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A Private Library with Valuable Intellectual and Cultural Heritage: A Case of Masood Jhandeer Research Library

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Introduction

The literature on the history of libraries indicates that the mechanism of recording the human communication and its preservation was the first step towards the manifestation of libraries. The collections consisted of clay tablets, papyrus roll, and codices were created and housed with great care in rooms adjacent to temples. The aim of writing was to preserve sacred human communication and knowledge (Ameen, 2005, p.112). From antiquity, rulers have controlled knowledge in order to establish social, religious, cultural, and political power. Their private libraries served as archives that held documents of royal families, genealogical charts, private medical records, military histories, and other personal records of the king/ruler. Thus almost all libraries until the nineteenth century were private libraries owned by kings, temples, and other individuals/institutions, and were usually restricted to nobility, aristocracy, scholars, or priests. Examples of the earliest known private libraries include one found in Ugarit (dated to around 1200 B.C.E.) and the Library of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh

(near modern Mosul, Iraq- dating back to the seventh century B.C.E). Private libraries for citizens became possible after the invention of the printing press, which allowed individuals to develop personal collections. Today, the concept of a private library is broadly applied to any individual's personal collection regardless of its size. In contrast to public libraries, private libraries include one's own personal works, letters, diaries, photos, blogs, and other personal materials (Ferington, 2002; Private Libraries Association, 2007). Famous private libraries of the world include; Queen Elizabeth II's Library in Windsor Castle; Tianyi Pavilion - the oldest private library in Asia (located in Zhejiang, China); Library of Sir Thomas Browne; Bibliotheca Lindesiana etc. (Wikipedia, 2010). The brief overview of few other famous private libraries of current era is as under:

The Folger Shakespeare Library

The Folger Shakespeare Library is an independent research library on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. It has the world's largest collection of the printed works of William Shakespeare, and is a primary repository for rare materials from the early modern period (1500-1750). The library was established by Henry Clay Folger and opened in 1932, two years after Folger's death. The library offers advanced scholarly programs, national outreach to K-12 classroom teachers on Shakespeare education, and plays, music, poetry, exhibits, lectures, and family programs. It also has several publications and is a leader in methods of preserving rare materials (Wolfe, 2002).

The Huntington Library

The Huntington Library is established by American railroad magnate Henry E. Huntington in San Marino, California, USA. In addition to the library, the site houses an art collection strong in English portraits and French eighteenth-century furniture and botanical gardens that feature North America's strongest collection of cycads (Huntington Library, 2010).

The John Carter Brown Library

The John Carter Brown Library is an independently funded research library of the humanities located on the campus of Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. The Library is recognized as possessing one of the world's finest collections of rare books and maps relating to the European discovery, exploration, settlement, and other works that interpret its holdings to facilitate and encourage use of the collection (John Carter Brown Library, n.d.).

Hakim Zillur Rahman Library

Hakim Zillur Rahman Library established in early 60s by Prof. Hakim Syed Zillur Rahman, a great bibliophilic, philanthropist, a scholar of repute and an expert in Islamic/Unani Medicine. The library at present houses over 15000 books and back volumes of journals and has access to over hundreds of medical journals. Thesis, institutional reports, staff publications, CD ROMs, video cassettes are the other resources available to all scientific community. It also has precious and valuable collections of manuscripts, special numbers of magazine, paintings, postal stamps, coins and specimens of oriental calligraphy (Ibnsina Academy, n.d.).

Masood Jhandeer Research Library: The Largest Private Library of Pakistan

Only 85 kilometers away from Multan and 70 kilometers from Bahawalpur, situated a clean, non polluted and ideal town named Sardarpur Jhandeer. The town is famous for its Jhandeer

Library not only in Pakistan but also all over the world. The Library belongs to mediocre land-owners who are good cotton growers. Farming and book collection is a rare combination anywhere in the world. A few hundred books received by way of inheritance became the nucleus of this immense collection. In 1952, the library started from a single room of a farm guesthouse. Now it is housed in 25 rooms and is the largest private library of Pakistan with respect to standard and number of books. The substantial increase in the number of books started in 1960s. Jhandeer Brothers have collected and preserved religious, cultural, historical, and literary heritage and updated them. Masood Jhandeer Library achieved universal fame as a private library. In 1995, Sada-o-Cinema Iranian Broadcasting and Television Corporation direct telecasted a documentary film about Masood Jhandeer Library Via satellite. In the same year the BBC London broadcasted a documentary about Masood Jhandeer Library. In this context the BBC appreciated the forty years struggle of Mian Masood Jhandeer, Mian Mehmood Jhandeer and Mian Ghulam Ahmed Jhandeer to preserve a variety of religious, national, historical, literary and cultural heritage. Though being a private one, it has been rendering the essential services of a public research library for all purposes. Since Masood Jhandeer Library is a reference library, several research scholars, M.Phil and PhD students are quenching their thirst for knowledge. Vice Chancellors of universities, principals of colleges, professors, doctors and other professionals come here. They also provide residence to out station scholars and researchers (Mahmood, n.d.). It contains books in Urdu, English, Punjabi and Saraiki on all important topics. It has more than one thousand copies of the Holy Quran written in different calligraphic designs. It has also two thousand hand written books on religion. Of these rare books some are antique while others are gold written. There is also a volume of ten Paras of the Holy Quran which weighs 100 Kg and occupies 3 ½ x 2 ½ feet. Two men are needed to open it (Bari, 2010).

Research Questions and Methodology of the Study

Keeping the importance of Masood Jhandeer Research Library (MJRL) in view, it is needed to explore its status regarding collection, environment, staff and services. Following are the research questions of the study:

1. What is the status of the collection in MJRL?
2. What is the status of staff and services offered by MJRL?
3. Are needed preservation and conservation facilities available for the rare material and manuscripts?
4. What are the future-plans for the development of MJRL?
5. What recommendations can be furnished for the improvement of MJRL?

As it is a case study, multi-method design of research based on interviews, observation and document analysis was used to obtain the data about the MJRL. For this purpose, the top management of MJRL (Mian Ghulam Ahmed Jhandeer) was interviewed for getting the detailed information about the library.

Analysis of Data and Related Discussion

To achieve the objectives of the study, the data were collected about collection, technical processes, automation, environment and other facilities, methods of preservation and conservation, services and collection etc. Analysis of data and related discussion is as

followed:

Intellectual and Cultural Heritage at Masood Jhandeer Research Library

Book collection was the favorite hobby for Jhandeer family. Till 1980s when the number of books reached to 70000, they decided to shape this library into a public library. So finally it was decided to convert it into a post graduate research library. This library was named Masood Jhandir Research Library (after the name of elder brother Mian Masood Jhandir). The library has rich cultural and intellectual heritage. Statistics presented in Table-1 show that currently library has 120,000 books, 92000 periodicals, 4000 manuscripts and 1133 Quran Collection, which also includes rare and handwritten copies. Some manuscripts or rare books are written in interesting way.

Table 1 *Collection of the Library*

Sr.	Collection Details	No.
1.	Total No of books	120,000
2.	Periodicals	92,000
3.	Other Manuscripts	4000
4.	Quran Collection (Manuscripts and Rare)	1133

Technical Processing

Library uses 19th Edition of DDC for classification. Some modified form of classification is being used for Islamic books. New Cutter scheme has been adopted with the help of Hakim Abdul Majeed, India (Brother of Hakim Saeed of Hamdard) for oriental collection.

Staff

The library is owned and managed by three brothers; Mian Masood Jhandeer, Mian Mehmood Jhandeer and Mian Ghulam Ahmed Jhandeer. The other staff members include one professional librarian and three non-professionals. The staff is well trained in handling the library's routine tasks.

Funds for the Library

The Library does not get any kind of grant or support from Govt. or other institutes. Jhandir brothers generate all the funds on their own. They are progressive cotton growers and all the funds depend upon the good growth of cotton and its good market rate. A famous poet Murtaza Barlas rightly said, "Jhandir Brothers grow cotton and harvest books". Library accepts donation of books and have acquired 8-10 small/large personal collections. A few known collections are of 'Prof. Dilshad Klanchvi', 'Agha Shorash Kashmiri', 'Dr. Rafi-ud-Din Hashmi', 'Allama Ateeq Fikri', etc.

Preservation and Conservation of the Rare Material

For the security and safety of material from natural and human made disaster, the library takes many measures. It secures the library material from theft, damage, deterioration etc. It was told during the interview that library tries its level best to keep the library environment dust free. All the doors open inside the library. All the exhaust fans are not directly installed but they are connected with long pipes so that dust or humidity may not reach directly to the

library material. All the materials pass through the fumigation process during the holidays. An excellent book binding section has been established for the bindings of damaged collection. Anti termite processing has been completed in the library building with the help of a professional organization from Islamabad. Sometimes leaves of Neem (پتے کے مہین) are also used as natural treatment against termites, silver fish etc. Digitization and lamination process will be started in future to preserve the library material especially manuscripts. The library has a special binding section for the care of damaged material. Mechanical cutter and Xerox machine is also available in the library.

Collection Development Policy of the Library

As library is post graduate research library, so the books purchased or acquired are on the research subjects. The library keeps in view the research needs of M.Phil and PhD scholars not only in the country but abroad as well. As library is situated in a village, the acquisition of books has always been a problem. Most of the books are selected and purchased from big cities like Lahore, Quetta, and Peshawar. Library has collection on Islam, Hinduism, Christianity and other religions too.

Target Users of the Library

The target audiences are researchers and scholars. Mostly the post graduate students, M.Phil, PhD, and Post Doc scholars get benefit from this library. Library membership is open for all without any fee. Library services are open for all book lovers, researchers, scholars, students and teachers. Thousands of scholars from Pakistan and abroad have used this library. For example, a Dutch lady (In 2002-03) completed her doctoral thesis in this library. Similarly, an Iranian woman stayed for 9-10 months at this library to complete her post doctoral work on the indexing of manuscripts available in the library.

Services Being Offered by the Library

It is a non lending library (a reference library). Photocopying and scanning of books with digital camera is available. Visitors can stay in the hostel of the library without paying any fee. Moreover, complementary logistic support is provided by the library due to its location in a village. Library staff is very cooperative to provide all facilities to the users. Fibre Optic High Speed Internet is available with the help of PTCL. The aim of library services is:

- 1 To promote the book and research culture
- 2 To make it possible for users to get inspiration from this library
- 3 To promote the intellectual and cultural heritage.

Future Plans of the Library

Currently, the library is planning to automate the library services. Similarly it is going for the digitization of rare material. For this purpose, the library is looking for skilled and competent staff. Library website is also among the future plans.

Library's Role in the Preservation of Cultural and Intellectual Heritage of Pakistan

The library is playing a vital role in preserving the intellectual and cultural heritage of Pakistan by preserving manuscripts, and rare book material. It has enthusiastic and dedicated

work force, which is working day and night for this noble cause.

Conclusion

Developed nations of the world preserve their cultural and intellectual heritage for their coming generations. History of human civilization shows that only those nations stand in the world with dignity that care for their heritage. The libraries always played a nucleus role in the preservation of this heritage. From antiquity, the private libraries owned by rulers/kings served as archives for the documents of royal families, genealogical charts, private medical records, military histories, and other personal records of their owners. Not only in the past but in current era as well there exist many renowned private libraries that are playing their vital role in the preservation of intellectual heritage. In Pakistan, the Masood Jhandeer Research Library is the largest private library, which has the richest collection of manuscripts and rare books. It is owned and managed by a dedicated team of book lovers, who are working hard without any external funds and resources for the development of the Library. The management is enthusiastically pursuing various plans to raise the standard of the library to make it an up-to-date research library. Few recommendations are made in this regard:

5. The Government should help and promote such scholarly initiatives in the country by providing them with reasonable funds;
6. The Government should provide more facilities in the Jhandeer Town for the promotion and extensive use of this intellectual and cultural heritage;
7. The library should try to acquire more professional staff for the delivery of better services;
8. Such efforts made by motivated individuals should be highlighted through mass media for the promotion of book culture in the country.

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