

## Libraries, Past to Present: A Change

S. S. Joshi

### Abstract

Library is a place where books are kept for reading, study or reference. The main function of the Library is to collect, preserve and disseminate knowledge to the society. In the early periods the libraries were considered as the store house of books where books were kept in closed access system under key and lock. The Librarian was thought to be the custodian of these books. In the presented scenario, the situation has been totally changed. The libraries are observing open access system in which users are free to use any of library material. The role of the Librarian is considered as a manager/disseminator of knowledge. Libraries are fully automated. Electronic material is replacing the print material gradually. Softwares are used for housekeeping operations. RFID and bar code technology is proved to be boon for users and staff as well.

**Keywords:** Library; Software; Automation.

### Introduction

Libraries are considered as the backbone for the development of a society. These are temple of knowledge which lays strong foundation of the youth of any country. Collection, preservation and dissemination of knowledge are main objectives of the library. The concept of libraries has totally been changed in present era. Initially libraries were thought as the place where knowledge is stored in closed access. Whenever user visit library, before consulting material they were supposed to talk to the library personal for getting the same. The Librarian was thought to be the custodian of these reading books. With the passage of time and advancement of technology the concept has totally been changed. The libraries are observing open access system in which users are free to use any of library material. The role

of the Librarian is considered as a manager/disseminator of knowledge. Regarding libraries, S.R. Ranganathan's concept of five laws clearly depicts the philosophy of libraries.

- Books are for use.
- Every reader his/her book.
- Every books its reader.
- Save the time of the readers
- Library is a growing organism.

### Definitions

ALA glossary of Library and Information Science has defined library as "A collection of materials organized to provide physical bibliography and intellectual access to a target group with a staff that is trained to provide services and programs related to the information needs of the target groups".[1]

According to Ranganathan a library is "A public institution or establishment charged with the care of a collection of books, the duty of making them accessible to those who require the use of them and the task of converting every person in its neighborhood into a habitual library users and reader of books".[1]

Though the first public library was established in Athens in 330 BC, yet in

---

**Author's Affiliation:** \*Deputy Librarian, Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology, Hisar - 125001, Haryana, India.

**Reprint's request:** Dr. S. S. Joshi, Deputy Librarian, Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology, Hisar - 125001, Haryana, India.

E-mail: ssjoshi99@yahoo.com

(Received on 10.12.2013, accepted on 15.12.2013)

presented scenario the public library system has not developed up to the maximum extent because only few States have passed and implemented library legislation. For the development of libraries, Indian Government has established a Raja Ram Mohan Roy library founding in Colcutta. The main aim of this foundation is to develop the libraries in India, so that the knowledge may be disseminated effectively.

### *Type of Libraries*

Broadly libraries can be divided in four categories i.e. Public Library, special Library, academic library and national library. Academic library can be further divided into:

1. School Library
2. College Library
3. University Library.

### *Public Library*

This is a library which is maintained from the public funds and free to use by the members of the society. The objectives are as under:

- Free for all.
- Educates the member of the society.
- Preserve the heritage of the society.
- Recreation for members.
- Support the cultural activity.

### *Special Library*

A special library is that library which deals with the reading material of a specific subject. Everything is special in such type of libraries such as:

- Special reading material.
- Special infrastructure
- Special users.

### *Objectives*

- To satisfy the informational thrust of

specific community.

- To provide subject specific material
- To provide current information.
- To provide ILL services.
- To provide abstracting services.
- To provide indexing services.

### *Academic Library*

This library can be further divided in to school Library, college library and university library.

### *School Library*

The fate of any country depends on the school library. The schools are responsible for the development of any nation. It is initial stage for proper growth of children.

### *Objectives*

- To add knowledge of the students.
- To enhance reading habit.
- To satisfy the informational thrust of the students.
- To provide social training.
- Recreational activities.

### *College Library*

This is a library which is established in the college to satisfy the educational needs of the college students and the faculty.

### *Objectives*

- To provide educational material to the college students and faculty.
- To promote reading habits.
- Inter library loan facility.
- To provide the reading material for home

use.

- To make the students and faculty members to be the regular visitors of the library.

### *University Library*

University libraries are thought to be the soul of the University. The main function is to promote research activities in university.

#### *Objectives:-*

- To promote research activities.
- Conservation and dissemination of knowledge.
- To inculcate reading habits.
- Extension services.

### *National Library*

It keeps and preserves all the significant documents published in a nation. The national library of India is situated in Kolkata.

#### *Objectives*

- To work as a national information center
- Produce national bibliography
- To collect and preserve the national literature.
- Produce a union catalogue
- To provide leadership to the libraries

### *Old Trend*

In the early period libraries did not attain a good reputation in the society. These were merely store houses. The librarians were thought to be the custodian of the books. Traditional methods used in these libraries were cumbersome and time consuming. Some of the following main techniques were used for charging/discharging system:

### *Day Book System*

This was the first issue system adopted by the libraries. In this system register was maintained by library staff for all transactions with following columns.

Sr. No.	Date	Detail of member	Detail of reading material	Remarks, if any
---------	------	------------------	----------------------------	-----------------

The date wise record was maintained in this system. But it was very difficult to ascertain due date of a book, to whom the book has been issued and how many issued.

### *Ledger System*

Keeping in view the growth of library the Day book system was replaced by the ledger system.

Following columns were used in the ledger:

Sr. No.	Date of issue	Author	Title	Accession No.	Date of return	Signature of dealing hand
---------	---------------	--------	-------	---------------	----------------	---------------------------

#### *Advantages*

- Single page was allocated to every user.
- Identity card was not required.

#### *Disadvantages*

- Quantity of books in circulation cannot be ascertained.
- Number of due books cannot be ascertained.
- Due date cannot be ascertained.
- Not a permanent record.
- Chances of misuse.

The ledger system lost its credibility in the absence of instant retrieval of circulation statistics. The same was replaced by the card system.

### *Card System*

In this system cards were used for keeping issue record. These cards were arranged date

wise and it was easy to retrieve data. Earlier there was a one card system in operation, which was replaced by two card system in later stage. Browne issue system was most popular two card system at that time.

#### *Browne Issue System*

This system was developed by N.E. Browne who was the librarian in Boston USA. In this system due date slip of 5"x 3" size, having following detail was pasted on the last page of the book and the book pocket of 5"x 3" was pasted inside the book.

Due Date	Date of Issue
----------	---------------

Name of library                      Accession No.

The book card of the size 4"x 2" was prepared and inserted in the book pocket. This

Call No.
Accession No.
Author.....
Title.....

book card contained the following details.

In this system tickets were issued to the readers as per their entitlement. The size of the ticket remained 3"x2".

#### *Check-out Procedure*

Suppose a user wanted to get the books issued. He picks the books from the concerned shelf and brings the same to the counter official for issue along with the number of tickets as per requirement. The counter official pick the book card out of the book pocket and the same was inserted in the ticket submitted by the student for issue purpose. Then these tickets were arranged date wise in the tray as per Call No. / Accession No.

#### *Check-in Procedure*

Users who wanted to return the book in the library present the book at the circulation counter for the return. The counter official

check the data from date slip and pick the ticket along with book card out of the tray. The card is again inserted in the returned book and book is placed on the concerned shelf. In case the counter official found that the book received after due date, the fine was calculated as per library rule.

#### *Advantages*

- Simple issue procedure.
- Easy to retrieve the tickets.
- Circulation statistics could be maintained easily.
- Books could be reserved.
- Signature of the member not required.

#### *Disadvantages*

- In case, the card is lost no permanent issue record was available.
- It was not possible to ascertain to whom a particular book issued.
- Waste lot of space for maintaining issue record.
- Charging trays were difficult to manage.
- Filing of cards took lot of time.[2]

#### *Modern Scenario*

1. *Automated/Digital Libraries:* In the present scenario libraries are moving towards automation/digitization. Many software are available in the market to automate the library. University Grant Commission is also providing (SOUL) software for universities libraries through INFLEBNET. The automatied system of circulation has totally over powered the old system. In this system if any user wants to return a book to library. He presents the same to the counter official for return. Counter official scans the barcode and process the same. On a single click the book is returned from the account of the users. In case of issue of book, the barcoded membership card is scanned prior to scanning the book. The detail of the user appears on the screen. There after bar code of

book is scanned and on a single click book is processed for check out. This is a simple procedure and save the time of the members and the staff as well. In digital library data is stored in digital format. User can access the data while sitting anywhere in the world. Gradually e- material is replacing the printed material. It is making the information retrieval easier for the library users.[3]

2. *Electronic Resources:* Gradually electronic material is replacing the print material. INFLIBNET through INFONET programme of UGC is providing free access of online resources to university libraries. Through SHODHGANGA, INFLIBNET is providing access to e-theses submitted by the universities nationwide. Facility for access of e-resources in colleges has also been provided through N-List programme.[4]

3. *Electronic Databases:* Number of electronic databases is available in every subject to simply the research. For example some of the databases in the field of Economics, management and commerce have been listed below:

- Emerald management Xtra 175
- Economic outlook
- States of India
- PROWESS of CMIE

4. *Barcode Technology:* Barcode is a machine readable code which requires ledger scanner to read the data. It is a series of vertical lines with varying width and space. These bars and space represent different characters. This technology has superseded the traditional technology in libraries. In automated libraries most of the activities are performed with the help of the computers. The main function in the libraries is issue and return of books. In the earlier period many systems just as day book system, ledger system, Browne System were used to undertake the issue return activity. These systems were time consuming and it was also not possible in these systems to

know as to whom the book has been issued and how many times it has been issued. Even users were also not satisfied with this system. Library staff was also busy updating ledgers or arranging reader's tickets in the tray. The efficiency of the library staff has been increased with the emergence of this technology. It has also made the library operation very simple and less time consuming. Now most of the software in the field of library and information science are equipped with this technology.

#### *Benefits*

- Data can be identified quickly.
- Easy to operate.
- No technical skill is required.
- Accuracy

5. *RFID Technology:* RFID technology has been used in the libraries to replace the barcode technology. With the technology advancement, the libraries are always keen to provide better services to their clientele. The RFID has served the purpose. This technology is useful in the libraries due to the following reasons:

- Efficacy in check in and check out.
- Information management.
- Library security.
- Saving of time.
- Reduced the duplicity.[5]

#### **Conclusion**

Due to the technological advancement mentality of the librarians and the users are changing day by day. Librarians know that they are playing the role of information manager. Their objective is not to provide the tools of information rather information itself. User wants instant information from the library. Old modes of circulation system have been replaced by automated circulation system. RFID technology is attracting more and more libraries. These days' electronic resources are

replacing the print material. User need not to go anywhere in search of information. They can get the desired information on single click while sitting anywhere. Government is also promoting the use of electronic resources. INFLIBNET center of UGC is providing free access of electronic resources to the students and faculty members of universities and colleges. Funds are given to automate the libraries. The challenge before the libraries is that they should adopt the latest technologies and promote the use of e-resources. Due to the financial crisis only few libraries are using latest technologies. Government should provide adequate proportional funds to libraries so that the technology may be used up to the maximum extent.

## References

1. Kumar Krishan. Library organization. New Delhi: Vani; 1987, 1-7.
2. Mittal RL. Library administration. New Delhi: Metropolitan; 1969, 521-585.
3. Ross Samues. Digital preservation, archival science and methodological foundations for digital libraries. 2012; 17(1): 43-68.
4. <http://www.inflibnet.ac.in/> (accessed on 9-12-13).
5. Dawes Trevor A. Is RFID right for your library? *Journal Access Services*. 2004; 2(4):7-13.