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A Study of Public Libraries in India: Pre-Independence Period

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Abstract

Public libraries are plays a vital role in the society in terms of social, cultural and economic developments. Availability of public libraries in a society directly and indirectly reflects the knowledge of the people. By examining the historical movement of public libraries in different regions, we are better equipped to identify the existing gaps in the field of libraries and thereby provide valuable directions in the establishment of new libraries. The scope of this study is to give a bird's eye view and critical analysis of age-old public libraries which existed in pre-independence India. Further it provides a detailed accounts of selected prominent public libraries during the same period. The existence of public libraries in pre-independence India can be broadly divided into three parts -ancient period (before 1200 AD), medieval period (1200 A.D. – 1757 A.D.) and the British period (1757 A.D. – 1947 A.D.). Hence, historical research of public libraries using perspective

approach will help us understand the effectiveness and impact of public libraries in the society.

KEYWORD: Public Library, Pre-Independence Libraries, Indian Libraries, Public Library History, Library History

INTRODUCTION

Public libraries gather information and make them available to common man in different formats that are easily understandable. Public library should provide access to all without any form of discrimination. The UNESCO manifesto states that: "the services of the public libraries provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status" (IFLA/UNESCO, 1994). Even today, public libraries tend to be the only place of access to internet and use of computers to many students and senior citizens. In the fast transforming era of information we need public libraries to aid us in differentiating information clutter. Thus, public library is one of our greatest treasures and we use it in a proper way to become an enlightened community. Due to the ever changing aspect of human society and the increase in need for authentic information sources, the library's role and function in creating knowledge enriched modern India has transformed drastically. The libraries play a crucial role in intellectual stimulation and thereby facilitates social awakening during freedom struggle (Hugar, 2015).

History is understood as a chronological documentation of the events that took place in previous centuries upon deep assessment into the truthfulness of matter. Historical research in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS) has always been a deserted area, where we could find only countable persons working, that too organized based on their passion and regions to which they belong. Libraries are considered to be the gateways to the land of wisdom. Libraries were embedded with collection of books on different subjects and areas of interests. They provide access to all the resources in the field of culture, education and research (Donald, 1990).

Historical research of Public Libraries from the past to the present is an attempt to eradicate the current shortcomings and thereby fill the lacuna in the field of library studies. There are a few studies investigating the birth and development of Public Libraries in the past decades (Navin Prasad, 2016). Researchers are scattered in the field of LIS with respect to their passion and geographical locus. In the current amelioration of human race public libraries play a pivotal role in the propagation of information, which enhances the knowledge of citizens and pave way to healthy literate society as a whole (Shivanand 2016). Knowledge has a centralized role in the current society of information and communication technology (Bajpai, 2015), which has made libraries an indispensable part of human population from the age – old days to the recent years, shaping the society in a cultured and civilized way (Ngurtinkhuma, 2011) like what it should be in a persuasive manner. The sequential metamorphosis of ancient illiterate societies to modern societies was highly based on the documentation, signifying the rise of cultured and educated people via print culture and many other modes of information (Wani, 2008). Hence, the present study focuses on the origin and development of libraries in India during the period of pre-independence.

SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTIONS

For the purpose of this study both primary and secondary sources utilized i.e. literature on libraries, information received through phone calls, mails, articles; RRRLF project, governmental documents, annual report of National libraries, inscription on marbles stones, manuscripts, monuments, travelogues from various countries in different time periods expressed in different sources of archaeological studies, etc.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN PRE – INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

In order to understand the historical context of the origin and development of libraries, we need to go back to the stone ages, where man started inscribing his views, the form of art and culture on rocks, stones, palm leaves, etc. The historical interpretation of development of libraries has its roots in human

evolution, paving the way to the subsequent spread of the idea of making an organized library in different parts of the world. Investigations made on the epigraphy, numismatics and sigillography are standing proofs, which symbolize the origin and metamorphosis of libraries from past to present.

The present day printed books are one of the finest transformations from past clay tablets, papyrus, palm leaves, birch barks, silk cloth and copper plates (Rao, 1961). Thus, in the ever advancing technological world the common man's addiction to public libraries has risen, which has led to enumeration of the roles and goals of public libraries.

ANCIENT PERIOD (before 1200 AD)

In archaic stage, only manuscripts and palm leaves written books constituted the library. The earlier form of education was Shruti – Smriti, in which significant function has been played by memory, that what we hear through our ear retains in heart. The finding of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro civilizations stand as a proof to authentic and serene nature of the culture of India. The Magadha and Mauryan era inscriptions made in Tamil, Brahmi, Kharosthi, Armaic scripts were recovered. Innumerable inscriptions recovered from 2nd century B. C. were in Brahmi script and the grant of *Lalitha Vistara* by Buddhist monk stating the position of traders, artisans and Buddhist monks was a clear evidence that the Indians were highly enlightened with writing in 1st and 2nd century B. C. itself (Rao, 1994).

The Gupta period marked the dawn of well-organized libraries housing the collection of both Buddhist and Brahmanical literature. The socio – economic and cultural roles were implemented by Vaishnavas, Shaiva maths, Buddhist monasteries and Hindu temples. The education period was estimated to be 30 – 37 years in Brahminical literature and ten years in Buddhist monasteries in the 3rd century.

Nalanda University, one of the oldest universities in ancient India, it was established in the 4th century A.D. The ancient prominent Chinese travelers such

as Hiuen Tsang and I – Tsing who were popular during 6th and 7th century A.D. wrote about significance of Nalanda Univeristy. Through the Tibetan documentation we could know the locus and pattern of construction of the Nalanda Library, which was known as Dharamganj. Dharamganj architecture comprised of three buildings in the name of Ratnasagar (Ocean of Gems), Ratnaranjoka (Sea of Gems), and Ratnodadhi (Collection of Gems). It is also enriched with texts on Vedas, Vedantas and Samkhya philosophy. The Nalanda University was burnt in 12th century A.D.by Bakhtiyar Khalji, which led to the loss of many of the sacred manuscripts and documentations of the pasts. King Dharmapala established Vikramshila University in the 8th century A.D. Vikramshila University houses a collection of rich texts in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Tibetan languages. Exceptional compilations of the Vikramshila University were devastated by the Muslim invader Bakhtiyar Khalji (Ngurtinkhuma, 2011).

The King Rampala patroned Jaggadal Vihara in Varendrabhumi in the 10th to 11th century A.D. This along with the library of Mithila constituted space for writing, reading, editing and translating manuscripts. The Sompuri University which was severely devastated by fire in the 11th century was renovated by the monk Vipul Srimitra, King Guhasena also gave funding to acquire books for this library from his royal treasury. The university was one of the important Hinayana center for learning at Kanheri, on West coast which was embellished during the rule of Amoghavarsha in 9th century (Bhatt, 1994).

The Eastern most center of learning is Navadwipa in West Bengal which flourished during 10th – 11th century. It was crowned by the act of Gauda ruler, who made it as his capital. It was also demolished by Bhakhtiyar Khalji. The greatest fascination for students from various parts of the country and outside country like China, Burma and Ceylon was the Nagarjuna University situated at Amaravathi in South on the banks of river Krishna. It was also a center for Mahayana studies.

MEDIEVAL PERIOD (1200 A.D. – 1757 A.D.)

In Medieval India, the libraries growth and development was not evenly distributed. The Northern and Southern regions of our country came into closer contact after the spread of Mughal Empire in the 8th – 12th century A.D. and with the ever increasing interest in literature, science and medicine paved the way for the future upheaval of libraries during the medieval period.

Libraries of medieval period in India can be divided into four categories-religious, public, private and academic libraries. All the libraries of the above mentioned categories constituted more than 2000 volumes of books. The last Maratha emperor Sarabtoji patronized the Tanjore Saraswathi Mahal Library which stands till now as a proof of one of the finest libraries. It consists of thousands of manuscripts and printed books. The Mohamed of Ghazni owned 30,000 and Mohamed Gavan owned 3000 illustrious volumes of books in their respective libraries. Amir Khusro was appointed as the director of Royal library by the emperor Jalal – ud – din Khilji and honored with the title of Muhafiz – I – Quran (protector of the Quran).

One of the most common attributes associated with all the Mughal rulers was that all of them maintained and patronized palace libraries. And many magnanimous libraries housing various important manuscripts were built during Mughal period (1562 – 1748 A.D.). The old Fort Delhi, stationed the library of first Mughal Emperor Babur (1526 -1530 A.D.), as he was very keenly interested in reading books. He often used his library in his free time and he took keen interest in elaboration of the library. After Babur, his son Humayun took over the crown in 1530 A.D. and he laid the foundation for the development of Imperial Library at Agra and he was also a legend and lover of books.

The Mughal Empire after Humayun was succeeded by Akbar (1556 – 1605 A.D.), under whose leadership, the imperial library housed books from different places like Deccan, Kashmir, Bengal, Gujarat, Jaunpur which added feather to its existing fame (Sharma, 1985). The important books for the library were translated in a separate section and library contained 24000 bound volumes and

illustrated editions. Picture gallery was also established in the Imperial library under the reign of Emperor Jahangir (1605 – 1627 A.D.). The then Emperors of Mughal Empire till Aurangzeb patronised Imperial library with utmost care and passion. The most elegant Imperial library of Mughals met a contemptible end with the invasion and devastation of Nadir Shah in 1738 A.D. Some of the significant collections of Imperial library were looted and carried away by him. Maharaja Chikka Deva Raya of Mysore (1672 – 1740 A.D.) and Tipoo Sultan needed a special mention for their contribution to the modernistic libraries. With the fall of Mughals in the mid of 18th century and the subsequent British Invasion and colonization in India made way for the British to exert their control over libraries in India from the 19th century onwards.

BRITISH PERIOD (1757 – 1947 A.D.)

The 19th century was marked with mutinous transformation in social, political, industrial and other phases of life in India which led to the era of transformation of the historical libraries in our country. During the period of British rule, the country was divided into 3 presidencies, in the name of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. Public libraries were set up in these three regions of our country. The Asiatic Society of Bengal was the first modern library setup in India in the year 1784 and Asiatic Society of Bombay was formed succeeding to it in the year 1804. The year 1818 saw the formation of Madras library Society with its access to public. Bombay General Library was started in the year 1830 as a public library. Maharaja Tukoji Rao Holkar II of Indore set up the General Public Library at Huzurya Mahal in the year 1854 A.D and patronized it with an initial donation of Rs.500 and a further grant of Rs.12 per month (Bhatt, 1994). It was also one of the other public libraries established during the British period. The oldest and prestigious Kitab Ghar was established in 1866 A.D. and went through many struggles before it got shifted to "Rajwada chowk".

British period some of the important libraries are David Sassoon Library, one of the oldest library in Mumbai established in the year 1870, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library constructed in the year 1930, which was formerly residence

of former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and was aptly named after him; the National library of India situated in Kolkata houses 2.2 million books and the largest library in India by volume and public record. The State Central Library of Hyderabad was constructed in the year 1891 A.D. by Nawab Imad – ul – Mulk and was granted heritage status in the year 1998 A.D. State Central library of Kerala was one of the oldest public libraries in India and established in the year 1829 under the reign of King Swathi Thirunal. The Connemara public library is one of the four National Depository Libraries established in 1890 and constituted most of the respected works of the country. The Allahabad Public Library known as Thornhill Mayne memorial situated at Alfred Park in Allahabad. It is one of the biggest libraries of Uttar Pradesh founded in the year 1864. It has a collection of 125,000 books, 40 varieties of magazines, newspapers from 28 different languages and 21 Arabic manuscripts (Kanwar, 2015).

Noticeable public libraries which exited in pre-independence period

S. No.	Library Name	Year of established (A.D.)	Place
1.	Mughal Imperial Library	1526	Kabul (currently it is in Pakistan)
2.	Rampur Raza Library	1774	Uttar Pradesh
3.	Bengal Royal Asiatic Society	1784	Culcutta
4.	Saraswati Mahal Library	1798-1833	Thanjavur
5.	Bombay Royal Asiatic Society	1804	Mumbai
6.	State Central Library	1829	Travancore
7.	Krishnadas Shama Central Library	1832	Goa

8.	Asiatic society library of Bombay	1835	Maharashtra
9.	Calcutta Public Library	1836	Culcutta
10.	Romain Rolland Library	1837	Puducherry
11.	Native Library	1850	Ahmedabad
12.	Andrews Library	1850	Surat
13.	Indore General Library	1854	Indore
14.	Raichand Dipchand Library,	1855	Broach
15.	Lang Library	1856	Rajkot
16.	Institute Library at Delhi (Hardayal Municipal Public Library)	1862	Delhi
17.	Allahabad Public Library (Thornhill Mayne memorial library)	1864	Allahabad
18.	Stuart Library	1866	Godhra,
19.	Radha Krishnan Central Library	1866	Rajasthan
20.	Government Library	1867	Junagarh
21.	Town Lakhajiraj Library	1868	Rajkot
22.	Apparo Bholanath Library	1870	Ahmedabad
23.	David Session Library	1870	Bombay
24.	Adyar Library	1876.	Chennai
25.	Baroda State Library in Baroda	1877	Baroda
26.	Mahuva Library	1877	Mahuva
27.	Maulana Azad Library	1877	Aligarh

28.	SRS Library	1879	Jammu & Kashmir
29.	Barton Library	1882	Bhavnagar
30.	Bhagvatsinhij Library	1884	Bondal,
31.	Punjab Public library	1884	Lahore
32.	Adyar Library and Research	1886	Tamil Nadu
33.	Bharati Bhawan Library	1889	Allahabad
34.	Connemara public library	1890	Tamil Nadu
35.	Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library	1891	Patna
36.	Central Secretariat Library	1891	Delhi
37.	Victoria Jubilee Library	1891	Vankaner
38.	State Central Library	1891	Hyderabad
39.	Imperial library of India	1891	Calcutta
40.	Dahi Laxmi Library	1892	Nadiad, Gujarat
41.	Tikhtasinhji Library	1892	Bhavnagar
42.	Dayal Singh Public Library	1896	Punjab
43.	Birchandra State Central Library (Ujjayanta Palace Library)	1896	Agartala, Tripura
44.	Victoria Diamond Jubilee Library	1897	Jalalpur,
45.	Lyall Library	1899	Aligarh
46.	Madhav Library	1899	Lashkar
47.	Punjab Public Library	1900	Punjab

48.	State Library	1903	Shillong, Assam
49.	Hamidiya State Library (Maulana Azad Central library)	1909	Bhopal
50.	Salar Jung's Musium	1914	Hyderabad
51.	Seshadri Iyer Memorial Hall houses (the State Central Library)	1915	Bangalore
52.	Shri Sanmati Pustakalaya	1920	Jaipur
53.	Dwarka Das Public Library	1921	Punjab
54.	Mahakavi Bharathi Memorial Library (also known as Karungal Palayam Library)	1921	Tamil Nadu
55.	Sir Ganga Ram public library	1923	Punjab
56.	Sinha Library	1924	Patna
57.	Jubabati Memorial Library	1927	Manipur
58.	Mahima Library	1930	Nahan,Himachal Pradesh

DETAILED ACCOUNT OF PROMINENT PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

SARASWATHI MAHAL LIBRARY

The Nayak kings who ruled Tanjavur in 1535-1676 C.E. established the oldest library of Asia, Sarswathi Mahal library in Tanjavur. The library was magnificently developed by the Maratha ruler, Serfoji ll (1798-1832 A.D.). The library contained excellent collection of palm leaf manuscripts in Tamil, Sanskrit

and other Indian languages. The Library was located inside Tanjore (present name is Tanjavur) palace and was open to access by public in 1918.

RAZA LIBRARY RAMPUR

Nawad Faizullah khan laid foundation as to the Rampur Raza Library in the year 1774. The library was patronized well by other descendants of Nawab family like Said Khan (1840-1855), Kalb Ali Khan (1865-1887), Hamid Ali Khan (1889-1930), and the last ruler Raza Ali Khan on whose name the library is known today. This library stands as a symbol of unification of Hindu-Islamic cultural heritage during the period of 18th century. It constitutes exemplified collections of rare musical manuscripts, Arabic and Persian literature, and Printed volumes of Qur'an in various languages like Pashto, Urdu, Hindi and Sanskrit. It has an adorable collection of around 30,000 bound volumes in Turkish and Tamil and the Raza library is considered to be Asia's fascinating and magnanimous library.

ASIATIC SOCIETY OF MUMBAI (1804 A.D.)

The Asiatic Society of Mumbai has its roots in the Literary Society of Bombay founded by Sir James Mackintosh which first met in Mumbai on 26 November, 1804. The main objective of the Society was 'to promote useful knowledge particularly such as is now immediately connected with India'. Today it receives an annual grant from the Govt. of India. It has a collection of over hundred thousand books along with rare ancient manuscripts, painted folios, coins, artifacts, maps and prints. Various measures such as the establishment of microfilming laboratories and techniques like compact book shelving system are used for the conservation and preservation of damaged books.

ROMAIN ROLLAND LIBRARY (1827 A.D.)

Bibliotheque Publique (Public Library) was the first library in present Puducherry (Union Territory). It was established during the French Rule. It was founded by Desbassyns de Richemont in 1827. When the library in question was first opened, Indians were not allowed to borrow books-only Europeans had that privilege-though they were allowed inside the reading room. As years went by,

the library's collection grew manifold. It now holds over 3 lakh books. In 1942, a museum was constructed inside the library building. The library consists chiefly of French and English books. It draws scholars not just from various parts of the country but also from abroad. In 1967, the name of the library was changed to Romain Rolland, a French scholar and a good friend of Mahatma Gandhi, to commemorate his birth centenary. The library is also noted for its rare book section which is composed of around 15,000 books, some of which cannot be found elsewhere. The library contained around 2 lakhs books and 25 thousand bounded volumes.

KERALA STATE CENTRAL LIBRARY (1829 A.D.)

The Kerala State Central Library, set up during the golden age of Kerala's erstwhile Travancore kingdom 1829 A.D, is undoubtedly India's first public library. The gothic influences on the building's architecture are quite apparent. Originally called 'Trivandrum people's library', in its initial days the membership was confined to the elite and privileged sections of the Kerala society (Raman Nair, 1991). Since its genesis, the library has changed hands numerous times. The library was managed in its early years by the Trivandrum library managing committee. Decades later, the reins of the library were handed over to the University of Kerala. And, now, finally it carved a new department for itself out of ministry of education, Kerala.

GUJARAT VIDYAPITH LIBRARY (1921 A.D)

Though constructed inside the premise of a university, the Gujarat Vidyapith library caters not just to its students but also to the general public. It boasts of a collection of over 6 lakh books. Both the library and the university had its inception in the same year, i.e. 1921. This library has the distinction of having a whole section dedicated to Gandhian literature, books that are either written about or authored by Gandhi. The aforementioned section known popularly as

'Gandhi Bhawan' is widely visited for its photo gallery, a humble attempt at chronicling the life of the nation's father.

SINHA LIBRARY

Sinha library, it has a collection of over 100000 books, formerly known as Shrimati Radhika Sinha Institute, is arguably the most popular library in Patna, Bihar. The establishment had its inception in 1924 under the patronage of Dr Sachichidananda Sinha, the first president of India's constituent assembly. Besides for the sheer volume of its collection, the library shall never be lost to the pages of history for having witnessed some of the subcontinent's significant historical events. Sinha who was known to have had a substantial number of influential and powerful friends threw soirees and festivities at this very building. His guests included prominent Indian political figures such as MK Gandhi, Maulana Mazharul Haque, among others.

CENTRAL LIBRARY OF BARODA (1931 A.D.)

It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that Sayajirao Gaekwad III spearheaded the Gujarati library movement. Before his Reign began, there was only one library in the entire state of Gujarat and the number increased, at the time of his death, to around 1500. Suffice it to say that it was this remarkable man's zeal for learning and scientific temperament that engendered a sudden spike in the number of libraries in his kingdom. But the biggest feather in his cap was undeniably the Central Library of Baroda. The library was founded in 1931; back then trees and shrubs were purposefully planted by the windows so that the integrity of the books won't be lost to high humidity. Now, the library makes use of modern technology to create a digital catalogue database and to entertain children with visual media. The administration of the library guards a copy of the constitution that contains the original signatures of its drafters.

KRISHNADAS SHARMA STATE CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY (1832 A.D.)

Krishnadas Sharma State Central Public Library established in 1831 at Goa by Viceroy Dom Manuel de Portugal e Castro'as in the name of 'Publica Livraria' (Book store) which was the library of the Academia Militar de (military training Institute in the beginning). It was also one of the oldest libraries in India. The name of this library has been changed multiple times throughout its history. The library is, now, named after a renowned writer called Krishnadas Sharma who in retrospection is considered the father of Konkani literature. As per the available data, the library houses around 180000 books in English, Portuguese, Konkani, Hindi and Marathi. The library currently operates under the wing of government of Goa. The Library Certified into ISO 9001: 2015.

CULCUTTA PUBLIC LIBRARY (later known as NATIONAL LIBRARY OF INDIA) (1836 A.D)

The National library of India is merger of Calcutta public library (1836 A.D.) and Imperial library of India (1891 A.D.). It is located in Kolkata. The library has been awarded the status of National library by an Act of the Parliament. It is among the four libraries in the country to be listed in the Delivery of Books and Newspapers (Public Libraries) Act, 1954. As a consequence, the library has the legal prerogative to receive a copy of all the books, journals, periodicals or any such publication printed anywhere in the country. Located in the historic Belvedere Estate, the library was the official residence of the Governor General of India during the British rule. It has the distinct honor of being India's official library of records. In terms of the volume of collection, it is by far the largest library in the country, possessing over 22 lakh books.

CONNEMARA PUBLIC LIBRARY (1890 A.D.)

Connemara Public Library was established in 1890 at Chennai in Tamil Nadu. Apart from being one of the four National Depository Libraries, it also serves as

a depository library for the UN. It was part of the Madras Museum back in the day which was later separated due to the need for a public library. It was named after the then Governor, Lord Connemara. It was converted as the State Central library in 1948 with the enactment of Madras Public Libraries Act, 1948. The library has one of the richest collection of books, periodicals, centuries–old publications and other important works. It is also one of Asia's largest libraries with a collection of over 6 lakh books.

KHUDA BAKHSH ORIENTAL PUBLIC LIBRARY (1891 A.D.)

The Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library is situated on the banks of river Ganga in Patna. It is a historical wardrobe of about 21,000 manuscripts and 2.5 lakhs of illustrated volumes. The library gained public access in October, 1891, due to the efforts of Bihar Khan Bahadur Khuda Bakhsh, who donated his entire property for public welfare. The Library was declared the Institution of National Importance by an act of the parliament in 1969 and is fully funded by the Ministry of Culture.

BIRCHANDRA STATE CENTRAL LIBRARY (1896 A.D.)

The Tripura's first prominent library is Birchandra State Central Library. It was established by King Maharaja Radhakishore Manikya (1862-1896) who Christened this library after his late father Maharaja Bir Chandra Manikya, an avid bibliophile who set up a library in his palace, which later went on to become the eponymous library. The library at first was meant for the use of the members of the royal family, but in 1896 the king decided to have all the vernacular books transferred to a different complex which would then be open to the general public. The vernacular section began as an extension of the palace library but soon it found success and became a "full-fledged library". In 2010, the library was moved to a different premise at the old Secretariat building, where it was modernized beyond recognition.

SALAR JUNG MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

Salar Jung Museum and Library located in Telangana treasures a rich collection of art creations, rare books and manuscripts. The Library and Museum was constructed by Mir Yousuf who was conferred the title 'Salar Jung III'. Due to health issue in 1914, Salar Jung III give up his Prime Minister post and later developed keen interest in art and literature. The Museum and Library consists of ancestral works of art and creation. After India got independence, the museum and library was opened for the public by the first Prime Minister of India Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. Later in 1961, the Museum was declared an 'Institution of National Importance' by an act of the Parliament. Currently the Museum and Library is directly controlled by the Governor of Telangana.

CONCLUSION

We, as humans, not only inherit traits from our forefathers but also the traditions which they bequeathed us. Our forefathers put great efforts to develop libraries which would remain as an everlasting example even after their lifetime. It is a treasure trove of knowledge, wisdom, art of communication, customs and rich traditions. That was indeed a glorious history of libraries during pre-independence period in India. The present investigations throw light on the present status of libraries in India during pre-independence period. These are really our treasures of past which each one of us should patronize and develop with great care and concern.

The public libraries established during pre-independence period have a long way in achieving their goal for which they have been constructed. It is the prime responsibility of each and every library authority to take good care of age-old libraries in their region and should take maximum efforts for their development and digitalization in future. The government should also allocate separate funds for the maintenance of libraries of pre-independence time and at the same time monitor their spending in order to ensure that they are used for development of pre- independence libraries. In conclusion, I would like to state that further research is needed in historical research in public libraries to get a better

understanding of public libraries developments in pre-independence period and thereby enabling development of future strategies for libraries in India.

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