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PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM IN ANDHRA PRADESH: AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The state of Andhra Pradesh has a long history of library system before Indian independence as part of the Madras Presidency. Significant changes have taken place in the public library system over the time. This paper gives a brief description of the public library movement, aims and objectives of the library movement, library legislation and organizational structure of public library system in A.P.

Keywords: Library legislation, Andhra Pradesh Granthalaya Parishad, RRRLF, NAPLIS, NKC.

INTRODUCTION

India celebrated its 74 years of Independence in 2021. A brief stock of its development in the library field helps to introspect the progress made in the library field. An important landmark in the history of public library services in India was made by Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekward by introducing free compulsory elementary education backed by libraries in 1883 in the district of Baroda and thus free public library services in India were introduced as a system in 1907. It can, therefore, be traced out that 2007 is the centenary year of free public library services in India. In spite of several drawbacks, the public library system in India made considerable progress.

A brief account of public library development in Andhra Pradesh is presented in the following paragraphs as a backdrop with a view to illustrate the sequence of happenings.

1. LIBRARY MOVEMENT IN ANDHRA PRADESH

The library movement in Andhra Pradesh was a people's movement spread to all regions. The success of public library movement in Andhra Desa can be traced to the beginning of the 19th century. It grew steadily in the subsequent decades. In the year 1800, a private library belonging to Paravasthu family was declared open for the public. It was subsequently developed as Arsha Grandhalaya. Raja Rameshwar Rayalu's (1821-1865) library was also opened to the public at Wanaparthi and Mahabubnagar.

In Rajahmundry, a public library was opened by Justice James Thomas in 1839. The Theosophical Society opened a Library at Guntur in 1850. Mudigonda Sankaradhya promoted the Sankaranda Library in Secunderabad in 1872. In 1886, Saraswathi Nilayam was started by Manthane Adinarayana Murthy, a school teacher. Historically, this library was the first public library ever conceived and started by a single individual in Andhra Desa.

In the Telangana region of the former Hyderabad state, a library was established by Mulla Abdul Qayum, a nationalist and a patriot and Moulvi Syed Hussain Bilgrami (Nawab Emadul Mulla), in the year 1886. This was later acquired by the Nizam's Government and declared open to the public. This was named "Asafia Library" and was converted into State Central Library in 1892. Slowly and steadily, libraries and reading clubs sprang up in several parts of Andhra Desa. The following can be mentioned as examples; the Sarswathi Vilasamu at Pulivendula, Cuddapah District (1892); C.V.N. Library, Ongole (1890); the Simhachalapathi Rao Library, Vijayanagaram (1894); the Naoroji Club, Undi (1895); Veeresalingam Kavi Samajam, Kumundavalli (now in West Godavari District) (1897); Gautami Grandhalayam, Rajahmundry (1898); Vardhamana Samajam, Nellore (1906); the Reading Club, Kolluru (in Guntur District) (1899); the Youngmen's Literary Association, Guntur (1900).

During 1907-1908, it led to a growing demand from the people for more libraries and centers of information in different parts of the state. The Ram Mohan Library was established at Vijayawada by Ayyanki Venkata Ramanaiah in 1911, the Andhra Grandhalayam by M. Ramachandra Rao at Kurnool in 1920 and Saraswathi Niketanam by V.V. Shreshti at Vetapalem, in 1911.

In the former state of Hyderabad of which Telangana formed a part, as in the British India, library movement paved the way for and gave strength to political, social and cultural

renaissance of the people. Against the peculiar conditions under the Nizam's autocratic rule in Hyderabad state, the library movement helped in forging an awareness and unity among the Telugu people to fight the oppression by feudal force. The rulers wanted to suppress the library movement by issuing the notorious circular (No.53) in 1929, which banned establishment of a library, school or obtaining such permission became a very difficult task.

In the beginning of the 20th century (i.e., 1901) Sri Krishna Devaraya Andhra Bhasha Nilayam was established as a result of the devotion and dynamism of Ravichetti Ranga Rao, the Raja of Munagula. From 1901 onwards, the library movement in the Hyderabad state became a popular movement. It derived its motivation, strength and direction from the people themselves.

With the establishment of Sri Krishna Devaraya Andhra Bhasha Nilayam, the library movement gained momentum and libraries were established at several other places in Telangana. Mention may be made of Raja Raja Narendra Andhra Bhasha Nilayam (1904) established in Hanamkonda by the efforts of Madapati Hanumantha Rao, the Andhra Samvardhani (1905) at Secundrabad, Andhra Vijnana Prakashini Grandhna Nilayam (1917) at Suryapet, Sri Vemana Andhra Bhasha Nilayam (1923) at Siddiambar Bazar, Hyderabad. Bala Saraswati, Andhra Bhasha Nilayam at Afzal Ganj, Hyderabad Prathaparudra Andhra Bhasha Nilayam (1924) at Manikonda; Desodaraka Andhra Bhasha Nilayam (1925) at Kukkunuru and Vijnana Niketanam, (1936) at Khammam. By the year 1925, under the dynamic leadership of Madapati Hanumantha Rao, nearly 100 libraries were established throughout Telangana. Suravaram Pratapa Reddy, another notable personality, through his journalistic activity rendered valuable services for the spread of library movement in the Telangana region.¹

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE LIBRARY MOVEMENT

The aim of the library movement is to disseminate knowledge among the people for a better living. The old idea that a public library is a mere storehouse of books and the librarian is its custodian became outdated. The library movement conceived that a public library is a "people's university". In the words of S.V. Narasimha Sastri, "its aim is to unfold the varied faculties of every individual comprised in the body politic, man or woman, child or adult, rich or poor, literate or illiterate by adopting appropriate means and methods in each case in accordance with the idiosyncrasies, tastes, environment, intellectual equipment and the like".

The library movement aimed at achieving a overall development of human personality and to realize the objective of the library as an effective means. The movement wished to spread knowledge among the people and thereby awaken the "atma" of the individual from ignorance and inertia and help him in leading a truthful and purposeful life in the society. The Library

Movement in Andhra Pradesh ran almost parallel to the national movement and social movement in the other parts of the country. The glorious history of libraries and library movement in Andhra Pradesh can be studied under two broad headings:

- i) Development of libraries up to 1901 A.D
- ii) Development of libraries up to 1960

2.1. Development of libraries up to 1901 A.D.

Andhra Pradesh has a rich tradition of learning. The history of Andhra Pradesh reveals that during the Buddhist period Acharya Nagarjuna established a residential university at Ari Parvath, the Hill abode of Nagarjuna, on the banks of river Krishna in Andhra Pradesh. This library was rich in its collection. Later, a number of libraries were established and managed during 10th, 11th, 15th, 16th, centuries in different parts of the state. However, the success of the public library movement in Andhra Desa can be traced to the beginning of the nineteenth century. The landmarks, in this period, were the establishment of a private library belonging to Paravasthu family which was later developed as Arsha Granthalaya, Likewise, during this period a number of libraries were established, mostly by private efforts. As far as the Telangana region is concerned, private libraries played a dominant role during the nineteenth century.²

2.2. Development of libraries up to 1960

In 1901, Sri Krishna Deva Raya Andhra Bhasha Nilayam was established and here forth the library movement in the Hyderabad state became a popular movement which derived its motivation, strength and direction from the people themselves. According to Raju (1988), by 1914, there were nearly 163 libraries scattered all over Andhra Desa without any central authority to coordinate their activities or to promote their growth. Another landmark is the organization of the First Andhra Desa Librarians Conference on 10th April, 1914 which led to the establishment of Andhra Desa Granthalaya Sangham. After the establishment of this Sangham, the library movement gained sufficient momentum in Andhra Desha with the untiring efforts of Sarvashri Ayyanki Venkata Ramanayya, Chilkamarthi Lakshmi Narasimham and Suri Venkata Narasimha Sastry and others. The major activities in the library movement during this period are, Granthalaya yatras otherwise known as library pilgrimages, boat library service, street plays, etc.³

In the library movement in Andhra Pradesh, the publication of *Granthalaya Sarvasvamu* which was started as a quarterly journal in 1915 is a land mark and currently it is being brought out as a monthly journal.

The stalwarts in the library movement in the Telangana region were Sarvashri K. Lakshman Rao, Madapati Hanumantha Rao, Suravaram Pratapa Reddy, K.V.Ranga Reddy, T.Ranga Rao, A Veerabhadra Rao, B.Rama Krishna Rao, M.Narsinga Rao and others. Thus, the library movement in Andhra Pradesh during this period helped not only the reading habits, but created a social consciousness among the people. It extended support to various social and political movements in Andhra Pradesh and made people evaluate the importance of public libraries.⁴

The first Public Libraries Act in free India was enacted in the year 1948, named as Madras Public Libraries Act which paved the way for the development of Public Libraries in the then composite Madras State. This Act was implemented in 1950 onwards in twelve Andhra District which formed part and parcel of the Composite Madras State. Subsequently, in 1955, Hyderabad Public Libraries Act was enacted for implementation in the then Telangana region. With the states reorganization in the year 1956, the newly formed Government of Andhra Pradesh enacted a fresh act named as Andhra Pradesh Public Libraries Act (1960), which came into effect from 01-04-1960.

3. LIBRARY LEGISLATION IN ANDHRA PRADESH

Andhra Pradesh was formed in 1956 in accordance with the recommendation of the States Reorganization Commission. When the state was formed, the Madras public libraries act was in operation in the eleven districts of Andhra region and Hyderabad public libraries act was in force in the nine districts in Telangana region. In order to have a composite act, the Andhra Pradesh Public Libraries Act was enacted in 1960. This Act was amended successively in 1964, 1969, 1987, 1989 and in 2016.

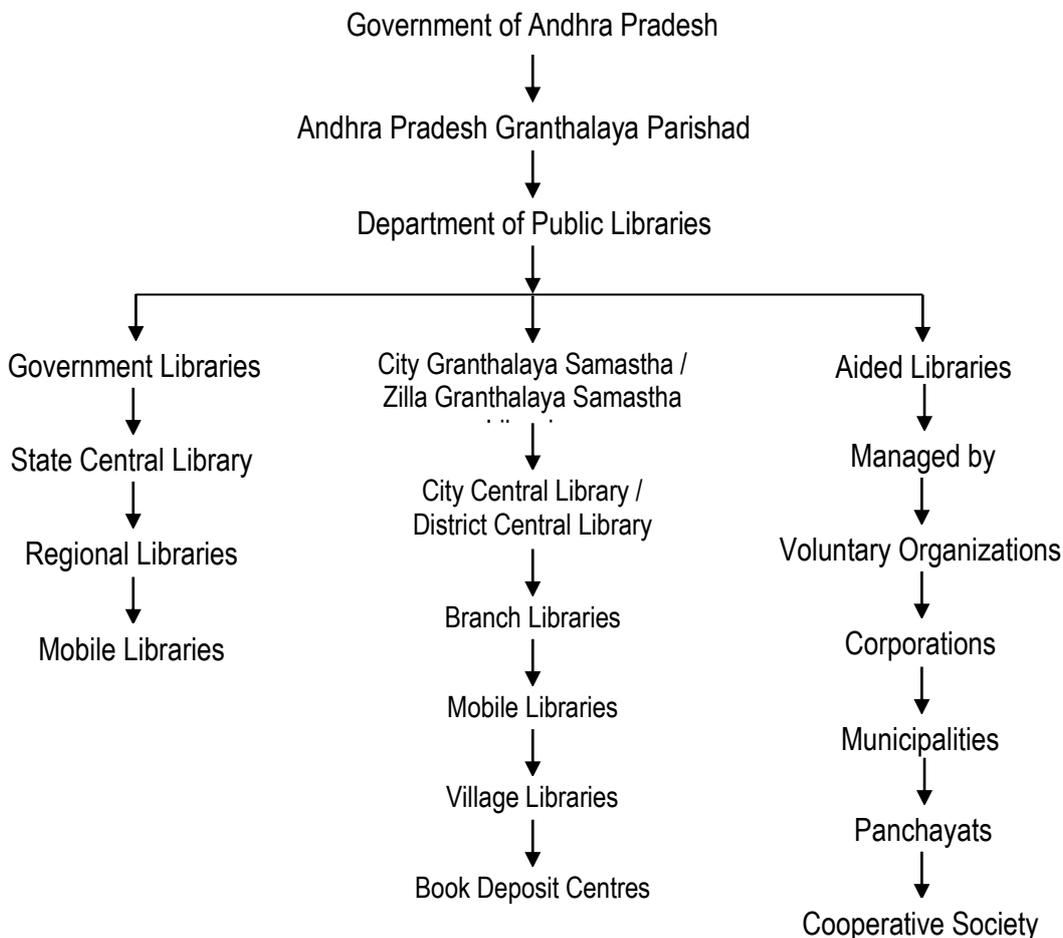
3.1. Special features

The special features of the APPL Act are given below

- 1) Constitution of Andhra Pradesh Granthalaya Parishad as an apex body with statutory powers and functions.

- 2) Constitution of a directorate of public libraries to direct, supervise and control the public library system.
- 3) Constitution of City/ Zilla Granthalaya Samsthas through nomination of Chairman and members by the government.
- 4) Librarians of City/ District Central Libraries as ex-officio secretaries of the City/ Zilla Granthalaya Samsthas.
- 5) Collection of eight paise library cess on house tax and property tax collected by local bodies.
- 6) Payment of salaries of the staff working in the City/ Zilla Granthalaya Samsthas by the government.
- 7) Grant-in-aid to private libraries by government and City/ Zilla Granthalaya Samsthas.

3.2. Organizational Structure of Public library system in A.P.



3.2.1. Andhra Pradesh Granthalaya Parishad

The Parishad shall be established by the government by notification for the state of Andhra Pradesh with its headquarters in Hyderabad. The Parishad shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal with power subject to the provision of the Act.

Composition of the Parishad

1. The Chairman, to be appointed by the government from among the persons who have rendered eminent service for the cause of education and library movement;
2. Director of public libraries (Member- Secretary)
3. Seven members nominated by the government of whom
 - i. One expert having specialized knowledge of library science;
 - ii. Two members who have rendered service for the development of library movement;
 - iii. One person representing aided libraries;
 - iv. One from Chairman of Zilla Granthalaya Samsthas;
 - v. One from secretaries of Zilla Granthalaya Samsthas; and
 - vi. Chief Librarian State Central Library, Hyderabad.

Objects of the Parishad

1. Organize and promote library service;
2. Establish, maintain and develop an integrated, comprehensive and efficient library service in the state;
3. Augment supply of books and periodicals to libraries;
4. Develop infrastructural facilities like building, furniture, equipment to public libraries;
5. Raise finances and regulate their usage;
6. Undertake other related activities;
7. Suggest ways and means for raising additional resources; and
8. Prepare long-term and short-term plans for providing library service.

Functions of the Parishad

1. Evolve perspective plans;
2. Prepare consolidated programmes with the guidelines issued by the government and RRRLF and implement the programmes;
3. Approve the budget estimates of the Parishad and Granthalaya Samsthas;
4. Sanction opening of libraries, deposit centres etc and recreation of full-time posts with the approval of the government;
5. Accord administrative and financial sanction for
 - i. Construction of buildings
 - ii. Additional staff; and
 - iii. Shifting of regional and mobile libraries
6. Accept gifts or endowments;
7. Approve and submit to the government every year the audited statement of accounts and utilization certificates of its funds;
8. Approve annual audited statements of accounts of the Granthalaya Samsthas;
9. Approve annual report of the working of public libraries to be placed before the legislature;
10. Decide policy for selection and purchase of books;
11. Organize and conduct library seminars, meeting and conferences;
12. Coordinate all activities concerned with the library services; and
13. Prepare consolidated programme in accordance with the guidelines issued by the government.
14. Advice the government on all matters arising under this act. It shall meet at least once in two months.

The chairman shall preside over all the meetings. The chairman and every member of the Parishad, other than the ex-officio members shall hold office during the pleasure of the Governor.

3.2.2. Department of Public Libraries

The government shall constitute a separate department of public libraries and appoint a director for the department. The director so appointed shall be subject to the control of the government:

1. Supervise the State Central Library and its branches;
2. Superintend and direct all matters relating to public libraries;
3. Declare libraries eligible for aid from the government;
4. Direct and control the work of all the Granthalaya Samsthas;
5. Report to the Parishad on the working of libraries;
6. Publish a bibliography of all books published in the state; and
7. Arrange centralized classification, cataloguing inter library loan, coordination of books selection and maintenance of copy right registry.

3.2.3. Zilla Granthalaya Samstha

The Zilla Granthalaya Samstha for a district shall consist of

- 1) Three members nominated from the residents of the district who have rendered eminent service for the cause of education or libraries;
- 2) One member from the presidents of aided public libraries;
- 3) One member nominated by the government from among the councillors of every municipal corporation or of every municipality as the case may be of the district;
- 4) Two members nominated by the government from among the presidents of mandal panchayaths in the district concerned;
- 5) Dy. Director of Adult Education of the district;
- 6) District Education Officer of the district;
- 7) District Public Relations officer;
- 8) The Librarian, District Central Library (Member Secretary);

- 9) The District Panchyath Officer of the district.

The government shall nominate one non-official member as the Chairman, City / Zilla Granthalaya Samstha. The Chairman and nominated members shall hold the office during the pleasure of the Governor.

Functions of Granthalaya Samstha

- 1) Provide land, buildings, furniture, fittings, materials required for public libraries;
- 2) Stock books, periodicals, newspapers, manuscripts, maps, films, records, etc;
- 3) With the previous sanction of the director shift or close any public library or discontinue aid;
- 4) Accept any gift or endowment;
- 5) Provide lectures, classes and other extension activities;
- 6) With previous sanction from a competent authority acquire any library; and
- 7) Distribute grants to libraries and social education programmes; etc.

Finance and accounts

Cess

Every Granthalaya Samstha shall levy in its area a library cess in the form of a surcharge on the property tax or house tax at the rate of 4 paise for every rupee. It may, with previous sanction of the government, increase the rate not exceeding 8 paise for every rupee of tax.

Library Fund

Every Granthalaya Samstha shall maintain a fund called "Library Fund" from which all its payments under the Act shall be met.

1. Cess collected;
2. Contributions, gifts and income from endowments;
3. Special grants from the government;
4. Others funds collected by the Granthalaya Samsthas under any rule or bye laws made under the Act.

Reports and inspection

The Act also stipulates the necessity of providing annual report by every library, Granthalaya Samstha and the Granthalaya Parishad. It also mentions inspection by parishad or any person nominated by it.

Table-1
Statistics of public libraries in A.P.

S.No	Type of public libraries	Total
I	Government libraries	
	State Central library	-
	Regional Libraries	4
	Mobile libraries	-
	Total	4
II	Zilla Grandhalaya Samstha's	
	District Central Libraries	13
	City Central Libraries	-
	Branch Libraries	894
	Mobile Libraries	02
	Book Deposit Centers	1475
	Total	2506
III	Aided Libraries	
	Panchayath Libraries	-
	Co-operative Society Libraries	-
	Private Management Libraries	-
	Total	-
	Grand Total (I+II+III)	2510

Source: Department of Public Libraries Govt. of A.P.⁵

In Andhra Pradesh Libraries so emerged shall be managed by Municipal Corporations Grama Panchayaths, Co-operative Societies, and voluntary Organizations. However, these Libraries did not get sufficient grants from the State Government. The above table clearly shows the detailed current statistics on public libraries with regard to structure of public library system in A.P.

4. RAJA RAM MOHAN ROY LIBRARY FOUNDATION (RRRLF)

The establishment of the RRRLF by the Central Government at Calcutta as a part of the Bi-Centenary celebrations of the birth of the Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a great social reformer of the 19th century was another positive step in the progress of library movement in Post-Independent India. RRRLF is a central autonomous organization established and fully financed by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. RRRLF is registered under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961. It is the nodal agency of the Government of India to support public library services and systems and promote public library movement in the country commensurate with the objectives as embodied in its Memorandum of Association. The supreme policy-making body of RRRLF is called the Foundation. It consists of 22 members nominated by the Government of India from amongst eminent educationists, librarians, administrators and senior officials. The Minister of the Department of Culture, Government of India or his nominee is the Chairman of RRRLF. The Foundation works in close association and active cooperation with different State Governments and Union Territory Administrations through a machinery called State Library Planning Committee (SLPC/SLC) setup in each State at the instance of the Foundation. To participate in Foundation's programmes, a State Government/U.T. is required to contribute a certain amount fixed by the Foundation. Since 2005-2006 the Foundation has also taken up the initiative to develop the District Youth Resource Centre (DYRC) in collaboration with Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathana, an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs.

RRRLF promotes public library services rendering book and financial assistance to the public libraries under different schemes of assistance in collaboration with Library Department or Department in charge of Public Library Service⁶.

5. National Policy on Library and Information System (NAPLIS)

In 1985, a committee was set up under the chairmanship of Prof. D.P. Chattopadhyay to formulate a National Policy on Library and Information System (NAPLIS). The Committee submitted its report in May 1986. Following that, another committee looked at implications of the report and created an action plan for its implementation. The Empowerment Committee submitted its report in April 1988 and an Implementation Cell was formed to implement its recommendations within a period of six months. Yet another Working Group, under the Joint Secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Culture, was constituted to examine its recommendations for implementation. The Working Group submitted its report in July 1993 and suggested implementing only 29 of 60 recommendations made by the NAPLIS.⁷

6. NATIONAL KNOWLEDGE COMMISSION (NKC)

The National Knowledge Commission was constituted in 2005 as a high level advisory body to the Prime Minister of India, with a mandate to guide policy and generate reforms. The commission's aim is to transform India into a vibrant knowledge based society. For this the commission seeks to develop appropriate institutional frameworks to strengthen the education system, promote domestic research and innovation and facilitate knowledge application in sectors like health, education, agriculture, water and energy and industry. It also aims to leverage information and communication technologies to enhance governance and connectivity. In the words of Dr. Manmohan Singh, Ex. Prime Minister of India, "The time has come to create a second wave of institution building, and of excellence, in the field of education, research and capability building so that we are better prepared for the 21st Century".

Its prime focus is on five key areas of the knowledge paradigm- access to Knowledge, knowledge-concepts, knowledge-creation, knowledge application and development of better knowledge services. The key task in this initiative is to open doors to knowledge, skills, imagination and ideas presently and potentially available or accessible to the people. The libraries of India stand as a rich repository and resource.

It is thus a central objective of the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) to examine the present standards and services of libraries like public, private, institutional and specialized and other information centers and resources, to create mechanisms and institutions that will serve the people. The goal is to transform libraries from guarded storehouses of publication into open stock-piles of knowledge.⁸

7. CONCLUSION

India now has become one of the most developing countries in the world. It spreads in various fields of knowledge and disseminates its resources to the world. It has also established public libraries and community information centers to give and help local community to acquire information from various agencies. Public library services have been expanded to serve the local people. But even after 70 years of independence India, public libraries could not be administered and managed with the clear mandate of law in many states of India. As such, the development of the nation through library services is neglected in some states, and its services are beyond the reach of the rural poor. The public library service in Andhra Pradesh has been one of the means of instrument to develop and educate the community. It provides reading materials to the community and has been an institution for the society in their formal and non-formal education

through its various collections and programs. It is not only for that purpose it also helps the society in various kinds of activities by providing knowledge and information through its services and activities.

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