

**PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN INDIA:
PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PUNJAB**

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Abstract

The history of the development of the public libraries is as old as the education in India. Here, public libraries are treated as the property of the common man. The public libraries have developed enormously in India right from the early period till date in different stages and different paces. But it is not the case with district libraries in India. The district public libraries have badly failed in serving its clientele as much as these were expected to serve due to several reasons.

A vast explosion in Information, a big increase in the resources of knowledge materials readily available for each and every minute requirements, a rapid development in Information and Communication Technology, and a huge change in information seeking behavior of the people have made it compulsory to modernize the district public libraries, so that they can serve the users of these libraries in an effective way as per their likings and needs.

The present study has focused on the problems of district public library services in Punjab and their prospects due to which these libraries are unable to reach the common people in the state. It also highlights the challenges of public libraries in the present day context of modern technology and throws light upon the present status of services imparted by public libraries in the state in actuality.

Keywords: Public library, India, RRRLE, NAPLIS, NML

Introduction

India is a sovereign state in South Asia and geographically the seventh largest country by density, the second most populous and the largest democratic one in the world. It has the boundaries of the Indian Ocean on the south, the Arabian Sea on the west and the Bay of Bengal on the east. It has a coastline of over 7500 kilometers. India is surrounded by countries namely

Pakistan to the west; China, Nepal, and Bhutan to the North-East and Bangladesh and Myanmar to the East.¹ (India; Wikipedia encyclopedia).

Historical Development of Public Library System in India:

“The history of the development of the public libraries is as old as the education in India.”² (Ekbote; 1987; 2). The earliest written and recorded material found in India is in the form of inscriptions carved upon the stone pillars of the times of King Asoka (300 BC); these inscriptions could be called the first ever open libraries.”³ (Patel;2004;3).

Later, Ashrams came into existence in India and students started their studies under the supervision of well-known teachers. These Ashrams kept many manuscripts for the teachers, students as well as for the visitors of these Ashrams. These educational institutions

collected many different manuscripts and other materials which could help in their teaching and daily routine. They were to be kept and preserved very carefully. “The reading materials, of course, related to many subjects, formed the source material for imparting knowledge in different streams of education and culture. The collections might be linked to modern libraries since they were carefully maintained and extensively used by students and teachers alike”.⁴ (Ekbote; 1987; 4). Such Ashrams or Vidyapeeths had manuscripts and other reading materials preserved, that may be treated like library as they served information and knowledge to the students and community in different aspects.

For a big part of the Medieval period there was Muslim rule in India. Historically, it is called as the Mughal Period. During this period, there were great changes not only in social and political fields, but also in education and library system. “The period of Mughal is taken to be the golden period of Indian history for its educational, literary and library activities”.⁵ (Khursid;2004;5).

The Mughal Emperor Babur, the king of Kabul invaded India and added Delhi into his kingdom. “He established the first Mughal Imperial Library in 1526”.⁶ (Patel;2004;6). He inherited manuscripts from his father and

succeeded them to his next generations.⁷ (Smith; 1981;7) During the Mughal period, library technical works like accessioning, classification and cataloguing were also carried out in some ways. The head librarian was known as Nizam and the assistant librarian as Muhatin or Darogha. Other staff of libraries during Mughal period was namely Scribes, Book Illustrators, Calligraphers, Copyists, Translators, Bookbinders and Gilders.

Developments before the Independence:

The British took great interest in uplifting the rich cultural heritage of India. The East India Company established a number of academic institutions during the British period who were the representatives of the British Empire; and by the Christian missionaries".⁸ (Patel;2004;8). The Bengal Royal Asiatic Society set up library in 1784, Bombay Royal Asiatic Society in 1804 and Calcutta Public Library in 1835.⁹ (Sharma;1987;9). Establishment of these public libraries enlightened the community and it should be regarded as the foundation of the concept of public libraries to Indian people. Some of the Indian states also established public libraries such as Baroda established Baroda State Library in Baroda in 1877, Cochin established Public Library and Reading Room in Trichur in 1873. The first significant year in the development of public libraries in India is 1808 when the Bombay Government initiated a proposal to register libraries, which were to be given copies of books published from the 'Funds for the Encouragement of Literature'.¹⁰ (Bhattacharjee;2002;10).

We can't overlook the contributions of His Highness Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwar III of Baroda towards library movement in India. He is remembered today as the Father of Library Movement in India. In 1906, during his visit to America, he was very much impressed by the library services of America for the development of the people in their social, economic and educational life. He then invited an American, William Alanson Borden, a pupil-assistant of Charles A. Cutter, who was working as Librarian of the Young Men's Institute, New Haven. He decided to establish library as an experiment in one of the towns and in order to implement his idea immediately, he

issued orders to his ministers. In conformity to his ruler's instructions, the Minister of Education prepared a detailed plan to open Circulating Libraries in the State. It was approved in March 1907. Every public library instituted through the State's financial assistance was to be named as Circulating Library. Borden reached Baroda on November 6, 1910 and became the Director of State Libraries. It can be traced back that public library movement started since 1910 in India.¹¹ (Nagar; 1983;11)

The post of University Librarian was created in the University of Madras in 1923 and the post was joined by Dr. S.R. Ranganathan on 4 January 1924. He also prepared Model Public Library Bill in 1930 and revised it in 1957. In 1972 he introduced legislative library bill in Indian states. He made a tremendous contribution for the development of libraries in India. ¹² (Ranganathan; 1957;12).

Developments after the Independence

After independence in 1947, public libraries in India made a tremendous growth. The governments took a number of steps forward for the development of the nation from the point of education and considered library as its essential part. The programs executed by state and central governments since 1910 for the social and adult education of the public paved the way for the enactment of library laws and rules for granting aids in the country. Thus public library became part of the education budget of the country. The Planning Commission constituted a Working Group on Public Libraries in 1964 and the Commission submitted its report in 1965 with Model Public Libraries Act. The model bill was sent to all the states and UTs, which do not have Public Libraries Act with following recommendations:

1- New government agencies in the central government under the Minister of Education, a directorate of libraries and a state library advisory council in each state should be set up to execute the programs effectively. The central and state governments should share responsibility for providing adequate public library services.

2- State central libraries should be

established in four states: Madhya Pradesh, Mysore, Nagaland, and Orissa.

3- States which do not possess adequate functional buildings for their state central libraries should be provided with library buildings.

4- The state central library must have a children section.

5- There should be 335 District Libraries for 327 districts in the country, thus in large and populous districts two district libraries may be provided.

6- New buildings should be constructed for the existing 100 district libraries.

7- Block libraries are the chief feeding centre for the rural reading public, and therefore 2,500 new block libraries, covering 75% of blocks in the country should be constructed.

8- A sum of 10 million rupees shall be provided for distribution of grant to aid such libraries of urban and rural areas which depend on subscription and donations.

9- Three public libraries on model of Delhi Public Library should be set up

10- The Institute of Library Science established by the Ministry of Education at Delhi University in 1958-59, and then closed in 1962 should be reopened. Such institutes should be established at the state levels also to train graduate and undergraduate librarians to meet future requirements.

11- A sum of Rs.10000 shall be allocated as financial assistance to all national level and state level library associations to create library consciousness in the country by organizing seminars, conducting surveys, and producing library literature.

12- A program of book production should be undertaken.

13- A draft of the Library Act should be produced¹³(Panda, 1993, p. 35-36)

Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation was established on May 22, 1972 as an autonomous body under the Department of Culture, Ministry of Education. The primary & main objective of the Foundation was to promote the library movement and also to assist public library services in their developmental works.

A library section was established in the Department of Culture under the Ministry of Education in 1979. It was under the charge of

an Under Secretary. The objective was to promote the development of public libraries in India. A Working Group on Modernization of Library Services and Informatics was appointed by the Planning Commission in 1983 and it submitted its report in 1984 with the formulation of National Policy on Library Services and Information system in 1985 under the chairmanship of Prof. D.P. Chattopadhyay.

A High Level Committee 'National Mission on Libraries' had been set up by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, vide notification no. 18-4/2009 lib (Pt) dated 4th May, 2012 to pursue National Knowledge Commission recommendations for development of Libraries and Information Science. National Mission on Libraries set up four working groups and after working on the recommendations of the working groups it formulated the scheme National Mission on Libraries (NML) - upgradation of libraries providing service to the public. The scheme consists of four components i.e. Creation of National Virtual Library of India (NVLI); Setting up of NML Model Libraries; Quantitative & Qualitative Survey of Libraries and Capacity Building.

National Virtual Library of India was to facilitate a comprehensive database on digital resources on information about India and on information generated in India in an open access environment. The setting up on NML Model Libraries would develop six Libraries under Ministry of Culture, thirty five State Central Libraries and thirty five District Libraries with particular emphasis on economically backward districts, as model Libraries. In addition, six hundred twenty nine district public libraries across the states would be provided network connectivity. The Quantitative & Qualitative Survey of Libraries would be undertaken to prepare a baseline data of libraries in India through a survey of five thousand Libraries. The Capacity Building would be undertaken to enhance the professional competence of libraries and its staff.

Status of Library Legislation in India:

During last seven decades, Nineteen Public Library Bills had been passed in different states

of India. These are:

- 1- The Tamil Nadu (Madras) Public Libraries Act 1948
- 2- The Andhra Pradesh Public Libraries Act 1960
- 3- The Karnataka (Mysore) Public Libraries Act 1965
- 4- The Maharashtra Public Libraries Act 1967
- 5- The West Bengal Public Libraries Act 1979
- 6- The Manipur Public Libraries Act 1988
- 7- The Kerala Public Libraries Act 1989
- 8- The Haryana Public Libraries Act 1989
- 9- The Mizoram Public Libraries Act 1993
- 10- The Goa Public Libraries Act 1993
- 11- Orissa Public Libraries Act, 2001
- 12- Gujarat Public Libraries Act, 2001
- 13- Uttaranchal Public Libraries Act, 2005
- 14- Punjab Public Libraries Act, 2006
- 15- Rajasthan Public Libraries Act, 2006
- 16- Pondicherry Public Libraries Act, 2007
- 17- Chattishgarh Public Libraries Act, 2007
- 18- Bihar Public Libraries Act, 2008
- 19- Arunachal Pradesh Public Libraries Act, 2009.

District Libraries of Punjab

At present, The Punjab Public Library System is managed by the Directorate of Public Instruction (Colleges), which is assisted by Assistant Director, Cultural Affairs. Presently there is 01 Central State Libraries, 14 District Libraries, 104 Municipal Libraries, 1200 Rural Libraries and 3000 Reading Rooms in the State. So, Out of 20 Districts, the Six District of Nava Shahr, TaranTaaran, Moga, Mukatsar, Barnala and Ludhiana do not have their District Libraries.

Interpretation of the Data

Data regarding the MM Central State Library, Patiala and all fourteen district libraries of Punjab has been analyzed and the details of analysis are given below. Data was collected through structured questionnaire to the librarian/library in charge of each district library. One of the main objectives of this study is to evaluate the facilities available in the public libraries. The study is made for library building, seating capacity, library budget, library collection, membership, staff strength, details of hardware and software used, library services, networking facilities, ICT infrastructure and problems in ICT application etc. Detailed description of general features and infrastructure of public libraries under study is as follows:

Objectives of the Study

This study is intended to assess the present status of District Public Libraries in Punjab. The study tends to evaluate the Public Library System, staff-structure, collection and some other aspects of District Public Libraries in Punjab. The present study is a systematic approach to know the present status and development of District Public Libraries in Punjab. The survey, analysis and interpretation will definitely provide a unique public library model for its development. In the light of the theme of the problem under investigation, the study aims to focus on the following objectives and will attempt:

- 1- To examine the present status of the District Public Library in Punjab.
- 2- To know the District Public Library System in Punjab state.
- 3- To find out the Staff-Structure and present strength.
- 4- To examine the strength and weakness of resources or collection of District Public Libraries.
- 5- To examine the proper building and other amenities.
- 6- To assess the modernization and adoption of emerging technologies.

Methodology

The data is collected personally by the author with the help of a questionnaire from district public libraries and also the data available on the website of RRRLF about the public libraries of Punjab have been used for analysis and interpretation. There are fourteen district public libraries in Punjab. The present study confined to them. The relevant data collected from questionnaire personally and RRRLF site is analyzed and inferences have are taken to get the results.

Table 1: Description of Public Libraries under Study

Sr. No.	Name of Lib.	Address	Year of Est.	Type of Library
1	M. M. Central State Library Patiala	Patiala	1956	Central State Library
2	Com. Sohan Singh Josh District Library, Amritsar	Rani Ka Bagh, Amritsar	1982	District Library
3	District Library, Bhatinda	Zila Parishad Building, Bhatinda	1974	District Library
4	District Library, Faridkot	Sabhyachar kendra, Red Cross Bhawan, Faridkot	1982	District Library
5	District Library, Ferozepur	Town Hall Ferozerpur City	1980	District Library
6	District Library, Fatehgarh Sahib	Fatehgarh Sahib	1995	District Library
7	Govt. District Library, Gurdaspur	Back side Fish Park, Civil Lines, Gurdaspur	1966	District Library
8	District Library, Hoshiarpur	Hoshiarpur	1974	District Library
9	Guru Nanak Dev District Library, Jalandhar	Near Namdev Chowk, Jalandhar	1957	District Library
10	Guru Nanak Distt Lib. Kapurthala	Near Old Courts, Kapurthala	1971	District Library
11	District Library, SAS Nagar Mohali	Ind. Area, Phase-I, SAS Nagar, Mohali	1989	District Library
12	District Library, Mansa	Dr Ambedkar Bhawan, DC Complex, Mansa	1995	District Library
13	District Library, Nabha	Near SDM Residence Nabha	1946	District Library
14	District Library, Ropar	Ropar	1971	District Library
15	Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Distt Lib. Sangrur	Outside Patiala Gate Sangrur	1912	District Library

Table 1 shows the selected libraries which were the part of this study. This table further deals with some important data related to these libraries such as address, year of establishment and type of library. Out of selected fifteen libraries only one was central and remaining were district libraries.

Table 2: Nature of Library Building

Sr. No.	Name of Lib.	Type of Building	
		Own	Attached to
1	M. M. Central State Library Patiala	Yes	
2	Com. Sohan Singh Josh District Library, Amritsar		Municipal Building
3	District Library, Bhatinda		Zila Parishad
5	District Library, Ferozepur		Nagar Council
4	District Library, Faridkot		Govt. Office
6	District Library, Fatehgarh Sahib	Yes	
7	Govt. District Library, Gurdaspur	Yes	
8	District Library, Hoshiarpur		Municipal Building
9	Guru Nanak Dev District Library, Jalandhar	Yes	
10	Guru Nanak Distt Lib. Kapurthala	Yes	
11	District Library, SAS Nagar Mohali		Jal Supply Dept.
12	District Library, Mansa		Khajana office
13	District Library, Nabha	Yes	
14	District Library, Ropar	Yes	
15	Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Distt Lib. Sangrur	Yes	

Table 2 indicates the names and nature of library building which have been included in the present research work. Based on above mentioned categories, it can be inferred that eight of fifteen libraries have their own building. On the other side, Com. Sohan Singh Josh District Library, Amritsar and District Library, Hoshiarpur were attached to Municipal Building. Further table indicates that District Library, Bhatinda was attached to Zila Parishad. Building of District Library, Ferozepur was attached to Nagar Council. Further investigation revealed that District Library, SAS Nagar Mohali and District Library Mansa were attached to Jal Supply Department and Khajana office respectively.

Table 3: Area and Seating Capacity of Library

Sr. No.	Name of Lib.	Area	Seating Capacity
1	M. M. Central State Library Patiala	2 Bigah	150
2	Com. Sohan Singh Josh District Library, Amritsar	1062 Sq Feet	58
3	District Library, Bhatinda	300 Sq Feet	30
4	District Library, Faridkot	1300 Sq Feet	50
5	District Library, Fatehgarh Sahib	400 Sq Feet	25
6	District Library, Ferozepur	300 Sq Feet	50
7	Govt. District Library, Gurdaspur	4000 Sq Feet	20
8	District Library, Hoshiarpur	300 Sq Feet	20
9	Guru Nanak Dev District Library, Jalandhar	1500 Sq Meter	138
10	Guru Nanak Distt Lib. Kapurthala	400 Sq Feet	350
11	District Library, Mansa	1.5 Bigah	25
12	District Library, SAS Nagar Mohali	350 Sq Feet	10
13	District Library, Nabha	1000 Sq Feet	50
14	District Library, Ropar	800 Sq feet	100
15	Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Distt Lib. Sangrur	3.7Acre	50

Table 3 demonstrates the area and seating capacity of libraries. The areas of M. M. Central State Library Patiala and District Library, Mansa were 2 Bigah and 1.5 Bigah respectively. Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Distt Lib. Sangrur was spread on 3.7 acre. Furthermore, areas of other libraries such as Com. Sohan Singh Josh District Library, Amritsar, District Library, Faridkot, Govt. District Library, Gurdaspur, Guru Nanak Distt Lib. Kapurthala, District Library, SAS Nagar Mohali and District Library, Ropar were found to be 1062 Sq Feet, 1300 sq feet, 4000 sq feet, 400 sq feet, 350 sq feet and 800 sq feet respectively. Seating capacity of Guru Nanak Distt Lib. Kapurthala was found to be highest (350). On this hierarchy, second highest was M. M. Central State Library Patiala. Guru Nanak Dev District Library, Jalandhar has the seating capacity of 138 persons. Seating capacity of 100 visitors was there in District Library, Ropar. Remaining libraries were able to provide seating arrangement up to 60 persons which are presented in table 3.

Table 4: Mode of Acquisition of Books

Sr. No.	Name of Lib.	Acquisition			
		Purchase	Exchange	Gift	Any other
1	M. M. Central State Library Patiala	Yes	No	Yes	No
2	District Library, Nabha	Yes	No	Yes	No
3	District Library, Ropar	Yes	No	Yes	No
4	Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Distt Lib. Sangrur	Yes	No	Yes	No
5	Guru Nanak Distt Lib. Kapurthala	Yes	No	Yes	No
6	District Library, Ferozepur	Yes	No	Yes	No
7	District Library, SAS Nagar Mohali	Yes	No	Yes	No
8	Guru Nanak Dev District Library, Jalandhar	Yes	No	Yes	No
9	Govt. District Library, Gurdaspur	Yes	No	Yes	No
10	District Library, Bhatinda	No	No	Yes	No
11	District Library, Mansa	No	No	Yes	No
12	Com. Sohan Singh Josh District Library, Amritsar	Yes	No	Yes	No
13	District Library, Faridkot	Yes	No	Yes	No
14	District Library, Fatehgarh Sahib	No	No	Yes	No
15	District Library, Hoshiarpur	No	No	Yes	No

Mode of acquisition of books by these libraries was also explored by investigator. Table 4 revealed that all` libraries have mode of acquisition of books as gift. Alongwith this mode, majority of libraries purchased books.

Table 5: Collection of Library Materials

Sr. No.	Name of Lib.	Collection				
		Books	Ref. Books	Periodicals	Cds/ Audio Visuals	Rare Books
1	M. M. Central State Library Patiala	135900	1500	30	100	3000
2	District Library, Nabha	55875	500	4	---	---
3	District Library, Ropar	45000	2500	14	---	---
4	Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Distt Lib. Sangrur	64837	2000	15	---	---
5	Guru Nanak Distt Lib. Kapurthala	47000	1200	---	---	---
6	District Library, Ferozepur	41000	1000	7	---	---
7	District Library, SAS Nagar Mohali	24913	200	7	---	---
8	Guru Nanak Dev District Library, Jalandhar	85824	2700	16	---	---
9	Govt. District Library, Gurdaspur	24426	22	15	---	---
10	District Library, Bhatinda	35000	500		---	---
11	District Library, Mansa	19976	2500	5	---	---
12	Com. Sohan Singh Josh District Library, Amritsar	46822	2000	6	---	---
13	District Library, Faridkot	36475	4000	2	---	---
14	District Library, Fatehgarh Sahib	25000	1500	---	---	---
15	District Library, Hoshiarpur	42091	1500	14	---	---
Total	730139	15722	135	100	3000	
Coefficient of variation		60.88				

Data was also collected related to different material presented in libraries such as books, references books, periodicals, CDs/audio visuals and rare books. Data open up significant information which indicated that majority of libraries have books, reference books as well periodicals. Only M. M. Central State Library Patiala has 100 CDs/Audio Visuals and 3000 rare books. Also this library has more number of books (135900) than other mentioned libraries. Less number of books was found in District Library, Mansa which was found to be 19976. Number of reference books was more in District Library, Faridkot (4000) while less was found in Govt. District Library, Gurdaspur (22). Highest number of periodicals was observed in M. M. Central State Library Patiala (30) while other libraries' number of periodicals varies from 2 to 16 which has been given in table 5.

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Table 6: News Paper Subscription

Sr. No.	Name of Lib.	News paper			
		English	Punjabi	Hindi	Others
1	M. M. Central State Library Patiala	5	4	2	1
2	District Library, Nabha	2	2	1	x
3	District Library, Ropar	4	5	4	1
4	Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Distt Lib. Sangrur	5	4	4	x
5	Guru Nanak Distt Lib. Kapurthala	5	5	5	1
6	District Library, Ferozepur	2	1	2	x
7	District Library, SAS Nagar Mohali	4	3	3	x
8	Guru Nanak Dev District Library, Jalandhar	4	4	3	1
9	Govt. District Library, Gurdaspur	2	3	1	1
10	District Library, Bhatinda	2	3	2	x
11	District Library, Mansa	3	3	2	x
12	Com. Sohan Singh Josh District Library, Amritsar	4	2	3	x
13	District Library, Faridkot	1	2	1	x
14	District Library, Fatehgarh Sahib	2	2	1	x
15	District Library, Hoshiarpur	2	2	2	1

Table 6 provides data related to newspaper subscription of selected libraries. Classification of newspapers was done on the basis of English, Punjabi, Hindi and other languages. It was found that Guru Nanak Distt Lib. Kapurthala has the highest number of newspaper subscription i.e. it subscribed 5 English, 5 Punjabi, 5 Hindi and 1 other newspaper. Contrary to it, least number (4) was subscribed by District Library, Faridkot

Table 7: District Wise Staff Status of Public Libraries

Sr. No.	Name of District Library	Librarian	Restorer	Group 'D'
1	District Library, Amritsar	1	Nil	Nil
2	District Library, Bathinda	Nil	Nil	1
3	District Library, Faridkot	Nil	1	Nil
4	District Library, Ferozepur	Nil	1	1
5	District Library, Fatehgarh Sahib	Nil	Nil	1
6	District Library, Gurdaspur	Nil	1	Nil
7	District Library, Hoshiarpur	Nil	Nil	1
8	District Library, Jalandhar	2	Book binder-1	5
9	District Library, Kapurthala	Nil	1	2
10	District Library, Mohali	1	1	2
11	District Library, Mansa	Nil	Nil	2
12	District Library, Nabha	Nil	Nil	1
13	District Library, Ropar	1	1	3
14	District Library, Sangrur	Nil	1	1
15	M.M. Central State Library, Patiala	Chief Lib.1+1	3+office staff-4 Receptionist-1+Book binder-1	10
	Total	6+Chief Lib.	17	30

Above table 7 deals with district wise staff status of public libraries which further shed light on important information regarding, librarian, restorer and group D members. It was found that in totality there were six librarians and one chief librarian; seventeen restorers and thirty group D members. Only M.M. Central State Library, Patiala & District Library Amritsar, Jalandhar, Mohali, Ropar have filled librarian post and all other district libraries are working without a librarian.

Prospects & Problems of Public Library System in Punjab:

So many problems have been identified in development, modernization and functioning of public library services in the state of Punjab. Out of them the followings problems have been identified in practical & smooth functioning of the public library services in the state:

Availability of Infrastructure

No proper infrastructural facilities, like buildings, furniture, IT accessories etc. are available up to the mark in the state of Punjab for the smooth functioning of public libraries. These facilities, although available, are not sufficient and also some of the public libraries do not have even the minimum infrastructural facilities required to run the libraries. The concerned authorities are not interested in creating infrastructural facilities for the development of public libraries. It is very much interesting to mention that most of public libraries in the state of Punjab do not have their own building and are being run in the rented buildings only as formalities.

Collection

The most important component of the library activity is its collection which can be termed as heart of the library. Maximum numbers of district public libraries of the state of Punjab have very small collection of different reading materials. So much so that these libraries are not in the position to serve the real needs of the common people. Moreover, there is a huge imbalanced collection in these libraries. The governments should take steps for providing enough reading materials to the libraries so that they can serve the real needs of the users. There is a big scope and prospect for proper planning for the modernizing and automation of library services in the state. Open Source Software for library automation is easily available in the present era So there is immense prospect of modernization and automation of library services in the Punjab.

Library Staff

The severe constrain in District Public libraries in the state is of its staff. Most of the District Libraries of Punjab are running with very less

or without professional library staff. Thus the conditions of the libraries are in a dying position. The Government authorities never feel the need for the appointment of permanent library professionals to run the district public libraries. From table-1 we can see the clear status of staff in different public libraries of the state of Punjab. Even there is a huge imbalance in appointment of library staff-members. Most of the staff mentioned above is on temporary basis or on contract basis which needs to be regularized. Some of the libraries are running without professional library staff due to which the public libraries are not in a position to reach the public in real spirit. Most interestingly, some of the public libraries are not functioning in true sense of the library and the staff appointed for those libraries is being used in other departments. It is painful to see the depleted functioning of public libraries in the state. The government should provide the required number of trained professionals to these district public libraries for smooth functioning in real sense. The government should also strictly apply the library legislation in the state.

Lack of Advertisement and Indifferent Attitude of Public

Proper understanding about the importance of library services among the common people is lacking. So the indifferent attitude of the general public has become a major problem in extending public library services to them. The common people still do not understand the importance of the library services and are ignorant about their value. The need of creating awareness among different sections of the people about library services and its importance by authorities is very crucial. It can be done only by advertising district public libraries and their services on war footings.

Meager Reading Habits

Reading habit are very meager in modern society and it has become a major obstacle in providing public library services. The youngsters of these days have no time to read thus losing the habit of reading. Visiting the public libraries has become rare and rare. So the district public library authorities must

organize various programs for improving reading habits among the common people.

Libraries as Community Information Centre

Prominent library leaders in India have discussed the need for libraries to change these libraries from collection-oriented institutions to service-based institutions¹⁴ (Dasgupta, 2000). The awareness that the public libraries can serve as community information centers has existed for last several years. The National Policy on Library and Information System (NAPLIS) report of 1986 specifically recommends that village libraries should serve as local information centers, bringing the several areas such as public health, adult education, and local self-government under the same umbrella.¹⁴ (Dasgupta, 2000). The awareness that public libraries can serve as community information centers exists for last several years. The National Policy on Library and Information System (NAPLIS) report of 1986 specifically recommended that village libraries should serve as local information centers, bringing areas such as public health, adult education, and local self – government under the same umbrella.

To sum up it can be suggested that an investment in public library services, even only a small and modest part of the rising world economic status of the country can give a big boost to the social development and education goals to our country. The time is ripe for enlightened action as a momentum around the public library issue is developing in the country. If proper action is not taken, this movement may slip away as others have gone in vain in the past. Governments and elected officials come and go and the National Knowledge Commission may in fact not live up to its potential. However, the library movement in India and the state of Punjab has received some much needed momentum, which needs to be sustained. So we can say that there are abundant challenges coming forth in the way of public libraries. The public libraries in India in general and public libraries of Punjab in particular should gear up for the upcoming challenges in order to make their place in the society or else one day these lose their much needed importance and identity. The time has come started to think and act to disseminate required knowledge so as to

build a vibrant sustainable society based on knowledge. Thus the authorities, library professionals, politicians and the common people have a great responsibility in strengthening the public library services in the state.

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