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**PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN ANDHRA PRADESH: ANALYSIS
OF USER'S PERCEPTIONS**



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Short Profile

P. Padma Latha is a Research Scholar at Department of Library and Information Science in Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Ananthapuramu. She has completed M. Li. Sc (Ph.D). She has Research experience of 4 Years.



ABSTRACT:

Public libraries have an exciting opportunity to help to bring everyone into this global conversation and to bridge what is often called 'the digital divide'. They can achieve this by providing information technology for public access, by teaching basic computer skills and by participating in programmes to combat illiteracy. The public library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users. The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for

all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. Specific services and materials must be provided for those users who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospital or prison. However, to fulfill the principle of access for all, they must also continue to maintain services that provide information in different ways, for example, through print or the oral tradition. These are likely to remain of vital importance for the foreseeable future.

KEYWORDS

Public Library, Users, visits, library movement.

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INTRODUCTION :

Andhra Pradesh has a cultural history for over five thousand years. During the 10th Century, Madhusudhana, a famous general of Chalukya King Raja Narayana, founded a college called Chati Kalasala and appointed six librarians called as Saraswati Bhandarikas besides other staff members. By 1800 the British established their political establishment over Andhra Region. The British initiated the dams across Krishna and Godavari rives providing irrigation and moderate industrialization was promoted. Thus the economic growth created demand for educational opportunities. The Western system of education was slowly spread into the districts and towns. At the same time, the social reform movement was picked up. Among the important social reformers in Andhra are Sri Kandukuri Veerasalingam Pantulu, Sri Gurajada Appa Rao, Sri Raghupati Venkata Ratnam Naidu, Sri Gidugu Venkata Rama Murthi Pantulu and others. All these developments created state for socio-cultural and political movement in Andhra region. Libraries came into being out of the initiative, planning and enthusiasm of individuals and groups, dedicated selfless workers.

During 1800 there is a 'Paravasthu' family library at Visakhapatnam, later developed into Arsha Grandhalaya and opened to public use. In 1820, the Saraswathy Mahal Library established by Raja Sarf'oji at Thanjavuru, Wanaparthi's Raja Rameshwar Rayalu's library (1821-1865) was opened to the public. The first telugu book was printed in 1834, and it initiated starting of a wave of reading clubs and libraries. Even during this period at Rajahmundry a public library was opened by justice James Thomas in 1839. And the Theosophical Society started a library in 1850 at Guntur. Sri Mudigonda Sankararadhya promoted the 'Sanakarananda Library' in 1872, at Secunderabad. A School teacher, Sri Mantena Adinarayana Murthy established a

OBJECTIVES

- 1.To study the origin, growth and pace public library movement in Andhra Pradesh
- 2.To analyze the perceptions of users on the utility of public libraries in Andhra Pradesh.

SAMPLING

The state of Andhra Pradesh is devided in to three natural geographical divisions namely Rayalaseema, Coastal Andhra and Telangana (Now Telangana was made a separate state). For in depth study 90 public library users were selected by stratified random sampling method from each of three geographical divisions of the state. So the total sample of the study constitutes 270 public library users in Andhra Pradesh.

FUNCTIONING OF REGIONAL PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN ANDHRA PRADESH

'Saraswathi Nilayam Library' in 1886. Abdul Quyum, a nationalist and parriot and Moulvi Syed Hussain Bilgrami (nawab Emadul Mulk) in the year 1886. Later this was acquired by the Nizam's Government and declared open to public, this was known as the Asafia Library finally converted into the State Central Library.

In the year 1911, the Rama Mohan Library at Vijayawada, the Saraswati Niketanam at

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Vetapalera in 1911 and Sarada Nilayam at Sattenapalli in 1920. The Andhra Desa Grandhabhandagara Sangham was established in 1914. A batch of library workers (Grandhalaya Sevakas) planned to tour a group of villages. This core group of library workers called 'Ramadandu' were divided into six sections, viz. (1) Advance Information Section, (2) The Bhajan Section, (3) Exhibition Section, (4) The Gramophone Section, (5) The lecturing section, and (6) The Magic Lantern section, held discussions with villagers, established a library, if there is no library.

Government of Andhra Pradesh appointed a committee under Chairmanship of Justice Sri Gopala Rao Ekbote to review the working of the Andhra Pradesh Public Libraries Act 1960 and to suggest, amendments to improve the private libraries (aided libraries) in Andhra Pradesh and the Government has appointed another Committee under the Chairmanship of Sri Vavilala Gopala Krishnayya in July, 1978. The government have in principle accepted the majority of the recommendations of this committee. And even the accepted recommendations could not be implemented due to financial and political reasons.

Hyderabad Public Libraries Act (1955)

The Hyderabad Library Association stated in 1951 took-up the cause of library legislation. Shri K-M.Ujlambkar, who took lead in this regard, persuaded Shri Gopalrao Ekbote, the Minister for Education, Hyderabad State to take-up library legislation.

INTRODUCTION

A Bill was drafted on the lines of the Madras Library Act and introduced the same in the Assembly in August 1954. The First All Hyderabad Library Conference was organised in December 1954 and Dr. S.E. Ranganathan was invited to preside over the conference. Dr. S.R. Ranganathan stressed the need for library legislation for a systematic growth of libraries. The Minister in his inaugural address assured to get the Bill passed in the next session of the Assembly and he got it done. The Hyderabad Public Libraries Act (1955) was a short lived one, because of the State Reorganization in 1956.

THE SALIENT FEATURES OF THIS ACT ARE:

- 1.The Minister of Education shall be State Library' Authority.
- 2.State Library Council is advisory in nature.
- 3.The Director of Public Instruction will also act as the Director of Public Libraries.
- 4.Local Library Authority - One each for Hyderabad and Secunderabad, and for each district.
- 5.Library cess on property tax or house tax at the rate of 7 pies (oki) on every rupee.

Andhra Pradesh Public Libraries Act (1960)

Andhra Pradesh was formed in 1956 in accordance with the recommendation of the States Reorganization Commission. Before the formation of Andhra Pradesh, the Madras Public Libraries Act was in operation in the eleven districts of Andhra region. And the Hyderabad Public Libraries Act was in force in the nine districts in Telangana region. In order to have a composite Act, the Andhra Pradesh

Public Library Act was enacted in 1960. This Act was amended successive?)" in 1964, 1969, 1987, 1989 and 1990.

This Act is called the Andhra Pradesh Public Libraries Act, 1960. It was implemented from 1st April, 1960 in the 50 Functioning of Regional Public Libraries in Andhra Pradesh State of Andhra Pradesh which comprises Andhra and Telangana areas.

Salient features of the Andhra Pradesh Public Libraries Act are :

- 1) Constitution of Andhra Pradesh Granthalaya Paishad, as an apex body with statutory powers and functions.
- 2) Constitution of a Directorate of Public Libraries to direct, supervise and control the public library system.
- 3) (in) Constitution of City/Zilla Granthalaya Samsthas through the nomination of Chairman and members by the Government.
- 4) Librarians of City/District Central Libraries as ex-officio Secretaries of the City/Zilla Granthalaya Samsthas.
- 5) Collection of eight paise as library cess; on house tax and property tax collected by Local Bodies.
- 6) Payment of staff salaries, working in the City/Zilla Granthalaya Samsthas,

Public Library System in Andhra Pradesh

The integrated Andhra Pradesh Public Library Act of 1960 helped in an orderly development of public libraries in the State. This Act created a network of public libraries, which started functioning and offering effective service in urban and rural areas of the state.¹

The public library system of the state constitutes a central library at the 'apex' of the system, followed by the regional libraries, the district central libraries, the branch 11 age libraries, deposit centers and mobile sides the above, there are aided libraries, jreries, and co-operative society libraries, which :ioning in the net work of public libraries in the state receiving grants from Zilla Grandhalaya Samastha. Though the Act declared that the state central library is the 'apex' library in the system, but there is no mention about the functions of this library.

Now there are seven regional libraries in our state. Out of the seven regional libraries, one regional library at Hyderabad is also called the State Central Library. The other six-regional libraries are at Nizamabad, Warangal, Tirupathi, Rajahmundry, Guntur and Visakhapatnam. The 1960 Act was completely silent on the activities, the relationship between the state central library and the district central libraries. But the State Central Library and State Regional Libraries are working under the control and supervision of the Department of Public Libraries.

The district central libraries were established by the ZGS, and it is constituted under section (1) of APPLAct 1960. At present there are 23 Samasthas one for the city of Hyderabad known as city Grandhalaya Samastha and one each at 23 revenue districts of the state. The outline of the development plan for urban areas given in Rule 16 of APPL Rules 1961 held that, each municipal town should have a main library, if the municipal town exceeds the population of 50,000. In addition to this, there may be a branch library for every 25,000 - 50,000 population. This norm prompted the Zilla Grandhalaya Samstha to open libraries in all the municipalities in cities and towns.

The development plan of the Rural Library System, under Rule 16(4) at APRL Rules 1961, states that there shall be a district central library in each district head quarters, and a branch library for each panchayat, where the population is 5,000 and above, there must be one book deposit centre for each village or group of villages with a population between 1,000 and 5,000.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Anil Bhojar and U.P. Nalhe (2013) in their paper tried to highlight the various aspects of Public Library in the tribal areas of Nagpur Division. The paper examines such issues as what public library is its definition, Importance etc. He has also tried to explore the contribution of Public Library to the development of villages in tribal areas. In this paper an effort is also made to understand the cultural significance of the tribal society. The objectives of the study and Hypothesis are also dealt with in the paper. Further, the paper looks closely at the library services, library departments, library schemes, library building, tribal and non-tribal readers, cultural programmes etc through a data interpretation approach.

Vijay Kumar P. (2013) made an attempt to understand whether the corporate social responsibility initiatives of the corporates are improving the state of public libraries. It also seeks to understand whether corporates take initiatives proactively to promote public libraries, how the public and private sectors are lending their support to the public library movement, what will be the way forward, and opportunities ahead to tap CSR resources for developing the public libraries.

Kailash Chandra Das(2013) observed that most of the companies have adopted CSR approach into their overall business strategy. Therefore, they have been successful in achieving the objectives of both business and social development. Their approach to work is not mainly relief, welfare, and service delivery but it is sustainable development oriented, which have long-term benefits. Vedanta Aluminum Ltd., Tata Steel, NALCO, Dr. Reddy's Labs, Lupin India, Ambuja Cement Ltd., Bharat Petroleum, SAIL believe in promoting human and social sustainable development through poverty alleviation by building capacity of rural people. The author felt that corporate houses can finance or sponsor various programmes of public libraries to fulfill their social responsibilities towards communities. Various examples and case studies have been incorporated below to corroborate this fact.

Sambasiva Rao N. et.al. (2013) felt that public library services have been expanded to serve the local people, but after 65 years of independence India, public libraries could not be administered and managed with the clear mandate of law in many states of India. The authors further felt there is every need to strengthen this system by using CSR mode and better management techniques. The authors conclude that the government has to bring a stringent law for implementation of funds under CSR. As libraries are knowledge centers, the government and corporate world have to have special consideration by funding them liberally.

Muralidhar D. and M. Koteswara Rao (2013) describes the concept of public-private partnership (PPP) and examines how it is different from 'privatisation' concept. It examines the present status of public libraries in India and the need for mobilising support for their improvement. The authors stress the need for implementing the National Knowledge Commission recommendation for PPP. The paper highlights the role of the public sector and private firms in developing public libraries through the PPP model. At the end suggestions were made on how to implement the model for the development of public libraries.

Bhuvaneshwari Ravi and Gayatri Vivek (2013) examines the importance of public libraries in educating the masses and increasing the literacy rate and disseminating knowledge. It also describes the historical origin of ancient universities and centres of learning, including public libraries in India and their contribution to the society. The paper discusses the problems faced by the public libraries today and various options available for their improvement. The author proposes a new model of public-private partnership with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and public-sector undertakings (PSUs) for the growth and development of public libraries to enable them to serve the user community. Senthur Velmurugan V., (2013) considers that the current status of the public library system in India is hard to ascertain and describe, because a consolidated picture is not available. There are twenty-eight states and seven union territories in India. All have their own public library systems, structure, and pattern of financial assistance. Nineteen of the states have enacted library legislation and the rest are providing public library service without legislation.

Roopa Gokhale-Shahade (2014) considers that the Public libraries have recognized their role to satisfy information needs of all types of people in the society. The Government at the State level and National level has taken initiatives to make public libraries as important source of information's for people formal walks of life. The National mission on libraries setup by ministry of culture has provided recommendations for development of libraries and information centers to make public libraries equipped with information.

Jean Fairbairn and Ugne Lipeikaite (2014) explore the role of public library responses to the crisis, and the ways in which they are supporting local and national economic development strategies. We do this by sharing experiences from the EIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries) Public Library Innovation Programme (EIFL-PLIP), which supports public libraries in developing and transition economy countries to use information and communication technology (ICT) to initiate innovative public library services that improve lives. We explore a particular model of service development that has grown out of the EIFL-PLIP experience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Importance of libraries to Community

Public libraries are repository of knowledge for public. They assumed more importance even in the age of computers. As such during field survey the respondents were asked to give their opinion on the importance of public libraries to the community. The same is presented in table 1.

Table 1
Respondents Opinion on the Importance of Public Libraries to Community

S. No	Responses	No. of Respondents	Per cent
1	Essential	87	32.22
2	Very important	71	26.30
3	Fairly important	104	38.52
4	Not very important	1	0.37
5	Not important at all	2	0.74
6	Don't know	5	1.85
Total		270	100.00

Source: Field Data

Table 1 shows that a preponderant majority i.e. 97.04 per cent sample respondents felt that the libraries are important to community. Among the 38.52 per cent considers them as fairly important, 32.22 per cent as essential and 26.30 per cent as very important. About 1 per cent of the users declared that the public libraries are not important assets to community. About 1.85 per cent not responded. It can be concluded that the public libraries are valued and are seen as important. Users appreciate the value of libraries to both the individual as well as the community.

FREQUENCY OF VISITING LIBRARY

Generally the users visit the library during leisure times or on public holidays. It is not possible for all users to visit public library daily. Table 2 gives the particulars of frequency of visit to public library by sample users.

Table 2
Sample Respondents Frequency of Visits Library

S. No	Frequency	No. of Respondents	Per cent
1	Daily	61	22.59
2	Weekly	159	58.89
3	Monthly	43	15.93
4	Once or Twice A Year	2	0.74
5	Don't Know/ Not Remembered	5	1.85
Total		270	100.00

Source: Field Data

As per the table 2 more than 58.89 per cent of users visit the library on a weekly basis, and on average almost all users will visit the library once a month. To be more precise around 22.59 per cent of

users were visiting library on daily basis. Nearly 58.89 per cent of sample users were visiting library once in a week. About 15.93 per cent of sample users were visiting library monthly once. Annual visitors and not responded users are negligible.

Family Members Frequency of Visits Library

As the libraries are repository of knowledge the users may visit the library along with their family members. The details of sample respondent users' family members' frequency of visiting the public library are given in table 3.

Table 3
Sample Respondent Family Members Frequency of Visits Library

S. No	Frequency	No. of Respondents	Per cent
1	Never Visited	56	20.74
2	During the last 6months	115	42.59
3	During the last 12 Months	71	26.30
4	Don't know	28	10.37
Total		270	100.00

Source: Field Data

It is evident from table 3 that the family members of around 68.89 per cent of sample respondents visited the library during the last one year. Among them 42.59 per cent sample respondent family members visited the library during the last 6 months. Around 26.30 per cent of sample respondent family members visited the library during the last 12 months. The family members of 20.74 per cent of respondents never visited the library. About 10.37 denied to respond.

Visiting along with Children

In good number of public libraries, there is a separate section for children. These section contain moral books, short-story books, basic general knowledge books etc. As such during field survey the respondents were asked "whether they have taken their children for libraries during last one year?". The responses to this question are presented in table 4.

Table 4
Number of Sample Respondents Visiting Library Along with their Children

S. No	Responses	No. of Respondents	Per cent
	Yes	59	21.85
	No	198	73.33
	Don't Know	13	4.81
Total		270	100.00

Source: Field Data

Table 4 reveals that only 21.85 per cent of sample children visiting the public library along with their children. A preponderant majority i.e. 73.33 per cent declared that they never visited the library along with their children. Remaining 4.81 per cent denied to respond.

UTILISATION SERVICES

The public library renders a variety of services to the users. The utilization of such services depends upon the mental makeup of the user at a particular point of time.

Table 5
Services Utilized by Sample Users
(Multiple Responses)

S. No	Services	No. of Respondents	Per cent
1	Take out books for children	128	47.41
2	Take out books for grown-ups	176	65.19
3	Use references materials, like the encyclopedia	69	25.56
4	Read Novels	138	51.11
5	Learn languages	56	20.74
6	Read News Paper	248	91.85
7	Use rest rooms/ spaces for study	133	49.26
8	Read magazines/ Periodicals	156	57.78
9	Read Entertainment Books	241	89.26
10	Other (please specify)	56	20.74

Source: Field Data

The data in table 5 shows that as many as 91.85 per cent of users declare that they go through the news papers, whenever they visit public library. Apart from, nearly 89.26 per cent of users reads entertainment books like Telugu Weeklies like Swathi, Andhrabhoomi, Chatura etc. Around 65.19 per cent stated that they take out books for grownups in the family. Around 57.78 per cent goes to library to read magazines and periodicals. The reading of novels is done by 51.11 per cent of sample users. About 49.26 per cent of users utilized rest rooms or library spaces for studying. Nearly 47.41 per cent of users take out the books for children. For the purpose reference books like encyclopaedias, district Gazetteers etc visited the public libraries by sample users.

UTILIZATION OF COMPUTER AND INTERNET

In Andhra Pradesh computers for public use is limited. Even if there are computers internet connection is further limited. Table 6 gives the details of computer and internet utilization by sample users and payment mode for such services.

Table 6
Use of Computer and Internet and Payment Procedure

	Particulars	Yes	No	If Yes			
				Total	Pay	Free	Total
1	Computer	54 (20.00)	216 (80.00)	270 (100.00)	5 (9.26)	49 (90.74)	54 (100.00)
2	Internet	21 (7.78)	249 (92.22)	270 (100.00)	8 (38.10)	13 61.90	21 (100.00)

Source: Field Data

As per table 6 about 20 per cent of users do access or use computers in libraries the bulk of this being used them free of cost. Among those who access internet and computing services in libraries, more than 38 per cent pay for these services.

Purpose of Visiting Library

The purpose for visiting library as per the responses of sample users is presented in table 7.

Table 7
Purpose of Visiting to Public Library

S. No	Purposes	No. of Respondents	Per cent
1	Educational Purposes (For Homework or To Take A Class)	84	31.11
2	Entertainment	129	47.78
3	Information on Health Issue	68	25.19
4	Information on Agriculture	71	26.30
5	Local News or Information	146	54.07
6	National News or Information	128	47.41
7	Financial or Investment News or Information	102	37.78
8	International News or Information	83	30.74
9	To Conduct A Job Search	72	26.67
10	To Look For Information on Starting or Running A Business	50	18.52

Source: Field Data

It is evident from table 7 that more than half (54.07 per cent) of the users declared that they visit public library to read and know local news. For the entertainment and time pass purpose the 47.78 per cent of users visiting the public library. To acquaint with national news or information about 47.41 per

cent of sample users were visiting library. To get financial or investment news or information 37.78 per cent of users were visiting libraries. the key reason for using libraries is educational as stated by 31.11 per cent of sample respondent users. To know the developments in international arena about 30.74 per cent of sample users were visiting the library. The curiosity to become acquaint with agricultural and health information making 26.30 per cent and 25.19 per cent of sample users respectively to visit the library. For employment search 26.67 per cent of users were visiting library. To look for information to start or run a business nearly 18.52 per cent of users visit the library.

CONCLUSION

The public library shall in principle be free of charge. The public library is the responsibility of local and national authorities. It must be supported by specific legislation and financed by national and local government. It has to be an essential component of any long-term strategy for culture, information provision, literacy and education. To ensure nationwide library coordination and cooperation, legislation and strategic plans must also define and promote a national library network based on agreed standards of service The public library network must be designed in relation to national, regional, research and special libraries as well as libraries in schools, colleges and universities.

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