

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology  
of Egypt / Egyptology

## THE ROLE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN FOSTERING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

**Dr.Nijumoni Changmai,**

Library and Information Science Department,

Charaideo, Sonari

**Dr.Nijumoni Changmai, The Role of Public Libraries in Fostering Social  
Development: A Theoretical perspective -Palarch's Journal Of  
Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 17(7), ISSN 1567-214x**

1. Introduction: Public library the local gateway to knowledge provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent, decision making and cultural development of the individual and social groups. Education has been recognized by all as instruments for social change. It is acknowledged as one of the basic factors for improvement of quality of life. Life and education go with hand in hand. Public library is the only effective agency of which door is open to all members of the country irrespective of caste, creed, religion, sex, age status, educational attainments, physical fitness and economic condition. It plays a dynamic role in educating the people without any biasness by supporting their continuing education or non- formal education. Supported by public or private funds, the public library make its basic collections and thus proved to be an effective weapon for converting illiterate to literates and helps the literate to go broader and broader, deeper and deeper and also richer to richer in terms of knowledge. According to S.R Ranganathan, ( Father of Library Science) "Public library is one which is open to any member of the public and usually free of any charge paid as so much for so much services. It is usually supported by local and grants from government. "UNESCO defines public library as "Those which serve the population of a community or region free of charge or for a nominal fee. They may serve the general public, special categories of the public such as children,

members of the arm forces, hospital patients, prisoners, workers and employers.” Thus a public library aims at serving the general public or special categories of the public in community concerned. It is basically a service library, which is meant to provide free services or charge a nominal fee its services.

2. Function of Public Libraries: In a developing country like India, heavy responsibility rests upon public libraries because now “the nation that reads is a nation that leads” is the main motto for all round development of a country. Here an attempt has been made to examine the various services offered by public library to the public.

- i. Information and educational services: In developing countries a lots of user use public library for the purpose of self improvement. They are concerned with information and education. Success of a democracy depends upon universal education of people. The public library underpins education both formal and informal. It serves as an educational centre by collecting and acquiring reading and learning materials and making them available to the users of all ages. Since lifelong education and education of the whole man have been supported firmly for achieving both individual and social aim of education.
- ii. Recreation and entertainment services: Healthy recreation is also an essential requirement of the society. The public library provides various books of fiction, light reading magazine, newspapers, audio- visual materials, television, radio, internet browsing facilities etc. for recreation of the people. It also organize various type of performing arts, musical events from time to time to divert human mind towards positive use of leisure time and thereby helps people to get rid the stress and strain of mechanical life. On the other hand, certain kinds of the books can leads to relaxation and achievements of pleasure.
- iii. National heritage and public library services: In the changing world there is a fear of loss the traditional values, ethics and culture. The people have to propagate, preserve and conserve their cultural heritage. The tangible and intangible cultural heritage include monuments, folks, arts, literature, manuscripts, handicrafts, performing arts including music, drama, painting, sculpture etc. These are the national heritage and preserved by the museums and libraries. The public libraries tries to make these cultural awareness by organizing workshop, conferences, social and cultural gathering etc.
- iv. Services to the children, young ones and the adults groups: Children are future stars of society and there for they should be served with great care.

Public library provides materials for children, often in a special section. Along with various children materials the library offers programmes such story hours, read-to-me programmes, summer reading camp etc. The young people are either students, school dropouts or those who were not lucky enough to go to school. Their main problems are requiring a place to study, passing of examination or learning a trade. No doubt, public library cannot give guarantee of employment for the young people, but they can guide them in deciding what they want to do. The adult constitute the major part of the total population and to help them to live confidently and comfortably to cope with the changing environments and to achieve potential satisfactions, which are all about them, adults must understand the changes and its consequences. The public library should therefore provide information and assistance to adults to understand and meet situation.

- v. Hospital library services & Services to physically challenge: The patients in hospitals with physical or mental disorder, the attendance of the patients and even the Doctors or other staff can be facilitated with library services. Many public library are aware of the social responsibility towards the under privileged class of the society called physically challenged such as blind, deaf, dumb etc. and try to help them to get the information they want and to take active participation in the society.
- vi. Public library extension services: The public library provide various extension services in order to create awareness among the general public about the role of libraries, library services etc. And also to create the image of the library as one of the most potent institutions that the society has founded for its round progress. Mobile library services are an effective public library extension services.

### 3. Objectives & Methodology:

- i. To create awareness among the people about public library as it is a self education centre. Here people of all age group can come and acquire knowledge.
- ii. Public library provide information on all aspects of life such as agriculture, finance, public hygiene, family planning, legal matter, knowledge of social advancement etc. to make the people functional literate.

This discussion is a theoretical one and data have been collected from the secondary sources and the discussion has been carried out using descriptive or analytical method.

#### 4. Public Libraries in Fostering Social Development:

Public library is considered as an essential part of a mechanical society, and plays a very important role in the community. It should be regarded as a social force which can greatly influence the society being served. It can help and safeguarding democracy, creating political awakening, bringing social awareness and fostering creative leisure activities.

A public library can play an important role in helping different sectors of the community. It can help former to improve production. It can enable businessman to improve business prospects. A public library can create love to reading among children, which can lead to formation of reading habits at an early age. It can help students of all ages and also can provide job information, helping people looking for better prospects to those who are unemployed. In case a member of the society intends to pursue self-education, then the public library might be the only institution accessible to him. The following key missions which are relate to information literacy, education and culture should be at the core of public libraries in fostering social developments.

- Creating and strengthening reading habits among the children at an early age.
- Supporting both individual and self conducted education as well as formal education at all levels.
- Providing opportunities for personal creative developments.
- Stimulating are imagination and creativity of children and young people.
- Promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievements anovations.
- Fostering inter-culture dialogue and favouring cultural diversity.
- Ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information.
- Facilitating the development of information and computer literacy skill.
- Supporting and participating in literacy activities and programs for all age groups.

#### 5. Problems of Public Libraries:

In India north-eastern region is a culturally developed zone. The region has a rich library heritage. The north-eastern region is also not lagging behind in field of education and research. But the service of the libraries of this region is at minimum standard. We are not in a position to develop library service due to some problems as per our society's demand. Except Mizoram (1989) and Manipur (1988) in north-east region no other

state has enacted library legislation. To upliftment of the library services in this region it is most essential to try for enactment of library legislation in the other state respectively. Therefore the government of the respective state must give importance to establish a library legislation which will benefit to achieve the aim of providing one village-one library system.

#### 6. Recommendation:

- Making public libraries active.
- Meaningful relations and partnership is most important to boost social development.
- Acknowledging that the right to social security is along with promoting employment, an economic and social necessity for development and progress.
- Promoting the establishment of an open equitable cooperative and mutually beneficial international economic environment through like UNESCO, UNICEF etc.
- Fostering entrepreneurship programs for all users.
- Promotion of community research beneficial of social activities.
- Engagement of local citizens in social developmental activities.
- Extension of services to the particular segment of society.
- Create innovation, ideas & knowledge for the welfare of the people.
- Public library arrange for celebration of a local festivals.

#### 7. Conclusion:

It is quite obvious that process of universal self-education has to depend largely on the recorded thought of mankind, not only of a particular country or of a particular language, but also of all countries or language of the world and the public library is the best reservoir of civilization. It bears the social responsibility of collecting, organizing, servicing, and administration the graphic records of civilization and looks after the most effective utilization of them. A man by nature wants to know more and more and the public library affords that facility to help the user to revise and re-add to the acquired knowledge of the past and present. With the aim and services rendered by it ones knowledge can be enlarge, enhanced and enriched. The public library is thus the public library is agreed and accepted as a centre for education, research, community, welfare and development. Public libraries can play an important role in strengthening the foundations of democracy. These can contribute to the welfare and progress of the community served and can help in the achievement of the aspiration of the people.

References:

1. Barman, R.K (1994) ‘‘Public Library Scenario in India at the threshold of 21<sup>st</sup> century’’, In : Herald of Library Science, vol. 38(1-2) Pp. 5-14
2. Khanna, J.K (1989) ‘‘Library and Society’’ New Delhi : Ess Ess Publication.
3. Kaula, P.N (1958) ‘‘Library Movement in India’’ Delhi, Delhi Library Association.