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Public Library Service in the NCT of Delhi: Present and Future

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To perpetuate the sweet memory of its Founder Director Professor Sachidulal Das Gupta, the School of Library Science of the Delhi Library Association instituted a Memorial Lecture Series way back in 1957. The inaugural lecture in the series was delivered by Shri B S Kesavan followed by Dr. D S Kothari, Prof. S Parthasarty, Dr. Jagdish S Sharma, Shri Girja Kumar, Prof. S Parthasarthy, Prof. M L Saini, Dr. TAV Murthy, Prof. TN Rajan, Dr. Usha M Munshi, Mr. N Dutta, Dr. (Ms) Uma Kanjilal, Dr. A L Moorthy, Prof. B K Sen and Prof. S Ansari.

Public Library Service in the NCT* of Delhi: Present and Future
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1. Introduction

It is a well accepted axiom that a library for democracy, universal self-education and enlightenment is indeed a public library. In view of its vital role, public support and service to the people it is rightly described as a library of the people, for the people and by the people. Alvin Johnson rightly calls a public library 'a people's university'. Pragmatically speaking, the institution that is equal to understand and promote the job of linking the mind with life and work, and organizing a communication system of ideas and concepts is the public library. It aims at reaching every one, educated, neo-literate and even uneducated. It can store and transmit ideas, provide forum for discussion and thus help in the formation of reflective public opinion which is essential for the successful functioning of a democratic system such as the one we have adopted in this country. Adherence to this democratic system, and respect for the dignity of the individual and freedom of his mind compel us to accept the need of organizing and developing public library system in the country as a whole in an order of priority.

2. Public Library Service: Essential Features

A public library as a community centre is expected to function with a free and unbiased outlook and this aspect has been well recognized the world over, both in developed and developing countries. Some of its essential features may be briefly described as following:

2.1 Usually Tax Supported:

Public libraries require continuous and growing financial support and therefore it always felt strongly that the authorities should levy library tax/cess specifically for this purpose which may be further augmented by financial support from Government funds. This has been accepted as a norm in most of the States, excepting West Bengal, in this country where Public Library Law has been enacted. In the absence of such a tax/cess the State or other concerned authorities must lay down stringent financial conditions so that the required support from the government exchequer does not get affected adversely with the change in the ruling authority at any point of time. Even in countries such as USA, UK tax- based support is considered essential in this regard.

2.2 Free Service:

The concept of free service to all, with out any bias or discretion whatsoever, is accepted as the Magna Carta of public library service the world over. A few decades back the matter with regard to providing free service was debated in countries such as UK and a few others when certain people felt that free services in general are less appreciated by

***National Capital Territory**

the users as compared to those for which they have to make certain payments, howsoever small in amount. The support for free service on the other hand was however quite large and continues to be so. In this country also the concept has been well accepted by the authorities and continues to be so in letter and spirit. In the findings of the **Survey**, which was conducted in Delhi during 2011, as part of a **Project** under **Tagore National Fellowship,** 94.4 per cent of the respondents are strongly in favour of the public library service to be free and well developed.

2.3 Documents Collection and Services:

A public library has to serve a mix up of users and must therefore build up its collection, (both in print and non-print forms) which is relevant for them who may be belonging to different age groups, physically disabled, prisoners, health patients and even those with special information needs such as professionals, business community and others. Besides the traditional library services such as lending of materials, reference service,etc it would be expected to organize various other activities and programmes such as lectures, discussion groups and exhibitions so as to make it a really visible centre in the community. The use of ICT and its applications, and Internet access must be introduced so as to add better access to various resources and services not only locally but even globally.

2.4 Formation of a Public Library System:

In order to meet the needs of the users effectively, it is necessary that each unit of a public library should be a viable unit. This may not however be always possible, howsoever generously supported financially it may be, and therefore the need for developing it   as part of a larger system. In such a system each unit is inter linked with the other, large and small, and each unit is as rich as the whole system. The formation of the system would help in maximizing the utilization of the financial support and in offering a variety of services which otherwise may not be possible in small units. The need for developing the public library service as part of a larger system has been always advocated, both at the national and international levels, by organizations such as UNESCO, IFLA, American Library Association, The Library Association (London) and Indian Library Association.

2.5 Decentralised Structure:

In order that a public library unit is really an integral part of the locality it must be easily accessible physically and for that purpose the public library system in a State or district must be organized in a decentralized manner on the basis of a locality, i.e. city, town, rural blocks, villages, etc.

2.6 Public Library Law:

It has been well recognized all over the world that enactment of a Public Library Act is essential to establish and develop a public library system on proper lines. In this country as well the need for enactment of such Legislation has been always considered necessary. Such a Law provides for various essential aspects such as: constitution, powers and functions of library authority at different levels such as State, District and Local; structural and functional aspects of the different units in the system; required financial support; manpower needs and development; and various other related matters. It may be reiterated that a strong legal footing of the system alone can greatly ensure its future development and functioning on proper lines.

3. Model Public Library System in India; Ranganathan's Role

Dr. S.R.Ranganathan, father of library movement in this country, duly recognised the need for   public library service and can rightly be called as a torch bearer in this movement in the country. He developed a model for this purpose by drafting a Model Public Libraries Act for a legislation-based State Library System in the country which was debated and approved by the Library Service Section of the First All –Asia Educational Conference at Banaras as early as 1930. During the following years he continued discussing this theme through his writings and lectures in the country during the 1940s and a more detailed bill prepared during the mid-1940s called Library Bill for the State of Granthajagat was published in 1950.

 In his Presidential Address at the All-India Library Conference at Baroda in January 1946 he emphasized this need and said: 'Before you disperse, I should, therefore, place before you just one programme to be carried out by you in your respective areas. That single programme is to work for the placing of a Library Act in the statute book of your Province or State. To do this, you do not need knowledge of library technique. It is not necessary. The time for it will come later. The next two years must see you, as often as possible, in the drawing rooms of the Ministers, the lobbies of the Legislature and in the mass meetings of your area. You must work in these places so persistently that when we assemble at Nagpur in 1948, each one of you can announce the gladdening news that your Province or State has put a Library Act on the statute book.'

It was because of his enthusiasm and leadership that the first Public Library Law was enacted in this country in 1948 in Tamil Nadu State (earlier Madras State) which is rightly called as a land mark event in the history of public library movement in the country. This also served as an essential necessity to promote public library systems and services in the country.

4. Public Library System in India: An Overview

An overall present scenario is as summarized below:

4. 1 State Level:

It is found that till 2009; only 18 States in the country had enacted the Public Library Law. They are: Tamil Nadu (1948) (earlier Madras till 1969); Hyderabad (1955); Andhra Pradesh (1960); Karnataka (1965) (earlier Mysore till 1973); Maharashtra (1967); West Bengal(1979); Manipur (1988); Haryana (1989); Kerala (1989); Mizoram (1993); Goa (1993); Gujarat (2000); Orissa (2001); Uttaranchal (2005); Rajasthan (2006); Uttar Pradesh (2006); Bihar (2008); and Chattisgarh (2009).

It may however be added that some of these States such as Haryana, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Chhatisgarh have not yet implemented this legislation.

A review of the salient features of Public Library Laws already passed in 18 States in the country reveals that all of them have given due recognition to the essential features of public library services as identified and discussed in the preceding sections. Generally speaking, there is an overall uniformity in the organizational pattern with State Central Library at the apex of the system followed by a decentralized structure consisting of district libraries, city libraries, block level libraries and others spread over the urban and rural areas in the respective State. Also, they have provision for library authorities at different levels such as State, district and local levels with membership from different agencies such as the local administration, local bodies and others so that the pubic library functions in an effective and intimate manner for the local public. Library cess collection duly augmented with governmental grants is recommended in most of these enactments except in West Bengal, Manipur and Mizoram where total funding is to be made available by the State Government from its exchequer. At the implementation level there are however certain variations. For example it is found that in certain States there is a separate Directorate of Public Libraries while in some others it is part of the Directorate of Education. It is however strongly felt that as far as possible there must be a separate Directorate of Public Libraries and the Director must be a professionally qualified library person. The overall model of the public library system for the States already being followed and enacted through State legislatures, can be rightly considered as a suitable model for the country as a whole.

Further, it is essential that the States which have passed the Law but have yet not implemented must take early steps to implement it in letter and spirit. Also, the 10 States without public library law must initiate the process to enact such a law as a necessity simply because a public library service is not a luxury but a necessity for a successful democratic system.

4.2 Union Territories (UTs):

There are at present 7 UTs viz. Andaman and Nicobar Islands; Chandigarh; Dadar and Nagar Haveli; Daman and Diu; National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi; Lakshdweep; and, Puducherry. NCT of Delhi and Puducherry have certain features of a State with an elected Assembly with Lt. Governor as the Head but the remaining 5 are directly under the over-all administration of the Union Government. These Union Territories (UTs) should also ensure the development of proper public library service by taking the required decision at the appropriate administrative level. The proposed public library system for NCT of Delhi has been described in brief in the following Section. Some of these UTs such as Chandigarh and Puducherry do have some public libraries but a proper system is the need of the hour which should be possible by enactment of a Public Library Law and its implementation in a proper manner. It seems relevant to recommend that since other UTs are directly under the administrative jurisdiction of the Union Government it would be most helpful if the Union Government gets a unified public library bill drafted and enacted through Indian Parliament which may be enforced uniformly in the 6 other UTs as well in the country.

5. NCT of Delhi: Public Library Scenario

A study of Delhi, its history, educational system, literacy, and development Plans, and several other connected matters provides an impressive and dynamic scenario about its past, present and plans for vibrant future. It has been developing at a fast rate in almost all areas of socio-economic activities. In the field of public library service however the rate of progress has been rather slow and disappointing, requiring immediate attention of all the stake-holders connected with it.

An overall scenario of the present Public Library service may be briefly described as following:

5.1 Early Period: An Overview:

While it is true that much study and research has been done already about the long, varied and rich history of Delhi during the ancient times a great deal however still remains unknown about certain aspects such as educational, social and cultural life during those times. One major factor for this gap can be rightly attributed to the non-availability of the contemporary records and other relevant materials. Whatever is known is based mainly on the historical generalizations made about the country and/or the region of the particular historical era. More specific studies have however been made of the period starting with the 12th century A.D., i.e. after the defeat of Prithvi Raj when Delhi passed

into the hands of Muslim rulers of different dynasties such as Slave dynasty followed by others namely Khilijis, Tughlaks, Lodhis and Moghuls. The British hold started in 1803 and they had full control after 1857, and more particularly after 1911 when Delhi was designated as the Capital of the British rule in India.

It is rightly presumed that some libraries did exist in Delhi during the Hindu, Buddhist and Jain periods of history but not much documented information is available about them. They must have been destroyed during the raids and plunders of outsiders in the country. It is however a well accepted fact that from the 13th century onwards learning and education activities were greatly promoted by different rulers and during those years Delhi did witness a great intellectual and cultural life among its people. Certain libraries were established during this period such the Imperial Library founded by Jalal-ud-din Khiliji, and the one started by the great Sufi-poet Nizam-ud-din Auliya. It is said that the latter library functioned as a public library because the general public was also allowed to use it. The Mughal Emperors such as Humayun, Akbar, Shahjahan and others had great interest in calligraphy, art and poetry including libraries . Even today remnants of Humayun's Library in Purana Quila and Darashikoh Library at Kashmiri Gate are places of great tourist attraction in the city. It is a fact that Akbar always took keen interest in the development of libraries and it was during his rule that a well-developed system of library administration was evolved and practiced. Abul Fazal, the great scholar of Akbar's time, acted as Librarian of the Royal Library.

5.2 Pre-Independence Period --Upto 1947:

It is indeed a sad commentary that during the British rule in India, even after 1861,when they took over almost complete control, till Independence in 1947, no significant development in public library movement took place in the country including Delhi. Whatever public libraries we find in the country during this period were mainly those which were established either in certain princely states such as the ones in Baroda, by local municipal committees or other local self-government bodies in states such as Madras and a few others, mostly in the Southern part of the country, or by the private endowments. In most of these cases they were working mainly as Reading Rooms, with a small collection, say, a few hundred books to be read only on their premises.

It is indeed difficult to believe that when New Delhi, the capital, was designed in 1911 and completed in 1930, no one conceived of the necessity of allocating a site for a proper public library service for the city. An analytical study of the contemporary political and social history leads to several possible reasons for the lack of proper public library development in the city during the pre-independence years which may be summarized as: firstly, the period leading to 1857 Mutiny was an era of uncertainties and political instability which undermined and in several ways destroyed the intellectual and enlightened fervour of the city, otherwise usually designated as the period of Delhi

Renaissance; secondly, lack of educational facilities both at the school and higher education levels almost till 1920s and therefore low level of literacy among the people; and thirdly, the usual apathy of the government authorities, which in many ways has been the usual happening in a colonial system of government around the world.

5.3 Present Status:

It must however be mentioned here that at the time of country's Independence there did exist several small public libraries and/or reading rooms, spread over different parts of the city which had been started by different philanthropic societies, religious endowments, etc with limited financial support. Some of them continue playing a rather limited role in their functions and activities even today. There is an urgent need to conduct a survey of these libraries in the city so as to make a proper assessment about their status and working so that these could possibly be integrated in a public library network in the city.

Some of the prominent public libraries in the city to-day are as described below:

5.31 Privately / Municipal Corporation Funded Public Libraries:

Some of the prominent public libraries falling in this category, in the chronological order of their establishment, are as given below:

(i)   Marwari Public Library (1915):

This Library was established by one Marwari Seth Kedar Nath Goenka and is located in Chandni Chowk area. It is still considered to be a useful public library in Delhi. It has about 50,000 books, mostly in Hindi. In addition, it has a rich collection of more than 2000 old journals and 50 rare manuscripts including a copy of hand-written Gita. It caters to about 300 regular members and research scholars who find it quite useful in different fields of their interest in the Humanities. Its Reading Room is visited most frequently by a large number of users for reading newspapers and magazines.

Its main source of income is in the form of donations mostly from the Marwari patrons and also occasionally receives *ad-hoc* grants from the State Government. In view of various factors such as financial constraints, inconvenient location, and limited services the Library lags behind seriously in making its presence felt among the larger user community in the City.

(ii) Raghumal Vedic Public Library (1915):

This Library is managed by a religious Trust. Besides its own financial income from Trust property, and donations from individuals and others, it receives a limited financial support from the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. It has a collection of about 25,000

volumes with major emphasis on Sanskrit and Vedic literature. Its Reading Room receives about 50 newspapers and magazines. Its members are registered with a nominal membership fee.

(iii) Hardayal Municipal Public Library (1916):

This Library is possibly the oldest public library in Delhi. Its history goes back as far as 1862 when it was housed in a portion of the Town Hall building with a small collection of books and other reading materials mostly donated by the British Officers of that time. Its earlier names were: Institute Library as part of the Lawrence Institute (1861-1866); Delhi Public Library and Reading Rooms (1902-42), and Hardinge Municipal Public Library (1942-1970). It was given the present name in 1970 after the well known freedom fighter Lala Hardayal. It continues to be housed in the original building in the then Queen's Garden, now called Gandhi Ground, in the Chadni Chowk area of Delhi.

It functions as a semi-autonomous body under the overall control of North Municipal Corporation of Delhi (NMCD). In view of several financial and other constraints the Library continues to lag behind in meeting the needs of the users. The annual finance required is estimated to be around Rs. 15 crore but it continues to receive a very limited amount, say Rs 1-2 crore, which hampers its proper functioning and development.

It is estimated that the Library has a collection of about 1,59,776 books and bound periodicals including 7720 rare books and manuscripts, in different languages such as Hindi, English, Urdu, Persian and Arabic. The total membership is around 1600 and on an average 400 users visit the Library daily.

Though historically important and rich in its collection the Library undoubtedly requires a face-lift to maintain its glorious tradition and reputation.

(iv) Mahavir Jain Public Library (1920):

This Library was established by the Jain Sahitya Sadan (Jain Literary Society) and is located in Chandni Chowk area of Delhi. It has a collection of about 30,000 books and bound volume of periodicals, with main emphasis on Jain studies. In addition, it has a rare collection of about 500 manuscripts which are used by scholars from all over the country. It acquires about 90 magazines and newspapers and on an average 300 users visit the Library daily. It certainly suffers from financial and other constraints in meeting the needs of the users.

(v) Fatehpuri Muslim Public Library (1928):

This Library was started as an attachment to the School of the Fatehpuri Mosque in Chandni Chowk and continues to cater the needs of the Muslim community in the area. It

is managed by the Delhi Wakf Board and has a collection of about 25,000 volumes in different languages such as Persian and Arabic with specialization in Islamic studies. It provides free Reading Room facility but lending of materials is restricted to registered member user on payment of nominal annual fee.

(vi) Dyal Singh Public Library (1954):

This Library was initially started in Lahore (now in Pakistan) in 1928 in pursuance of the 'Will' of Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia (1848-1898) who was a great philanthropist and social reformer in Punjab during the 19th century. It was established in Delhi in 1954 with the efforts of Dewan Ananad Kumar who was then the Chairman, Dyal Singh Trust Society in India. It is located most centrally and is easily accessible from the different areas of Delhi. It presently has a collection of about 40,000 books in different languages such as English, Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi. It subscribes around 100 magazines/journals and 23 newspapers in different languages.

Presently the Library has about 9000 registered members with an average of 100 users daily. It has separate Children's Section and provides facilities for using CDs, DVDs and other audio-visual materials. Though located most centrally, yet like several other public libraries in the city it also suffers from several constraints such as financial, manpower and others, to meet the needs of its clientele.

(vii) Ramakrishna Mission Library (1956):

It is located in the premises of the Ramakrishna Mission in New Delhi which is quite a central location in the city. It has a collection of about 50,000 volumes and with an average 300 daily users. The collection includes materials in different disciplines with more emphasis on spiritual literature. It subscribes to about 110 magazines and 15 daily newspapers. It receives financial support primarily from the parent body and limited grants-in-aid from different organizations donations from individuals. It provides free service to its users. Several years back it signed an MOU with the University of Delhi to extend its services to the students of the University

5.32 Union Government Funded-- Delhi Public Library(1950):

Delhi Public Library (DPL) was founded in 1950 as a joint Government of India and UNESCO Pilot Project. Its major purpose was to provide the people of Delhi free public library service using modern concepts and techniques. In addition to the traditional services expected of a public library it was to lay great emphasis on special services to be provided to the neo-literates and less educated people, children and young adults, physically disabled and other special categories of persons. Since many countries in the developing world had attained independence after the World War II, UNESCO rightly

thought it expedient to establish such like pilot projects in certain developing countries so as to demonstrate the useful role a public library plays in the socio-economic development, and, also in the spread of literacy programmes of a developing country.

From the very beginning it was felt that the Library should have sufficient of freedom and autonomy to manage its affairs and be not just a department under the Government of India. Accordingly Delhi Library Board was constituted as a Registered Society under the Societies Registration Act of 1860 on February 7, 1951 and a building on Queens Road (presently S.P. Mukerjee Marg) was acquired for the Library. Dr. S.R. Ranganathan was one among the signatories in its Memorandum of Association which included several eminent political leaders academicians, and bureaucrats of that time in Delhi. Mr. Edward Sydney, an eminent British Librarian was appointed as an Advisor in December 1950 for six months. He was followed another British Librarian Mr. F.M. Gardner who joined DPL as a Unesco Consultant in November 1951. Mr. D.R. Kalia joined as full-time Director in February 1951.

The Library was inaugurated on October 27, 1951 by Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of free India. Mauling Abdul Kalam Azad, the then Minister of Education, and Government of India presided over the Inaugural Function.

During the early years of its history DPL indeed played a significant role in the public library movement not only in Delhi but also in the country as a whole. DPL programmes and activities have been well described and assessed in several publications, reports and research articles published in the past few decades. Various details about its different components such as administrative system, membership, services and financial control, are summarized below so to provide an over-view about its activities and programmes:

(i) Delhi Library Board (DLB): The Board is constituted by the Government of India Ministry of Culture as per the provisions in the Memorandum of the Association of the DPL. It has full powers subject to the over-riding control of the Government of India. It has representatives from different organizations such the NCT of Delhi Government, Ministry of Culture Govt. of India, Municipal Corporations of Delhi, New Delhi Municipal Committee (NDMC) and others, as also a few experts in the field of Library & Information Science. The Chairman is appointed by the Government of India, and, like other members has a tenure of 3 years. The Director-General, DPL functions as ex-officio Member Secretary of the DLB.

(ii) Some of the other details are: (*illustrative)*

(a) fully funded by the Government of India, with an annual financial budget of about Rs.20 crore;

(b) provides services from different units such as: Central Library-1; Zonal/Branch Libraries-4; Sub-Branches-25; Community Libraries-3; Re-settlement Colony Libraries-12; Mobile Library Service Points-70; Deposit Stations-23; and service units for the visually disadvantaged, children, prisoners, etc., with a total of about 140 service units at present;

(c) had a total membership of 74367 in 2011; which declined from a membership of 130801 in 1971;

(d) document collection in 2010-2011 was 16, 08,813; in addition has a fairly large collection of CDs, DVDs; and also, receives a large number of publications under the Delivery of Books and Newspapers Act, 1954; and

(e) organizes periodically various cultural and other programmes under the auspices of its Social Education Department.

It may be added that during the 8-10 years DPL has taken various steps to modernize its services with ICT applications by providing services with Internet and other ICT tools.

5.33 Government of NCT of Delhi Funded Public Libraries:

NCT of Delhi is a vibrant State and its Government has indeed been playing a pro-active role in various fields of socio-economic development including economy, education, industrial and cultural. In the field of public libraries however its role has been rather disappointing to the extent that till today there is hardly any public library under the NCT of Delhi control which could be mentioned as an illustrative example for its services and activities. Presently, there are about 43 libraries under its jurisdiction which are designated as Composite Libraries and which function primarily as Reading Rooms in different DDA Community Centres. These libraries function under different constraints such as financial, manpower, document collections, and proper physical space. It is found that during the financial year 2011-2012 the total budget allocations for these Composite Libraries was estimated to be around Rs.3.50 crore including Rs. 30.00 lakh from the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation, under its Matching Grant.

There is no separate Department of Libraries as such and presently these libraries are under the over-all administrative control of the Punjabi Academy, which is part of the Department of Art, Culture and Languages of the NCT government.

6. NCT of Delhi: Public Library Development Plan

The development plan presented here for the NCT of Delhi follows the Indian Model mentioned earlier with a few exceptions mainly because of its rather unique position in the Indian Federal System of Government. For example, though it has a Union Territory status yet it is different from other Union Territories (UTs) in the country in the sense that it has Legislative Assembly with a Chief Minister and a 7-member Cabinet of Ministers. The Head of the NCT is however a Lt. Governor and not a Governor which is a usual pattern in full-fledged States in the country. It serves as the Capital of the country as also of the NCT of Delhi. Unlike other States certain administrative subjects such as Police

and Land Development are under the control of the Union Government and not under the NCT of Delhi Government.

It would also be relevant to mention here that in view of its being the Capital of the country, as also of the NCT, Delhi occupies a place of great importance in the country. During the past few decades it has made tremendous developments in all walks of human life and continues to play a prominent role in the socio-economic and political developments in the country. To mention a few facts relevant here: it is spread over an area of about 1484 kms and is estimated to have a population of 16.7 million (Census 2011). It is a highly multi-lingual and multi-cultural city and is vibrant with facilities in different fields such as education, tourism, sports, book trade, art and culture. It had a literacy of 81.67% in 2001which rose to 86.34% in 2011, with male being 91.0% and females 80.9% (*Delhi Statistical Handbook 2012*). Administratively, it is presently divided into 11 districts, has three Municipal Corporations and one New Delhi Municipal Committee (NDMC).

In such an environment of development it certainly deserves to have a well organized, well spread-out and easily accessible public library system for its population. Unfortunately the present facilities are much below the requirements and are found to be available to not more than 12-15 % of the people in the city.

6.1 Proposed Public Library Development Model:

 Main features of the proposed Public Library Model are as   explained below:

6.1.1   System and its Structure:

The proposed system would consist of: NCT Central Library -1; District Libraries-11 (one in each of the 11 districts); Branch Libraries-75 (one such library to serve a population of about 2 lakh population); and other services to be provided by Book Mobile Vans, special branches for special categories of users such as hospital patients, physically disabled and others. The number and location of such service units would be dependent upon the specific requirements of any particular area in the locality.

6.1.2   Public Library Legislation: Role of the Union Government:

This aspect has been debated and discussed at several forums and the model suggested here is different from the model being followed in the other States in the country. It is found that as per the present position the Government of NCT as also the three Municipal Corporations of Delhi (as a result of recent trifurcation of earlier Municipal Corporation of Delhi) have hardly been playing any significant role in the field of public library service in the capital city. **Delhi Public Library,** which is under the over all administrative and financial control of the Union Government Ministry of Culture is the

only one providing public library services to a fairly good per centage of users in the city. It is therefore proposed that the Public Library service in NCT of Delhi should be the responsibility of the Union Government and necessary legislation in this regard be enacted by the Parliament of India. Already services such as Police and Land Development are being provided by the Union Government by enactment of the required legislation through Parliament of India and therefore there is a good precedent for doing the same for Public Library service as well. It has been proposed that the required recurring financial support may be calculated on per capita basis of Rs. 50/ which would calculate to an mount of about Rs. 90 crore as per the present census figure of the NCT. It would also be quite useful if public-private partnership (PPP) concept would as well be used in this regard. Unlike several States Library cess on property is not being recommended here because Delhi has a multiple number of local bodies and levying such a cess and its management may involve several administrative difficulties.

It must also be added that in due course of time it is quite likely that the NCT Public Library system would be further extended in its geographical coverage by including the National Capital Region (NCR) as well which falls under the jurisdiction of different States such as Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. In that situation it would be Comparatively much easier to extend the scope of legislation passed by the Parliament of India rather than the one passed by the NCT Legislature or any other legislative body..

6.1.3 Other Aspects:

Several other aspects such as document collection, services to be provided, physical facilities and ICT applications would have to be developed by taking into account various standards and practices found useful for this purpose.

6.2 Implementation Strategy:

It is strongly suggested that the best way to implement the proposed Development Plan would be to up-grade the existing **Delhi Public Library System** which has a fairly good net-work of library services in the NCT of Delhi. It would be necessary that as a preliminary step a comprehensive study be made of the existing facilities, services and infrastructure, etc of the Delhi Public Library and its upgrading and expansion may be planned and implemented in a pragmatic manner. Also, a study of some of the existing public libraries such as Hardyal Municipal Public Library and Marwari Public Library be made and if found to be viable they could also be integrated in the proposed System.

7. Need for User Surveys

An essential component of an effective public library service is that it must have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of its user population which may include aspects such as their: reading interests and habits; use of computers and Interne etc;

evaluation with regard to existing public library collections, services and library staff. The conduct of user surveys periodically is therefore not only essential but of great help in developing library services to meet the needs of the users in the best possible manner.

Such surveys are usually carried out as essential routine matters in almost all developed countries as also in certain developing countries such as Singapore and Philippines. It is however noticed that in this country in general no such surveys are being carried out at present. While embarking upon a recent Project it was felt necessary by me and my Team members that we should conduct a user survey on a regular basis which provided us a proper picture about the users and their public library needs. The finding of this Survey entitled **Need for Public Library Service in Delhi: Citizens' Response (2011)** have been analysed and discussed in a separate volume which is part of a **2-volume** set entitled: **Public Library Service in Delhi: Present Status and Development Plan (2010-2020).** These volumes have been submitted to Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundations, Kolkata with a strong recommendation that the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation, Kolkata and State Library Authorities must, in future, make the conduct of such surveys mandatory for Public Library systems in the country. The **Survey Report** mentioned here, when published, may be used as a good example and serve as a starting point for such surveys in future in the country.

8. Role of National Mission on Libraries (NML)

It is quite important and relevant to mention here that the Government of India Ministry of Culture appointed a National Mission in 2012 and one of the important areas under the purview of the Mission would be the promotion and development of public library services at different levels in the country. It was formally inaugurated by the Hon'ble President of India at Rashtrapti Bhawan on February 3, 2014. The four major areas identified in order of priority : (1) creation of a national virtual library of India; (2) setting of model libraries with emphasis on (i) 35 State/UT Central Libraries; 35 District Libraries; and 6 libraries presently under the Ministry of Culture; (3) qualitative and quantitative surveys of libraries in the country; and, capacity building in the professional and non-professional staff working in public libraries, in particular in the field of ICT applications and use. Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation, Kolkata has been designated as the nodal agency for looking after the administrative, financial and other functional requirements of the NML.

The need for a National Mission on Libraries was always felt strongly and the National Knowledge Commission (2005) had recommended the appointment of such a Mission in one of its Recommendations. It is earnestly hoped that the Mission in collaboration with the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation, Kolkata would evolve strategies to implement its various policies and programmes including the enactment and implementation of public library legislation in the country. Further, it should also seek and encourage the involvement of different stake holders, including the public and

private sectors, so as to make the public library movement in the country really vibrant and effective.

9. Conclusion

While concluding, I once again convey my sincere thanks to Delhi Library Association and its office bearers for providing me an opportunity to talk on a subject which has always been very close to my heart. Being an important Library Association, with a long and rich history, it would be quite useful if the Association would take up necessary steps and formulate an action plan action so as to spread the message about the need for a proper public library system in this great metropolis and its implementation at an early stage.

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Professor P.B. Mangla had his higher education at three prestigious Universities, viz. Panjab University (Chandigarh), University of Delhi and Columbia University, New York (USA). He obtained his Master's degree in **History** from Panjab University, and, degrees in Library & Information Science from the University of Delhi and then Columbia University, New York. At the University of Delhi he was a student of Dr. S.R. Ranganathan, father of library science and library movement in India. While at Columbia University he had the opportunity to study and do research under the guidance of well- known scholars of the world. He was a **Rockefeller Foundation Scholar** for his studies at Columbia University during 1960s.

Presently he is a **Tagore National Fellow** under the **Government of India Ministry of Culture** since 2010. This Fellowship Scheme has been instituted by the Union Government in connection with the 150th Birth Anniversary of the great India luminary **Rabinder Nath Tagore.** This is a prestigious Fellowship and funded generously to be at par **with the basic pay of a Central University Vice-chancellor**. **Till now he is the only academic who has been honored with this Fellowship in the country in his field of specialization and has been called as a 'legendary scholar and authority in the field of Library Science'.**

Earlier, he served the University of Delhi for almost four decades out of which 29 years as a Professor of Library & Information Science. He had the distinction of being appointed as a full-fledged Professor at the age of 36 years which was a matter of real achievement in his career. During his tenure in the University of Delhi he held several senior and prominent positions such as Head of the Department; Dean, Faculty of Arts; Dean, Post-Graduate (Evening) Studies (which had an enrolment of about 1500 post-graduate students); and, Chairman, Board of Research Studies (H). He was a Member, **Court of the University of Delhi** almost for three decades, as also, of its **Executive Council (EC), and, Academic Council (AC)** which are the highest policy-decision making bodies of the University, for several years. He functioned as Chairman, Governing Body, of two prestigious Colleges of the University of Delhi, namely, **Deshbandhu College**, and **Dyal Singh College**, for several years.

He worked in Iran as an Expert and, in Guyana (West Indies) as a Unesco Consultant for several years. He has already visited about 50 countries for professional consultancy or assignments.

In India he has been closely associated with several Expert Committees/Working Groups, Selection Committees, etc. of the Government of India, State/UT Governments, Planning Commission, UPSC, UGC, CSIR, DST, Universities, and other Public and Private sector organizations. To mention a few, till recently, he was a Member, Research Council,

National Institute of Science Communication and Resource Centre (NISCAIR) under CSIR; Working Group on Libraries of the **National Knowledge Commission**; Board of Management, National Library (Kolkata), Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) (Kolkata), and, presently he is continuing as a Member, Delhi Library Board and RRRLF. The last three bodies are under the overall charge of the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India; He was President, Indian Library Association (1981-1983); and Vice-President, IFLA (The Hague) (1985-1991).

He has delivered prestigious Lectures in India and abroad and has been honoured with Awards, Citations etc., nationally and internationally. To give as an example**, in 2003 he was invited by the UNO to be one of the 5 Speakers from different parts of the world for a Conference held at the UNO Headquarters, New York.** He was honoured with Fellowship by the Indian Library Association (FILA) in 1983 and Membership, the Institute of Information Scientists (M.I. Inf. Sc.) London in 1979.

He has published books, research papers, and edited professional journals, in India and abroad. **He has a deep scholarship and indeed vast knowledge of the world of books,** book publishing (print and non-print) and related trade of knowledge industry.

Besides his academic and professional scholarship Prof. Mangla indeed has a vast experience of educational administration and policy matters at different levels, both in India and abroad, for which he has a commendable expertise.

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