The Expansion and Development of Public Library Systems in India

JS Vinuta Library Staff, District Central Library Branch: Kumta, India.
Narmada Bhat Librarian, SDM Degree College, Honavar, Karnatak University Dharwad, Karnataka, India.
jsv184@gmail.com[1], narmadabhat109@gmail.com[2]

Abstract

With the expansion of education, literacy, and publishing came the emergence of public libraries around the world. Every nation has a public library with a history of notable figures. The same is true of India. In ancient India, libraries were mostly founded thanks to the patronage of rulers, powerful businessmen, and scholars. Indian emperors and rulers received support from academics and learning. This paper discusses the expansion and modernization of India's library system from antiquity to the twenty-first century. The study discusses how several agencies, including the federal and state governments, the University Grants Commission, UNESCO, library associations, businesses, and a person, contributed significantly to the growth of India's library system.

Keywords: Library growth, Modern Indian library, Library development

Introduction

One of the earliest civilizations was born in India. The Indian culture was moulded by philosophical thought and intellectual inquiry. The establishment, upkeep, and operation of libraries in India are all detailed in the history of the country's systematic growth and development of libraries. The establishment, upkeep, operation, and expansion of a library all contribute to its growth. Without offering its residents access to free public libraries, no nation in the world can advance. In order to strengthen the democratization of information and to advance public understanding of social, cultural, historical, scientific, and technological topics, it is essential for a democratic nation like India to build service organizations like public library systems.

Any library's mission is to serve the community with services that are pertinent to it. Nevertheless, without appropriate collection, this is not achievable. Public libraries are places where anybody can use information without restriction, including teachers, doctors, farmers, and businesspeople. Public libraries, according to IFLA/UNESCO (2010), play a crucial role in the growth and upkeep of a democratic society by providing access to a wide array of information, viewpoints, and ideas. The document continues by stating that "the primary functions of the public library are to provide resources and services in a range of media to suit the needs of individuals and groups for education, information, and personal development, including recreation and leisure" (IFLA/UNESCO, 2010).

Study Objective

- The objectives of the study are as follows:
- To investigate India's collection development policy.
- To be familiar with the process for acquiring materials in public libraries.
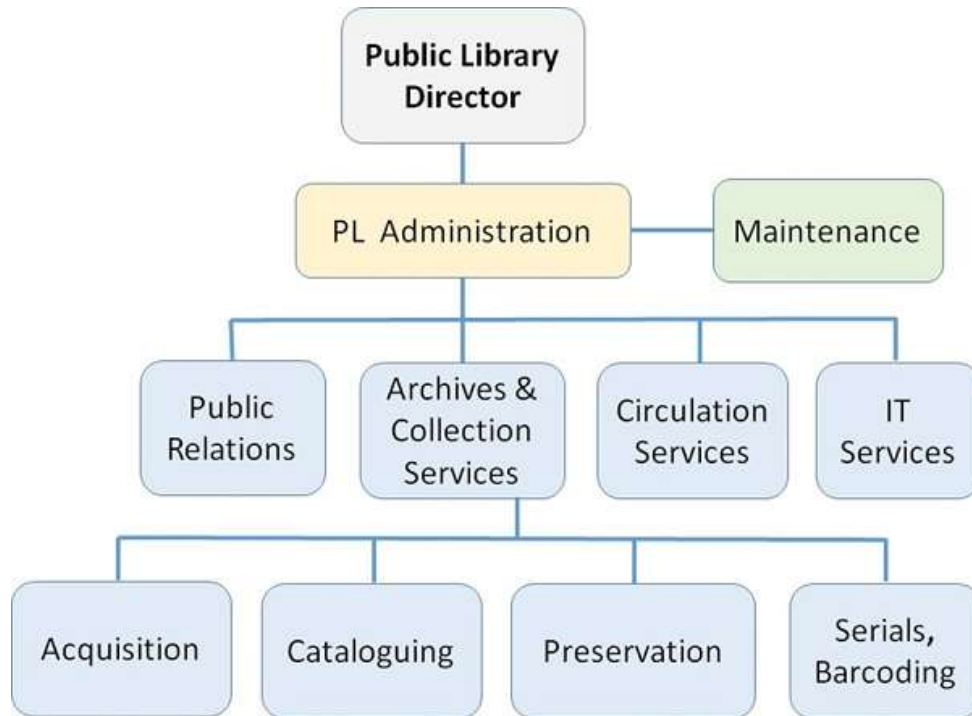- To determine how often public libraries use their library collections.

National Library Policy in India

The individual state government is in charge of developing public libraries in that state. In India, ten states have passed the Public Library Act. The state's public libraries operate without incident thanks to the library laws. There could be three levels of public libraries in a state. The top body would be a state central library, followed by district libraries in each of the state's districts and public libraries in both rural and urban areas dispersed throughout the state as the third tier. Also, the Public Libraries Act makes sure that every city and town has at least one government-supported public library. Additionally, this Act sets provisions for the allocation of funds, human resources, and other resources necessary for the growth and operation of public libraries. Some state governments offer subsidies to public libraries, while others levy a tax known as the "Library Cess" on taxpayers. Table 1 demonstrates the year wise act imposed by various state government for the library.

Sr. No.	State of Name Year of Library Legislation Act	Year of Library Legislation Act
1	Tamil Nadu	1948
2	Andhra Pradesh	1960
3	Karnataka	1965
4	Maharashtra	1967
5	Maharashtra	1979
6	Manipur	1988
7	Haryana	1989
8	Kerala	1989
9	Mizoram	1993
10	Goa	1993
11	Gujarat	2000
12	Odisha	2001
13	Uttaranchal	2005
14	Rajasthan	2006
15	Uttar Pradesh	2006
16	Lakshadweep	2007
17	Bihar	2008
18	Chhattisgarh	2009
19	Arunachal Pradesh	2009

Table 1: Library Act in Indian States

Figure 1 shows the common public library structure of India.

Figure 1: Public Library Structure

Number of Public Libraries in India

There haven't been any official statistics on the number of public libraries since 1947, when India gained independence from British control, despite many studies (Jambhekar, 1995; Thomas, 1997; Bhattacharjee, 2002; Majumdar et al., 2003; Matoria et al., 2007). Public libraries would benefit from having a department inside the Ministry of Culture that is solely responsible for developing, advocating for, promoting, and funding public libraries. Now, this effort is being done by the 1972-founded Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF). There are no trustworthy figures on finances, the quantity of public libraries, or per capita spending, though. Table 2 shows the approx number of public libraries in India.

S. No.	Source	Number of Public Libraries
1	Anon. (1907)	419
2	Gardner (1971)	24,086
3	Sharma (1985)	40,107
4	Ramaiah (1993)	44,205
5	Majumdar et al. (2003)	51,758

Table 2: Number of Public Libraries

Education and Public Libraries

Public libraries and education go hand in hand since using and having access to learning and development resources is crucial to the educational process and to a person's personal development (Singh, 1960; Das and

Lal, 2006). India has demonstrated tremendous potential as a rising nation to offer universal education to its expanding population. Figure 2 shows the growth of literacy rates in India from 1951 to 2011 and from 2001 to 2011, it increased from 64.83 per cent to 74.04 per cent (Shah, 2013). According to RRRLF, out of 29 states and 7 union territories in India, only 19 states have public library legislations.
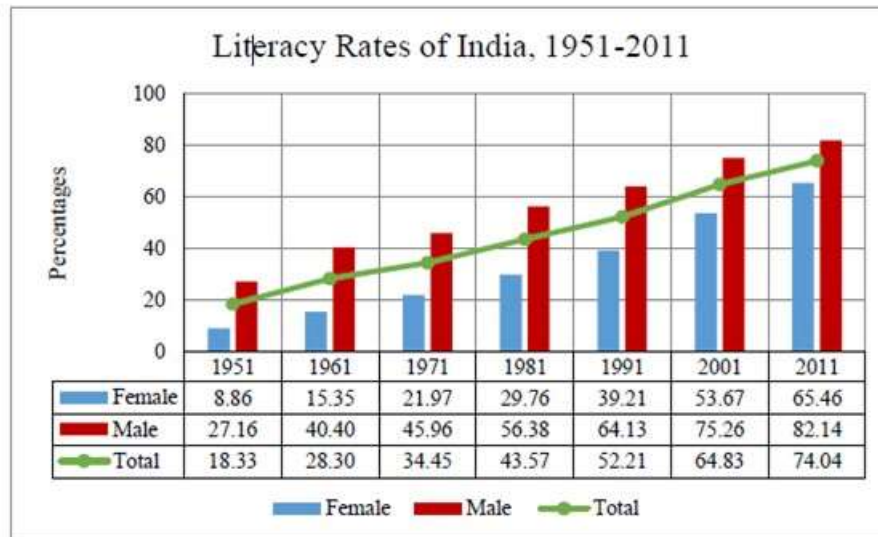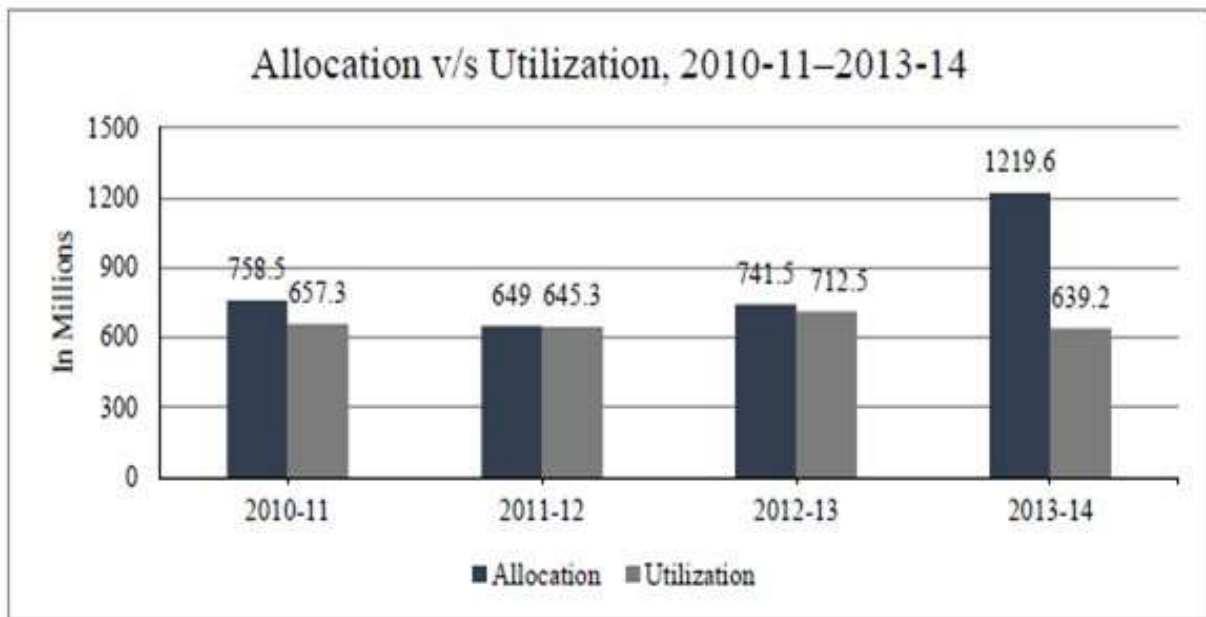

Figure 2. Literacy rates of India, 1951–2011

Public Library Finance in India

The service tax was hiked by the national government three times between 2015 and 2016, from 12.36 to 15 percent, including the new Swachh Bharat Cess and Krishi Kalyan Cess (The Economic Times, 2016). A national tax known as the Goods and Service Tax has also been enacted by the Indian government (The Indian Express, 2016). The failure to use taxes collected from citizens for public welfare is one of India's most pressing problems with state finances (e.g., education, clean energy, road development, health). Due to inadequate planning, implementation, and implementation of suitable procedures and policy programmes, these cesses collected are frequently not utilised for their intended purpose (The Hindu, 2015). Figure 3 shows the allocation and spending on public libraries (Press Information Bureau, 2014).

Figure 3: Ministry of Culture spending on public libraries in India

Conclusion

India is a big country with 1.21 billion inhabitants, the majority of whom live in 6,40,000 villages. Given the wider objective of constructing and bolstering a knowledge society, financing is required for these villages to develop the community anchors of lifelong learning. The government must set priorities that benefit users and learners, advance universal education, and make information more accessible. As a centre of the community that fosters intellectual growth and enriches knowledge, public libraries are essential. Regrettably, there are very few cultural spaces in India, including places for growth and learning. The central government should make it mandatory for the states to provide library services through a library legislation and create a Model Public Libraries Bill for the 17 states that do not have library legislation. There is a need for greater integration and coordination among various public libraries in order to gain the maximum benefits and use available resources in the best possible ways.

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