

Chapter 37

Library Resources and Services in Tamilnadu State Central Library (Connemara Public Library): A Study

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ABSTRACT

It is a known fact that Chennai city has a well-defined place when talking about landmark buildings, which have gone down the annals of history- Connemara library, certainly a pride of Madras is not only heaven for book lovers and research Scholars, the building by its sheer architectural beauty and marvel acquires a special significance as part of the history of Madras City. Public library is largely regarded as the People's University. It has tremendous developments in India from the early period to till date at various stages. Most of the Indian states now have free public library services to develop the people of India at different levels, which can be stated as below briefly. Majority of the users prefer to search documents directly from the stack room. The main purpose of visiting the library by the users is to prepare for complete examinations and some other purposes are to study in the library and to update their subject knowledge. The general book services provided by the library are highly useful. The Reference services provided by the library are highly useful. The users are satisfied with the information provided in the library. All the services available on the library except latest collections are found to be at satisfactory level. Nearly 7.5 lakhs of collection of books are available in the library. Selection of books is done by book selection committee. Nearly four hundred books are issued daily to the public. The users can retain the book for a maximum of 14 days. The users can renew the books for another three times either through phone or in person. A minimum amount of Rupees two per week is charged as overdue charge.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-3914-8.ch037

INTRODUCTION

During Vedic times, the pupils stayed in the *guru-gruha* for several years for education. Since ancient times, India is being very much pertinent in search of knowledge and wisdom. Oral communication was the best means amongst the people of India and writing was not available. "The earliest written and recorded materials found in India are the inscriptions on stone pillars of King Asoka (300 BC); these inscriptions could be called the first outside open libraries". Later, *Ashrams* came into existence in India and students study under the supervision of well-known teachers. They kept many manuscripts for use of the teachers and students as well as for the visitors. Many students joined ashrams and such big ashrams were known as *vidyapeeth*, where numbers of teachers are engaged to teach the students. These educational institutions collected many different manuscripts and other materials which can help in their teaching and daily routine. They kept and preserved carefully. "The reading materials, of course, related to many subjects formed the source material for transmitting knowledge in different streams of education and culture. The collections might be likened to modern libraries since they were carefully maintained and extensively used by students and teachers alike". Such *ashrams* or *vidyapeeths*, where manuscripts and other reading materials were reserved, may be regarded as a kind of library as they serve information and knowledge to the students and community in different ways. Pandey S K Sharma stated that; "In India, since the ancient times libraries have been functioning as light houses for those who wanted to read and to extend the boundaries of various disciplines. References are available to prove that Nalanda University (in Bihar) had its own multistoried library in 600 AD with massive collection of manuscripts.

Muslims mostly rule the Medieval Period of India. Historically, it is also known as Mughal Period. The Muslim rulers made great contributions to Indian culture and libraries played a significant role in the sociocultural development of the nation. "The period of Mughal is considered as the golden period of Indian history for its educational, literary, and library activities".

Babur, king of Kabul invaded India and annexed Delhi to his kingdom. "He established the first Mughal Imperial Library in 1526". Babur inherited manuscripts from his father and kept in his library and also collected books from different sources of his kingdom. Babur died in 1530 and was succeeded by his son Humayun. Humayun much lived in Agra and established library in his palace. He set up a library at Agra Fort, which was managed by Lal Beg. In his library, he kept books, gilded pen cases, portfolios, picture books and beautiful works of calligraphy. After the death of Humayun, his son, Akbar, succeeded him in 1536. Akbar is regarded as one of the greatest Mughal king. Akbar improved the management of library with some technical works. He appointed Sheik Faizi to manage and control library services. Akbar was very interest in manuscripts and appointed calligraphers to copy good manuscripts. He established a separate library for women at Fatehpur Sikri and made great improvement to the library. At the time of his death in 1605, the Imperial Library has twenty-four thousand books. Jahangir, another ruler of Mughal period, made a law that when a wealthy man died heirless, the property should be used for building and repairing schools, monasteries, libraries, and other institutions. Some wealthy and scholars, like Abdul Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, Shaik Faizi, Gulbadan Begum and ruler of Mysore and Jaipur also have their private libraries. Some Hindu learning centers also have libraries. "The libraries of these centers contain huge collections of manuscripts on religion and philosophy as well as other subjects like medicine, science and history". Christian missionaries have also contributed for the libraries since the coming of Vasco da Gama in India.

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