THREE HUNDRED TENTH REPORT

Functioning of Central Libraries in the country

(Presented to the Rajya Sabha on 3rd February, 2022)
(Laid on the Table of Lok Sabha on 3rd February, 2022)
PARLIAMENT OF INDIA
RAJYA SABHA

DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT, TOURISM AND CULTURE

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RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

February, 2022/ Magha, 1943 (Saka)
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*To be appended*
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

(2021-22)
(Constituted on 13th September, 2021)

1. Shri T.G. Venkatesh - Chairman

RAJYA SABHA

2. Shri Prasanna Acharya
3. Shrimati Priyanka Chaturvedi
4. Shri Sambhaji Chhatrapati
5. Shri Shaktisinh Gohil
6. Shri Md. Nadimul Haque
7. Shri Jugalsinh Lokhandwala
8. Dr. Sonal Mansingh
9. Shri Tiruchi Siva
10. Shri Vinay Dinu Tendulkar

LOK SABHA

11. Shri Anto Antony
12. Shri Margani Bharat
13. Shri Tapir Gao
14. Shri Rahul Kaswan
15. Shri Ramesh Chandra Majhi
16. Shri Sunil Baburao Mendhe
17. Shri K. Muraleedharan
18. Shri S. S. Palanimanickam
19. Shri Chhedi Paswan
20. Shri Kamlesh Paswan
21. Shri Sunil Kumar Pintu
22. Shri Prince Raj
23. Shri Tirath Singh Rawat
24. Shrimati Mala Roy
25. Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy
26. Shri Dushyant Singh
27. Shri Rajbahadur Singh
28. Shri Ramdas C. Tadas
29. Shri Manoj Tiwari
30. Shri Krupal Balaji Tumane
31. Shri Dinesh Chandra Yadav

SECRETARIAT

Shri Puneet Kumar, Joint Secretary
Shri P. Narayanan, Director
Shri Dinesh Singh, Additional Director
Shri Rajendra Prasad Shukla, Additional Director
Shri Ranajit Chakraborty, Under Secretary
Shri Gaurav Singh Gahlain, Assistant Committee Officer
INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture, having been authorized by the Committee to present on its behalf, do hereby present this Three Hundred Tenth Report on ‘Functioning of Central Libraries in the country’.

2. The Committee heard the views of the Secretary, Ministry of Culture on the subject on 1st November, 2021. The Committee heard the views of Additional Secretary, Ministry of Culture; Prof. Alok Tripathi, Additional Director General; Archaeological Survey of India; Shri T. J. Alone, Joint Director General; Archaeological Survey of India; Adv. A.D.N. Rao, Senior Advocate on the panel of Supreme Court of India; and Adv. Jayant Tripathi, President Legal Advisor to ASI, on the subject on 9th December, 2021. The Committee heard the views of the Secretary, Ministry of Culture on the subject on 6th January, 2022.

3. The Committee wishes to express its thanks to the officers of Ministry of Culture and Domain Experts for placing before the Committee, the material and information desired in connection with the subject and for clarifying the points raised by the Members.


NEW DELHI;
January 31, 2022
Magha 11, 1943 (Saka)

(T.G. Venkatesh)
Chairman,
Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture, Rajya Sabha
# ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOB</td>
<td>Delivery of Books</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSL</td>
<td>Central Secretariat Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>DL</td>
<td>District Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIT</td>
<td>Indian Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KBOPL</td>
<td>Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCERT</td>
<td>National Council of Educational Research and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDLI</td>
<td>National Digital Library of India</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NML</td>
<td>National Mission on Libraries</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>Public–Private Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>RRRLF</td>
<td>Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCERT</td>
<td>State Council of Educational Research And Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCL</td>
<td>State Central Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UT</td>
<td>Union Territory</td>
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</table>
Libraries exist in our country from ancient times. The world famous universities like Nalanda and Taxasila had magnificent libraries with a massive collection of manuscripts covering the universe of knowledge. However, the modern concept of public library has its origin in the provincial and British colonial period when many public libraries got established across the country. In the post-independence era, the main focus was on building knowledge society. Public libraries were considered to be very helpful in achieving this goal. Public library is a catalyst to the society.

2. A public library acts as a social institution which caters to the information needs of the society without any discrimination. In a developing country like ours, special emphasis is laid on literacy, adult education, formal and informal education. The UNESCO defines Public Library as "the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision making and cultural development of the individual and social groups".

3. Given the crucial role played by the Central Libraries across the country in dissemination of knowledge among students, research scholars as well as the general public, the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture decided to take up the subject ‘Functioning of Central Libraries in the country’ for detailed examination and report. The Committee had its deliberation with the Secretary, Ministry of Culture on this subject on 1st November, 2021 and 6th January, 2022. The Committee also heard various representatives of the Ministry and domain experts on the subject in its meeting held on 9th December, 2021.

4. In India, the public library scenario has improved considerably during the post-independence period. The Delhi public library was founded in 1951 as the first UNESCO Public Library Pilot Project under the joint auspices of UNESCO and Government of India. The purpose of this library was to adapt “modern techniques to Indian conditions” and to serve as a model public library for Asia.

5. As per the Seventh Schedule under Article 246 of Constitution of India, Libraries is enlisted in the State List. Ministry of Culture, however, because of historical and legal reasons, has been the custodian of select major public libraries of national importance in the country.

6. The following are the 7 Libraries/Organisations financed by Ministry of Culture. Budget is allocated to these organisations/offices every financial year for their administration and to ensure organisational goal:
1) National Library, Kolkata (Subordinate Office)
2) Central Reference Library, Kolkata (Subordinate Office)
3) Central Secretariat Library, Delhi
4) Delhi Public Library, Delhi (Autonomous org.)
5) Rampur Raza Library, Rampur, Uttar Pradesh (Autonomous Org.)
6) Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna, Bihar (Autonomous Org.)
7) Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation, Kolkata (Autonomous Org.)

**National Library, Kolkata**


8. The library is designated to collect, disseminate and preserve printed material produced within India. All forms of published materials in India are to be deposited at the National Library under the Delivery of Books and Newspapers (Public Libraries) Act, 1954, subsequently amended in 1956 (Newspapers and periodicals). It is also a legal depository library of the country and a largest repository body of Government Of India. It is a storehouse of 26,41,615 printed books, more than 125000 e-books, 7000 e-journals, about 88162 maps, 5744 manuscripts, 147331 bound printed periodicals titles, 598 foreign print journal, 905 newspaper titles comprising of more that 11000 newspapers bound volumes, 104388 microfilms roles, 97000 microfiches and over 21425 digitized books covering over 72 lakh pages.

9. The National Library, Kolkata is one of the four designated libraries entitled to receive a copy of every publication published anywhere in the country, under the Delivery of Books and Newspapers (Public Libraries) Act, 1954. The National Library is a permanent depository of all reading and printed materials produced in India, or written by any foreigner, wherever published and in whatever language both in printed and digital format.

10. One of the domain experts who appeared before the Committee on the subject, commented about this library as under:-

- Federation of Indian Publishers have estimated that more than one lac printed books, journals, monographs, etc., are published in India every year. But the National Library is estimated to receive only about one-third of the publications under DOB Act.
• There is no provision in the National Library yet to receive and create database of digital publication published in the country.
• This means the nation has almost lost its intellectual property of about 65% in printed form and 100% in digital form for more than 50 years.

11. The Committee finds that there is no proper preservation of books/manuscripts in the National Library in printed and digital format. The library is also not receiving copies of printed as well as digital publications published in the country. The Committee finds it extremely important that the Ministry of Culture and National Library, Kolkata come up with a mechanism for collection, preservation of material and digital publications and making them accessible not only to general public but also to posterity since the objective of the National Library being a permanent depository of all reading material produced in India cannot be achieved. It is understood that a project has been submitted to develop Repository of Indian publications ensuring almost 100% of delivery under Delivery of books Act, 1954 amended subsequently in 1956 and 2005. The project has been approved by Ministry of Culture. The Committee would like to know how the Ministry is ensuring this.

12. The well trained and adequate number of staff can play a dominant role in providing effective and efficient services to the users of the public library. At present, there is inadequacy of trained and competent staff to render effective public library services, forcing most services to be operated by semi and non-professional staff, which damages information organization and services. The problem of educated and competent professionals preferring to work in special and academic libraries rather than public libraries, also needs to be resolved. Some of the libraries don't even have administrative staff. The National Library doesn't have a Director General for the last few years. 130 posts in national Library have been abolished.

13. The Committee fails to comprehend how the National Library could be expected to function to its maximum potential when the top-level post of Director-General of the Library has been lying vacant for several years on the run. The Committee recommends that the post of the Director-General post in the National Library should not be kept vacant for such a long time and steps be taken to fill it up immediately. The Committee strongly recommends that urgent action needs to be taken for filling up the human resource requirements of the National Library.

14. The Committee also recommends that the Executive Head of Library should be an eminent Library and information Science professional with strong technical
background. He/she may be appointed in the grade of Director General at-least for three years for taking up the responsibility.

CENTRAL SECRETARIAT LIBRARY, DELHI
15. Central Secretariat Library (CSL), Ministry of Culture (MoC) is one of the largest Government Libraries in the country. CSL’s resources are an amalgamation of number of libraries of pre-independent India and many other old institutions such as Imperial Secretariat Library. Indian and Foreign Official Documents Sections are a valuable part of its core collection. It performs the function of a Secretariat Library with its collection of Government Reports and Gazettes.

16. Central Secretariat Library mainly caters to the needs of all the Ministries/Departments of the Government of India. Non-official users such as research scholars, academicians, students and others can also become a member of this Library. As on date, total collection of the library is 8.41 lakh documents which include books, government publications, reports and gazettes.

17. The Committee notes that Central Secretariat Library, a premier library situated in the heart of the capital, is a big attraction for politicians, bureaucrats and scholars. In view of its locational advantage, the Committee is of the view that CSL should undertake the role of advising decision makers on matters of library information services. The Committee also desires that CSL should play a lead role to coordinate with national and international agencies, associations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), publishers and other stakeholders for the development of library services in the country and for deriving benefit from huge collections of Government reports and gazettes.

RAJA RAMMOHUN ROY LIBRARY FOUNDATION, KOLKATA (RRRLF) (Autonomous Org.)

18. Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF), was set up in May 1972 with the objective to promote and support the public library movement in the country, providing financial and technical assistance for development of Public Library System and Services under its schemes, inculcating reading habits among the masses with the active cooperation of the State/ U.T. Library Authorities and Voluntary Organizations operating in the field of
library services. RRRLF has its Head Office Located in Kolkata and small zonal offices located in Delhi, Mumbai, Guwahati and Chennai. RRRLF promotes library movement and develop public library service all over the country through the implementation of two types of schemes – Matching and Non-Matching, to provide assistance towards building up of stocks of books and reading materials, modernization of library services, providing furnitures, storage items, digitization etc.

19. Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) was established in May, 1972 by the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India to spread library services all over the country in cooperation with State Governments, Union Territory Administration and Organizations working in the field.

20. It is an autonomous organization fully financed by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. It is registered under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961. The basic idea behind establishing the foundation was to take the library movement not only to small towns and villages but also to the remotest corner, in cooperation with the state governments, union territory administrations and other organizations engaged in the library service and mass education.

21. The Committee, therefore, recommends that central government, state governments and RRRLF should come forward and take initiative for proper development of public library system in India. They should devise a master plan to revive India's public libraries to cater to needs of special groups like children, differently abled, elderly people and ethnic minorities and achieve the goal of information for all.

**DELHI PUBLIC LIBRARY, DELHI (Autonomous Org.)**

22. The Delhi Public Library was established as a part of UNESCO project in 1950 and has developed into a major public library system and serves the entire metropolis. Delhi Public Library provides services to adult and child readers without any gender, religion, caste and class discrimination, as a form of social education. It provides platform to meet the recreational needs of the readers to highlight their hidden talent. The library has a central library, 3 branches, 19 sub-branches, 1 community library, 8 rehabilitation colony libraries, a Braille library, 144 mobile library service centers (including 25 Braille mobile library services) and 33 book reading centers in the capital Delhi. Delhi Public Library is expanding its services as a centre of knowledge dissemination and culture.
23. However Committee notes that membership of Delhi Public Library has witnessed decrease in recent times, one of the reasons being Covid-19 pandemic. It has come down to 1.5 lakh membership from what it was prior to corona period i.e. 1.85 lakh. Being a model library created in 1951 in Asia with UNESCO’s technical, financial assistance, it should lead other libraries in country and extend all possible help in their growth. Delhi Public Library should make all out efforts to increase its membership/viewership in the interest of general public.

RAMPUR RAZA LIBRARY, RAMPUR, UTTAR PRADESH (Autonomous Org.)
24. The Rampur Raza Library was founded by Nawab Faizullah Khan in 1774. It was taken over by the Government of India in 1975 by an Act of Parliament. Honorable Governor of Uttar Pradesh is the Chairman of the Rampur Raza Library Board. The Rampur Raza Library has a collection of approximately 17,000 manuscripts & rare items including 150 illustrated manuscripts with 4000 illustrations, 1,000 miniature paintings in 35 albums, 2,000 specimens of Islamic calligraphy in 84 calligraphy albums, 300 Art objects, 1300 historical coins and approximately 62,000 printed books.

KHUDA BAKHSH ORIENTAL PUBLIC LIBRARY, PATNA, BIHAR (Autonomous Org.)
25. Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library (KBOPL) has evolved out of a personal collection of Mohammad Bakhsh of Chhapra, Bihar. His son, Khuda Bakhsh enriched the collection further and converted it into a public library in 1891, with the then Govt. of Bengal as its Trustee. In December, 1969 an Act of Parliament, declared the Library as an Institution of National Importance and from July, 1970 it is functioning as an autonomous institution governed by a Board constituted by the Government of India with the Governor of Bihar as its ex-officio Chairman.
26. KBOPL possesses about 21,000 manuscripts of rare value mainly in Arabic, Persian and some in Turkish, Urdu, Hindi and Sanskrit languages, 3,00,000 printed books (including a large collection of Journal of Rare values) and about 2,000 original paintings of the Mughal, Rajput, Oudh, Iranian and Turkish schools.
27. The Committee noted that there was no regular Director in the library for the period 2014 to April 2019 and there was also no board in 2018. Board has been reconstituted in the year 2020. The Committee is dismayed to note that under the administrative control of Ministry of Culture, the said library had been running without a permanent Director for a few years which must affect the functioning and
The Committee recommends that Ministry of Culture should shed this apathetic attitude in the interest of Libraries and general public.

28. Budget Provisions made for all these 7 Libraries/Organizations financed by the Ministry of Culture, for F.Y 2021-22 are as under:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Name of Organizations</th>
<th>Total Budget Allocated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>National Library</td>
<td>Rs. 4628.36 Lakh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Central Reference Library</td>
<td>Rs. 558.21 Lakh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Rampur Raza Library</td>
<td>Rs. 702.00 Lakh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library</td>
<td>Rs. 632.50 Lakh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Delhi Public Library</td>
<td>Rs. 3627.00 Lakh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Central Secretariat Library</td>
<td>Rs. 166.00 Lakh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation</td>
<td>Rs. 2707.00 Lakh</td>
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**National Mission on Libraries**

29. In order to revamp the Public Library System & Services, and to provide digital content based services to the citizens at large, this Ministry launched the scheme of ‘National Mission on Libraries’ (NML) in 2014. This scheme consists of following four components:

   (i) Creation of National Virtual Library of India, (Now known as Indian Culture Portal)
   (ii) Setting up of NML Model Libraries (01 Central State Library and 01 District Library per State and Six MoC Libraries)
   (iii) Quantitative and Qualitative Survey,
   (iv) Capacity Building.

30. Indian Culture Portal was launched on 10.12.2019. It is being managed and maintained by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay. For other 03 components RRRLF is the nodal agency for administrative, logistic, planning and budgeting purposes. The Scheme has been extended for 05 years till 31.03.2026.
31. Progress made so far under NML:

- **Indian Culture Portal** (Formerly known as National Virtual of India)
  i. It has total of about 2.5 Lakh digital artefacts with metadata. It also has more than 9 Lakh bibliographic entries.
  ii. The content is presented in 17 categories such as rare books, e-books, archives, paintings and union catalogues.
  iii. It has also 10 categories of content such as stories, snippets, historical cities and forts.
  iv. The portal is currently available in English and Hindi.
  v. The portal can be accessed through an App called Indian Culture available on both Android phones and iPhone.
  vi. The portal is present through the Umang App also.

- **Setting up of NML Model Libraries** : Under this component till date, 40 Libraries (14 State Central Library (SCL); 21 DL; 05 MoC Libraries) have been financed so far.

- **Capacity Building** : 33 Trainings organized till now.

32. The Committee has been given to understand that many public libraries in India are in a state of despair and remain largely underdeveloped. Besides lack of funds, another reason cited for the shutting down of libraries is the shrinking number of visitors who, in turn, complain of the despairing conditions of libraries. Libraries in India don't offer inviting and inspiring spaces. Also, with time, the book collection in a library grows, which takes up visitors' space, as an increasing number of shelves are required to accommodate the growing collection. Many libraries fail to implement the periodic weeding policy, wherein old and rarely used books are disposed of. In many developed nations, public libraries are places where youngsters visit to realise their goals. In India, due to lack of policy and resources support, both at the central and state levels, public libraries are unable to match the expectations of the young population.

33. The Committee is of the view that public libraries have been neglected for a long time now and any change would need substantial time and effort from all directions - State, community, private sector and non-governmental organisations. The Committee recommends that public library system in India should be modified while keeping in mind the latest developments in the field of Information and Communication
Technology (ICT) so as to provide minimum network based services for the urban and rural populace. Libraries should be developed as Community Information Centre models and computerisation of libraries should be taken up fast to upgrade them.

CHALLENGES

34. There are a number of challenges ahead which prevents the libraries from achieving the goal of ‘information for all’. Some of the challenges are listed below;
   
a. Legislation
b. Organisational structure
c. Financial resources
d. School education
e. Low literacy rate
f. E-learning
g. Online membership and Drives to boost membership
h. Infrastructural improvements

- Legislation

35. The growth and development of public libraries in India as on date is uneven. Some of the States have enacted library legislations and they are doing extremely good in the development of public libraries. Other states are lagging behind. All the South Indian States are having well-structured public library system; whereas North-Indian States, such as Uttar Pradesh are having very poor infrastructure as well as less number of public libraries when compared with the size and population of the State.

36. The Committee observes that in the growth and development of public library system the public library legislation plays a very fundamental and crucial role. It gives framework for the system, but in India out of 28 states and 8 Union Territories only some states and Union territories have enacted public library acts. Even after completion of several decades of India’s independence, some states and UTs are yet to enact Public Library Acts.

37. The Committee is, therefore, of the opinion that the Ministry should bring pressure on state governments to enact library legislation in the states where it has not been enacted covering all aspects like structure of buildings, staff requirement, preservation of valuable manuscripts etc. for their proper growth. Libraries in Southern States may be emulated in this regard.


- **Organizational Structure**

38. The Seventh Schedule to the Constitution defines and specifies allocation of powers and functions between Union and States. It contains three lists i.e. (i) Union List (ii) State List and (iii) Concurrent List. As per the Constitution, library forms part of the State List. It means that maintenance and upgradation of libraries falling under the jurisdiction of state have to be taken care of by the State.

39. The Committee finds that library being a State subject, every State has created their own organizational structure. The Committee observes that public library system differs from one State to another, so there is no uniformity in the organizational structure of public library system; each State has developed its own system. The Committee notes that For example some States have established only District Libraries on the other hand some States have established District Central Library and City Central Library in accordance with the provisions made in the act.

40. The Committee feels that there is a need for uniformity in this area. The Committee, therefore, recommends that there is an urgent need to set up a Committee to draft National Policy on library and information system. A Committee on National policy on library and information system was set up on October 7, 1985 under the Chairmanship of Prof. D.P. Chattopadhyay and its Report was submitted on 31st May, 1986. It is more than three decades and the recommendations made then may have outlived its utility. So there is an urgent need to look into it. The Committee, therefore, recommends that a Committee for drafting a National Policy on Library and Information System may be set up by the Ministry of Culture at the earliest.

- **Financial Resources**

41. The Committee notes with concern that finance is one of the biggest constraint in the development of public libraries. The financial resources play an indispensable role in the growth and development of public libraries. The present scenario shows a dismal picture of the public library system in the country. The public libraries are not being attended with adequate funds either by state government or by Union Government. The Committee is dismayed to note that money being collected in the name of libraries by way of municipalities and panchayats through taxes, is not being spent on their development.

42. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the State Governments may be guided to frame rules/amendments in the Act in a manner that money collected for the
purpose is utilized properly and spent only for the libraries. It should not go to other State accounts and be used for other purposes.

43. Further, the current system of financing of public libraries in India is highly diverse. Even among the states which have enacted library acts, there are a lot of variations regarding the financial allotment. For instance, some of the States have introduced library cess in the States but in the majority of the States it is missing.

44. The Committee, therefore, recommends that a provision should be made for collection of library cess in the legislation itself, otherwise the libraries have to fully depend upon State Government grants as finance remains the main hurdle for the development of public libraries in India.

- **School Education**

45. The Committee notes that one of the great challenges for public library is to provide library services to the primary and secondary school children, because in India, many schools do not have any library especially schools which are run by government. In such a situation, the existence of a Public Library will be of great help for school going children in their formal as well as informal education. In the fast changing scenario Library's role is pivotal for providing online education with technological innovations like live streaming, digitized availability of print media, video conferencing, etc.

46. As library is a growing organism, not physically but virtually, new roles, challenges and opportunities for libraries are coming up now. The Committee recommends that facilities may be provided for online/virtual learning for school children. The Ministry should come up with guidelines for large scale digitization of various books, journals, manuscripts and many other library resources for catching attention of children, especially in the light of Coronavirus pandemic. A great opportunity exists today to increase the reading habit of general public, academicians, students, scholars and researchers in different fields by making various knowledge resources available through a single platform of virtual library. Technical expertise to make reading resources available with Central Libraries should be shared with the state libraries. If need be, Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model for libraries can be explored.

47. The Committee also recommends that in order to keep the interest of school children growing, textbooks can be uploaded on the internet. Like the e National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) books, State Council of
Educational Research and Training (SCERT) books may also be made available on the internet. Many school going children are not having textbooks or they cannot afford textbooks. Further, copyrights of some of expensive books can be bought from the authors and digital version of these textbooks can be uploaded and put on dedicated sites. Students from all over the country will benefit from it.

48. A lot of emphasis has been laid by the Central Government on sharing of ancient Indian knowledge, teaching-learning systems and also digitization of various such valued resources to broadbase our education system. By making such resources available to the citizens of this country in different Indian languages, the concept of - One Nation - One Comprehensive learning platform may be realised, and technologically enhance the user's experience in these Libraries, earlier understood in common parlance as footfall in libraries.

- **Low Literacy Rate**

49. Even though literacy rate has shown increase over a period of time (52.21 in 1991, 64.83 in 2001, 74.04 in 2011, 63.4% in 2021) still a considerable percentage of our population is illiterate, adding to that is the problem of awareness about public libraries among the people.

50. The Committee observes that it is really a challenge for public libraries to attend to the needs and requirements of every user in the fast developing knowledge society. In this regard, the Committee wishes to point out that young people are more tech savvy so they would like to use technology oriented services in libraries.


52. The Committee emphasises that if the goal for National Mission on Libraries (NML) is to be achieved, libraries will have to be upgraded at State and UT level by strengthening them. Only then, the target of 100% literacy and improvement in standard of higher education in the country can be realised.
• **E-learning**

53. The Committee observes that major infrastructural and technological improvements are needed in the libraries across the country to enable them to match with best international standards. This should be equipped with educational portals to benefit the students from all categories. The Committee is happy to note that National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology has sponsored the National Digital Library of India (NDLI) project by funding through Ministry of Education. The textbooks of NCERT are now available for the common public without any charge. The National Virtual Library is also there where thousands of rare books are available. **The Committee recommends that the opportunity should be utilized to create a web portal for interlinking of National Digital Library of India (NDLI) with international-library portals so as to benefit the masses across the whole country.**

• **Online Membership and Drives to Boost Membership**

54. The Committee is of the strong view that to keep up with the times, Central Libraries across the country should permit the general public to join/ renew/ cancel the membership of the Library via submission of an online form along with the online payment of membership fees. The Committee feels that doing so would give a major boost to the membership figures of all the Central Libraries. The Committee further recommends that the Libraries may conduct special Membership drives at local schools, universities, NGOs etc. in order to get students and researchers to join the library. This would permit increased utilization of the resources available at the Central Libraries.

• **Infrastructural improvements**

55. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may carry out a special exercise across all the Central Libraries in the country in order to assess the need for infrastructural improvement therein. The Committee feels that having good facilities in the form of well-lit comfortable sitting areas, reading rooms, computer facilities with good internet connectivity, etc. is a precursor to increase the usage of library resources in our country. The Ministry should come up with budgetary requirements for carrying out infrastructural improvements at the public libraries and approach the Ministry of Finance to grant special one-time grant in order to finance the same.
56. The Committee also recommends that public libraries in India should focus on Reader services by making use of vast Information Technology (IT) resources already available throughout the country. Libraries can no longer work in isolation either geographically or by sector. Their existence is being relatively challenged by new services or products like Google, Wiki, Quora, Social Media, E-Resources, etc. Indian libraries cannot remain untouched with these phenomena. The Ministry, therefore, should endeavor to keep reinventing, reshaping services, redesigning spaces and above all, de-learning age old practices before adopting new models of providing information services.

CONCLUSION

57. In India, there has been uneven growth of public libraries among the different States or regions and even with local library system. India is yet to achieve goal of information for all. The regions that are economically backward are badly served. The public libraries in rural areas are in bad shape as compared to urban areas. In addition to this the needs of special groups like children, differently abled, elderly people, and ethnic minorities have been largely left unaddressed and they must to be addressed on priority basis.

58. The established fact is that the public libraries can play a vital role in the development of states as well as a nation. Public libraries have a social mission and are devoted to the development of the community. It has been providing information, education, leisure and entertainment for decades and will continue these functions for many more years to come. In order to ensure that the public libraries play this role in the best possible manner, it is imperative that the Ministry play a proactive role in improving the condition of Central Libraries in the country, as well as devise a plan to assist State Governments in revamping State-financed Libraries.
RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS – AT A GLANCE

National Library, Kolkata

The Committee finds that there is no proper preservation of books/manuscripts in the National library in printed and digital format. The library is also not receiving copies of printed as well as digital publications published in the country. The Committee finds it extremely important that the Ministry of Culture and National Library, Kolkata come up with a mechanism for collection, preservation of material and digital publications and making them accessible not only to general public but also to posterity since the objective of the National Library being a permanent depository of all reading material produced in India cannot be achieved. It is understood that a project has been submitted to develop Repository of Indian publications ensuring almost 100% of delivery under Delivery of books Act, 1954 amended subsequently in 1956 and 2005. The project has been approved by Ministry of Culture. The Committee would like to know how the Ministry is ensuring this.

(Para 11)

The Committee fails to comprehend how the National Library could be expected to function to its maximum potential when the top-level post of Director-General of the Library has been lying vacant for several years on the run. The Committee recommends that the post of the Director-General post in the National Library should not be kept vacant for such a long time and steps be taken to fill it up immediately. The Committee strongly recommends that urgent action needs to be taken for filling up the human resource requirements of the National Library.

(Para 13)

The Committee also recommends that the Executive Head of Library should be an eminent Library and information Science professional with strong technical background. He/she may be appointed in the grade of Director General at-least for three years for taking up the responsibility.

(Para 14)

Central Secretariat Library, Delhi

The Committee notes that Central Secretariat Library, a premier library situated in the heart of the capital, is a big attraction for politicians, bureaucrats and scholars. In view of its locational advantage, the Committee is of the view that CSL
should undertake the role of advising decision makers on matters of library information services. The Committee also desires that CSL should play a lead role to coordinate with national and international agencies, associations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), publishers and other stakeholders for the development of library services in the country and for deriving benefit from huge collections of Government reports and gazettes.

(Para 17)

**Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation, Kolkata (RRRLF) (Autonomous Org.)**

The Committee, therefore, recommends that central government, state governments and RRRLF should come forward and take initiative for proper development of public library system in India. They should devise a master plan to revive India's public libraries to cater to needs of special groups like children, differently abled, elderly people and ethnic minorities and achieve the goal of information for all.

(Para 21)

**Delhi Public Library, Delhi (Autonomous Org.)**

However Committee notes that membership of Delhi Public Library has witnessed decrease in recent times, one of the reasons being Covid-19 pandemic. It has come down to 1.5 lakh membership from what it was prior to corona period i.e. 1.85 lakh. Being a model library created in 1951 in Asia with UNESCO’s technical, financial assistance, it should lead other libraries in country and extend all possible help in their growth. Delhi Public Library should make all out efforts to increase its membership/viewership in the interest of general public.

(Para 23)

**Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna, Bihar (Autonomous Org.)**

The Committee noted that there was no regular Director in the library for the period 2014 to April 2019 and there was also no board in 2018. Board has been reconstituted in the year 2020. The Committee is dismayed to note that under the administrative control of Ministry of Culture, the said library had been running without a permanent Director for a few years which must affect the functioning and decision-making process adversely. The Committee recommends that Ministry of
Culture should shed this apathetic attitude in the interest of Libraries and general public.

(Para 27)

National Mission on Libraries

The Committee is of the view that public libraries have been neglected for a long time now and any change would need substantial time and effort from all directions - State, community, private sector and non-governmental organisations. The Committee recommends that public library system in India should be modified while keeping in mind the latest developments in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) so as to provide minimum network based services for the urban and rural populace. Libraries should be developed as Community Information Centre models and computerisation of libraries should be taken up fast to upgrade them.

(Para 33)

CHALLENGES

The Committee is, therefore, of the opinion that the Ministry should bring pressure on state governments to enact library legislation in the states where it has not been enacted covering all aspects like structure of buildings, staff requirement, preservation of valuable manuscripts etc. for their proper growth. Libraries in Southern States may be emulated in this regard.

(Para 37)

- Organizational Structure

The Committee feels that there is a need for uniformity in this area. The Committee, therefore, recommends that there is an urgent need to set up a Committee to draft National Policy on library and information system. A Committee on National policy on library and information system was set up on October 7, 1985 under the Chairmanship of Prof. D.P. Chattopadhyay and its Report was submitted on 31st May, 1986. It is more than three decades and the recommendations made then may have outlived its utility. So there is an urgent need to look into it. The Committee, therefore, recommends that a Committee for drafting a National Policy on Library and Information System may be set up by the Ministry of Culture at the earliest.
Financial Resources

The Committee, therefore, recommends that the State Governments may be guided to frame rules/amendments in the Act in a manner that money collected for the purpose is utilized properly and spent only for the libraries. It should not go to other State accounts and be used for other purposes.

The Committee, therefore, recommends that a provision should be made for collection of library cess in the legislation itself, otherwise the libraries have to fully depend upon State Government grants as finance remains the main hurdle for the development of public libraries in India.

School Education

As library is a growing organism, not physically but virtually, new roles, challenges and opportunities for libraries are coming up now. The Committee recommends that facilities may be provided for online/virtual learning for school children. The Ministry should come up with guidelines for large scale digitization of various books, journals, manuscripts and many other library resources for catching attention of children, especially in the light of Coronavirus pandemic. A great opportunity exists today to increase the reading habit of general public, academicians, students, scholars and researchers in different fields by making various knowledge resources available through a single platform of virtual library. Technical expertise to make reading resources available with Central Libraries should be shared with the state libraries. If need be, Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model for libraries can be explored.

The Committee also recommends that in order to keep the interest of school children growing, textbooks can be uploaded on the internet. Like the e National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) books, State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) books may also be made available on the internet. Many school going children are not having textbooks or they cannot afford
textbooks. Further, copyrights of some of expensive books can be bought from the authors and digital version of these textbooks can be uploaded and put on dedicated sites. Students from all over the country will benefit from it.

(Para 47)

By making such resources available to the citizens of this country in different Indian languages, the concept of - One Nation - One Comprehensive learning platform may be realised, and technologically enhance the user's experience in these Libraries, earlier understood in common parlance as footfall in libraries.

(Para 48)

- **Low Literacy Rate**

  The Committee observes that it is really a challenge for public libraries to attend to the needs and requirements of every user in the fast developing knowledge society. In this regard, the Committee wishes to point out that young people are more tech savvy so they would like to use technology oriented services in libraries.

  (Para 50)

  The Committee emphasises that if the goal for National Mission on Libraries (NML) is to be achieved, libraries will have to be upgraded at State and UT level by strengthening them. Only then, the target of 100% literacy and improvement in standard of higher education in the country can be realised.

  (Para 52)

- **E-learning**

  The Committee recommends that the opportunity should be utilized to create a web portal for interlinking of National Digital Library of India (NDLI) with international-library portals so as to benefit the masses across the whole country.

  (Para 53)

- **Online Membership and Drives to Boost Membership**

  The Committee is of the strong view that to keep up with the times, Central Libraries across the country should permit the general public to join/ renew/ cancel the membership of the Library *via* submission of an online form along with the online payment of membership fees. The Committee feels that doing so would give a major
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(Para 54)

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The Committee also recommends that public libraries in India should focus on Reader services by making use of vast Information Technology (IT) resources already available throughout the country. Libraries can no longer work in isolation either geographically or by sector. Their existence is being relatively challenged by new services or products like Google, Wiki, Quora, Social Media, E-Resources, etc. Indian libraries cannot remain untouched with these phenomena. The Ministry, therefore, should endeavor to keep reinventing, reshaping services, redesigning spaces and above all, de-learning age old practices before adopting new models of providing information services.

(Para 56)