about various communities and sections of the people and their cultural background and help them live in peace and harmony. In a country like India, which is multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious, the libraries have a major role in developing social cohesion. The library should also acquire and make available books about the evils of war, communal riots and religious fundamentalism so that the citizens can be aware of all these evils and help each other to live in peace.

Health and well-being is another important responsibility of the society and the library as a social institution takes up part of this responsibility. They keep materials, which may assist people to become aware of the various health hazards, diseases and the ways of getting proper treatment. Prevention is better than cure and the library provides sufficient information regarding health and diseases and hygiene. In the context of less developed countries, the information about family planning, epidemics, child health, women’s health are of immense value. The information on the problems of old age and its management is also very important.

Information about Environment, Pollution, Economic development, Women’s status, Sustainable development, Alcoholism, Drug abuse, Social evils, Sexual health and related diseases etc., are very important for the society and the library has a responsibility to disseminate information in these areas by providing books, pamphlets, video films, CDs’ etc.

2.2.8.2 Educational function

Education is fundamental for the development of the society and the library has a major role in formal and informal education. It needs to stock books that are useful for formal and informal education. It should also supplement the existing provisions in the educational institutions in that area. Libraries should also provide materials, which will attract the younger generations to the library and initiate them into the habit of reading.

The new trends in the educational system like the starting of the Open University, Continuing education and Correspondence education has also increased the educational
functions of the library. A Public library is the only source on which the public depend for their life-long learning and the update of their professional skills. The public libraries are described as the ‘poor man’s University’ and ‘street corner University’.

When democratic governments came into being, it was recognised that the duty of the government was to provide education for the masses and schools were established. ‘The duty of a civilized government was to make the means of education available. Education at this level was known in the language of time as self-improvement. It was a means of improving yourself—improving your mind and thus improving your chances of improving your salary.’

In a country like India, the libraries have a role in increasing literacy and providing necessary reading materials to the neo-literate to develop further. Education has been universally recognised as a vital factor in the development of human personality. Libraries have a major role to play in developing the citizens and making them fit to live in a society. So, libraries need to provide books and other materials for their moral, spiritual and social development so that they develop into good citizens.

The recreational needs of the members are also to be satisfied by providing recreational reading materials and also materials, which will develop skills in sports, arts, games and other past time skills. Libraries also have a major role in meeting the informational needs of the society.

2.2.8.3 Economic Functions

The libraries also have an economic function. All people do not have the capacity to purchase the materials they need for their study or professional update. The library stacks these materials and this helps them economically. This includes leisure-reading materials as

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well. The materials in the library help people to get the information and that information helps to develop the society as a whole and this results in increased production and other development. The important part of innovation is information, and without information there is no innovation and without innovation there is no production.72

The business information provided by the library is very useful, for the business and agricultural development of the area. Consumer companies are also benefited by this information. Career guidance and information about job opportunities are the economic functions of the library. This information can help people get jobs and earn their living. The tourist can get valuable information on attractive sites and thereby tourism might develop leading to profitable economic activity. The library also provides local and international market information that are vital to the business community.

2.2.4 Cultural Function

Intellectual expression of a particular society could be discerned in its culture, which is defined as art, literature, music and other inventions.73 From time to time libraries, as a vehicle, can carry this information and enrich it for the future generation. It also helps people know about various other cultures in the world. The Library also helps people to popularise the culture by organising events related to the culture of the society in which the library exists.

Edward Taylor (‘Primitive Culture’, 1971) defined culture as ‘that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by men as member of society.’74

Andrew Carnegie is cited as holding the opinion that the purpose of a library is to ‘improve’ the masses.75

According to the Oxford American dictionary of current English cultural means ‘relating to the cultivation of the mind or manners, especially through artistic or intellectual activity’.

The UNESCO Public Library Manifesto of 1972 reads ‘The public library is a natural cultural centre for the community, bringing together as it does people of similar interest. Space and equipment are therefore necessary for exhibitions, discussions, lectures, musical performances and films, both for adults and children.

2.2.8.5 Political Functions

Libraries provide materials about the various systems of government especially political systems, the political parties and their policies and also about national and international political affairs. This helps people assess the political events in the country and the political experience in other countries of the world. Democracy is very vital for the peaceful co-existence of people and libraries help the decision makers in taking objective and unbiased decisions. ‘They (librarians) must themselves become active and not passive agents of the democratic process’. The library also gives information about the legal system of the country and the rights of every one. So libraries have a political function which helps people to perform their political role as true citizens of a country at the local, national and international level.

2.2.9. LIBRARY IMPACT

Michel Menou who has worked on some of the most high-profile international attempts at impact evaluation, has defined the need for evaluation of the impact of library and information services as meeting three principal requirements:

(1) the scientific need to understand what information is and how it affects human behaviour;

(2) the managerial need to prove information is a critical resource; and

(3) the political need to provide a rationale for policies and justify investments and thus to secure popular support (Menou, 2001).

The dictionary meaning of the term ‘impact’ is the effect or influence of one person, thing or action on another.

Brophy outlines impact in the context of library services as relating to ‘any effect of a service on an individual or group’ and that it may be:

* positive or negative
* what was intended or something entirely different;
* may result in changed attitudes, behaviours or products:
* may be short or long term; and may be critical or trivial.

When users agree that the services of the library has positively influenced their life or changed their lives, then it is real impact. This impact is the most valuable of all. Other definitions are:

Impact or ‘outcome can be seen as the eventual result of using library services, the influence the use had, and its significance to the user’.

This present study

It is evident from the multi-dimensional changes which are now taking place, that the potential of the libraries in shaping the future of the world is indispensable. In such a circumstance, research activities in this direction is bound to be increased. Hence, this study mainly aims at the analysis of the role played by the British library, Thiruvananthapurum in the socio economic and educational development in Thiruvananthapuram. As a result of this inquest, the present study has been undertaken through an elaborate survey to study the impact of the British library and analyse the impact of its services on the development and educational achievement of the people of Thiruvananthapurum.


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