

# Status of University Libraries in India



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## INTRODUCTION

India officially the Republic of India is a country that belongs to ancient times and occupies a greater part of South Asia. In area, India is the seventh largest country and second largest by population and boasts to have most populous democracy in the world. It is a constitutional republic comprising of twenty eight states, which have enormous degree of powers and control over its own affairs; six union territories and the Delhi national capital territory which includes New Delhi, the capital of India. India has shown substantial signs of progress in various domains since its independence (1947). Today, India ranks tenth among the most industrialized countries of the world.

## Location, Geography, and Population

Indian subcontinent is a peninsula which is surrounded by Arabian Sea in the south west, Bay of Bengal in the south east and Indian Ocean in the south. India measures 3214 km from north to south and 2933 km from east to west and extends between latitudes 8°4'N and 37°6'N and longitude 68°7'E and 97°25'E. Indian subcontinent is set apart from other parts of Asia by the Himalayan ranges. India covers an area 3,287,263 sq. km which is seventh worldwide and has a literacy rate of 65.38%. Home to ancient Indus valley civilization India has been regarded of prime importance due to its commercial and cultural wealth. Throughout centuries Indian inhabitants have developed a rich intellectual life in the fields of mathematics, astronomy and architecture.

## Government

India is a sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic republic which follows parliamentary system of government. India's central government is divided into three distinct but interrelated branches: legislative, executive

and judiciary. The constitutional head of the executive branch of the union is the president but the real executive powers lies with the council of ministers. Governor as a representative of the president is the head of the executive body while union territories are administered by the administrator appointed by the president.

## History

India's glorious history is intimately tied with its geographical location. Indian history erupts from the Indus Valley civilization, more precisely referred to as the Harappa civilization (2500<sub>B.C.</sub> – 1500<sub>B.C.</sub>). India after 1500<sub>B.C.</sub> was invaded by the Aryans who came out of the north who brought with them strong cultural traditions which miraculously still remains in force. India was later on unified under the Gupta dynasty during which the northern parts of India touched the skies as far as administration and the Hindu religion was concerned which has been referred as India's golden age. During the eighth century Mughals invaded India and ruled India for 150 years. From mid eighteenth to mid nineteenth century India was annexed by the British East India Company. British rule faced strong opposition in the form of 1857 revolt which led to the first war of Independence (1857 – 1858). In 1947 India wrestled its independence from the British rule led by many freedom fighters and the visionary and non-violent ideas of Mahatma Gandhi. Acquisition of India's independence paved the way for division of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan.

## Education

In ancient times, Indian education was based on Gurukula system of education where anyone who wished to study went to a teacher's house, lived with the teacher and was taught. Modern school system was brought by Lord Macaulay in 1830s. Post-independence (1947) various initiatives were undertaken to improve the

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education system: National Policy of Education (1986), Programme of Action (1992) etc. India today is the second largest higher education network in the world. A national pattern exists with 12 years of schooling that consists of eight years of elementary education, five years of primary and three years of middle school. To promote higher studies universities are setup by the central government by means of legislation while colleges through state government or the initiatives of the private bodies. There are three tiers of universities: Central or State Universities funded by MHRD (Ministry of Human Resource Development) and state government, Deemed Universities and the Institutions of national importance. The academic programmes offered in India are: vocational, diploma, undergraduate, post graduate and doctoral levels. For higher studies in health sciences, engineering and technology, science and management India has established higher seats of learning known as AIIMS (All India Institute of Medical Science), IIT (Indian Institute of Technology), IIS (Indian Institute of Sciences) and IIM (Indian Institute of Management).

## BACKGROUND

### Libraries

The word library is derived from French word “librairie” and latin word “liber” meaning books. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica latinized Greek word, “bibliotheca,” is the origin of the word for library in German, Russian, and the Romance languages. In essence, a library is an organised collection of information resources made accessible to a defined community for referencing or borrowing. Libraries have been considered of prime importance since a long time. Efforts of library pioneers like Ranganathan provided sound theoretical foundations as well as international recognition. Ranganathan is considered as the father of Indian librarianship who articulated the concepts of library practises: classification, cataloguing, abstracting, indexing and librametrics. Ranganathan's five law of library science formed the basis of the philosophy of library science in India. They are 1) Books are for use 2) Every reader his/her book 3) Every book its reader 4) Save the time of the reader 5) Library is a growing organism. There are national libraries in India: National

library Calcutta, National Science library Delhi (NISCAIR), National Medical library (AIIMS), National library for Deaf and Dumb Mysore, National library for blinds Dehradun. In addition to National Library Calcutta, Delhi Public library, Connemara Public Library and Bombay Central Library serve as the legal depository libraries. Public library development has been strong in the last fifty years as a result of proper legislations and nineteen states have enacted library legislation till date (Table 1).

Over a period of time India has also formed committees to resolve the problems of libraries. Table 2 lists a summary of various committees formed in India.

Moreover, in order to foster resource sharing Indian government has laid emphasis on the creation of library networks and consortia. Table 3 presents a snapshot of library networks and consortia available in India.

Recently the central government in India has launched Rs 1000 crore project that attempts to link digitally nearly 9000 libraries across the country under National Mission on Libraries (NML).

*Table 1. Library legislation in India*

S.NO	STATE	YEAR	LIBRARY CESS
1.	Madras	1948	5 paise
2.	Andhra Pradesh	1960	8 paise
3.	Karnataka	1965	3 paise
4.	Maharashtra	1967	No
5.	West Bengal	1979	No
6.	Manipur	1988	No
7.	Kerala	1989	Yes
8.	Haryana	1989	Yes
9.	Mizoram	1993	No
10.	Goa	1993	No
11.	Gujarat	2000	Yes
12.	Orissa	2002	Yes
13.	Rajasthan	2005	Yes
14.	Uttar Pradesh	2005	Yes
15.	Uttarakhand	2005	Yes
16.	Chattisgarh	2007	
17.	Pondicherry	2007	
18.	Bihar	2008	
19.	Arunachal Pradesh	2009	

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