



# Role of Libraries in Modern Society

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## Abstract:

Modern society has various needs such as education, research, cultural advancement, information, spiritual and ideological pursuits, pastime and recreation. Society has founded various institutions to serve these needs. Among them the library occupies a prominent place: While other institutions are designed to meet one or a few of the needs, the library is able to meet all of them in equal measure. It plays an important role in supporting the educational and research activities of society, promoting culture, disseminating information, catering to the spiritual and ideological instincts in man and building up a value system for him and providing recreation. All human activities at all times have relied heavily on knowledge and information. But it is only in the last half of this century that information and knowledge have taken, the centre of the stage, making them the most important resources for development. It is lanelv information technology which has made information storage and processing, access and liability possible irrespective of distances and location by moving them with speed and accuracy. Information and knowledge have occupied the status of basic resources, and modern society, therefore, is termed as an information society. The institutional mechanism to meet a variety of knowledge and information needs has drastically changed. The library has become one of several institutions that serve knowledge and information. This paper discuss now the library plays its role in society.

**Keywords:** Information society, Disseminating, Non-formal Education.

## Introduction:

In modern societies, every human activity is organised through institutions. Every major social task, whether economic performance or health care, education or research, business or industry is institutionalised. The protection of the environment or defence is today invariably entrusted to institutions and organisations. Libraries and other similar types of institutions are those

that collect, stock, process, organise, disseminate and distribute information/knowledge recorded in documents. Since knowledge and information are so vital for all round human development libraries and other institutions that handle and manage knowledge and information are indeed invaluable. In this Unit, you are introduced to the important role that libraries play in the educational process of formal and non-formal learning, in research and development, in cultural activities, in spiritual and ideological realms, in recreation and entertainment, etc. With spectacular advances in information technologies and increasing categories of users and their information needs in different situations, modern society is heading towards an information society in which the central instrument of change, force and direction of change are knowledge and information. I would like to focus on the role of Libraries in Modern society.

## Objective of Research:

- (1) To find out the role of Libraries to meet the different requirements of persons in society.
- (2) To find out the expanding dimensions of Libraries and emerging new information institutions in a changing society.
- (3) To find out information about the services of the library to a variety of information needs of users in different contexts in an information society.
- (4) To find out Impact of libraries on modern society.

## Role of Libraries in Modern Society:

At the earlier stages of education like the school this should be done to supplement classroom teaching. At later stages, particularly in colleges and universities, the focal point of learning should gradually shift from the classroom to the library. It is through the extensive reading of a variety of books bearing on a subject that a student will be able to acquire in-depth knowledge of the



subject. By being able to analyse and compare different viewpoints as expounded in different books, a student will be able to develop his capacity for analytical and critical thinking. This will enable him to formulate independent viewpoints and opinions. The role of the library in fostering the intellectual development of students cannot be over-emphasised.

Apart from school, college and university libraries, the public libraries too have a responsibility to support formal education. For this purpose, the public library must stock books and other material of an academic nature suitable for students and teachers of educational institutions in its area and make the books, etc., available to them. It must be remembered in this context that a public library should serve everyone in its community and it should not ignore the requirements of teachers and students who form part of the community.

In non-formal education where the help of the teacher is minimal, it is the library that is the main resource. Students here have, by and large, to acquire knowledge through self-study. Libraries of formal educational institutions as well as public libraries have a significant role to play in this respect: The former should throw open their facilities to students of non-formal education in such a manner that the interests of their primary clientele are not adversely affected. Universities, as the bodies that lay down academic standards and conduct examinations in the field of higher education: have a special responsibility in this regard. They should try to make their library services reach as wide a clientele as possible including students of non-formal education. One way to make this possible is to establish branch libraries of the main university library at different places within its jurisdiction and making them accessible to the entire academic community in the area including students of non-formal education. But the main responsibility of supporting non-formal education rests with the public library system. Everyone should have access as a matter of right to the public library. A public library should try to discharge this responsibility by acquiring books and journals suited to the needs of the students of non-formal education in its area. The development of a sound public library system is an essential pre-requisite for the successful implementation of all non-formal educational programmes. If the library needs of the students of non-formal education are not met by academic and public libraries, the result would be that the students would take

to cheap guide books. The inevitable consequence of this substitute will be a steep fall in the standards of education.

The establishment of educational institutions for physically handicapped persons is a special and mandatory responsibility of society and the government. Appropriate learning and teaching materials are acquired by these types of institutions, such as books and other types of learning kits for the blind, in addition to other physical facilities. Libraries attached to these institutions have the responsibility of stocking these types of library material and help these unfortunate persons use them and thus get them educated and rehabilitated in society.

In India where illiteracy is as high as 47.79 % (according to the 1991 census), this responsibility assumes great importance and vast dimensions. The public library's important role in this regard and the need to prepare it adequately to discharge its role should never be lost sight of. If one is an illiterate person, do you think that he/she is unable to get the benefits of education? Not at all. Literacy is only a means of education, not education" itself. It is, no doubt, the most important means, and not having it is a serious handicap. But we have today many other effective means that modern technology has brought into existence. The audio-visual media, especially the video tape, have made it possible for education to be brought to your doorstep. It is a special responsibility of the public library to work for the education of the illiterate people in its community through, such media: It should also organise learning clubs and other programmes of oral communication for educating its illiterate clientele.

The library has an educational role in another sense also. It should stock books relevant to the needs of people engaged in different locations in its area. By-reading such books they will become better informed and educated in their areas of work and will be able to increase their work efficiency. This will lead to greater productivity. The public library has to play a contributory role here also. Libraries, through their books, are actually repositories of information and knowledge. Information is indispensable for any human activity aiming at social progress. The researcher, the teacher, the student, the administrator, the industrial and business manager, the artisan, the entrepreneur, the farmer, the worker in the factory and the field, all need information to equip, themselves better for the fruitful pursuit of their



respective vocations. The basic information role of the library is to collect material containing information through appropriate methods. It is primarily in this sense that a library is described as an information centre. But a library also has an information role in the sense of providing information relating to the socio-economic needs of the people. A library can stock career information books and help those who are on - the lookout for a career in a particular field. Similarly, well-produced *How-to-do-it* type of books would be helpful in providing guidance to youngsters wanting to start some enterprise. In short, a library should be so equipped and organised that it will be able to serve its community with all types of information that may be in actual or potential demand.

The first cultural role of the library is that it preserves the cultural heritage of the human race as represented by the books and other documents it holds. It has also a cultural role in two other senses. It should make available books which would bring to expression the creative talent- of individuals and develop their faculties for aesthetic appreciation. It should also organise cultural programmes like music concerts, dances, dramas, painting competitions for children, exhibition of paintings, etc. and thus enrich the cultural life of the community. These programmes primarily fall in the domain of public libraries. Books can be broadly divided into three categories - books of information, books of recreation and books of inspiration. Spiritual and religious books, books that propound ideological themes and other books of permanent value which may be described as classics are books of inspiration. They meet the spiritual, religious and ideological needs of their readers. Every library should have a representative collection of books of this type to inspire people to high ideals in life and inculcate values in them.

Supporting research is yet another important role of the library. Access to existing knowledge and information is essential for research. The knowledge that is newly; created is primarily communicated through journals, research reports and other similar publications: Every library attached to an institution engaged in research should have a strong collection of such publications to support research programmes. The

libraries attached to universities, research organisations and research and development wings of industrial establishments play the key role in this respect. However, no library is without a research function in some form. Even public libraries have a research role especially in the social sciences and humanities. The healthy use of leisure is a matter of great importance in community life so that leisure time is not devoted to negative and destructive activities. The library should cater to the recreational needs of its users by stocking books suited for the purpose. Novels and other forms of literature, works of art, books of travels, biographies, popular magazines, etc., are primarily books of recreation\*and they should have a place in every library. Besides, libraries, especially public libraries, should organise programmes of healthy recreation and entertainment like the performing arts, musical concerts, etc.

**Conclusion :** The result from this research study show that a gateways to knowledge and culture, libraries play a fundamental role in society the resources and services they offer create opportunities for learning, support literacy and education and help shape the new ideas and perspectives that are central to a creative and innovative society they also help ensure an authentic record of knowledge created and accumulated by past generations. In a world without libraries, it would be difficult to advance research and human knowledge or preserve the world's cumulative knowledge and heritage for future generations.

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