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**AUTOMATION AND NETWORKING OF M.J PUBLIC LIBRARY, AHMEDABAD**

**Abstract ::**

The study deals with the automation and networking of M.J. public Library. As we know, IT plays very important role of library functions where computerization is successfully utilized. Public library is regarded as a social institution and a living force to education, indigenous knowledge and to preserve the cultural heritage customs prevalent in rural areas. The Library is regarded as a public Library and is expected to convert the potential readers into actual readers. With the information explosion and creation of knowledge, the library has acquired a key position as the indispensable library for the people with necessary accumulated knowledge.

Here, the author discusses briefly about the public library. By mid 1980s, the importance of computerized library network was realized and many library personnel proposed setting up of computerized information systems. In the network concern lot of efforts are done by the professionals, with an intention is that the information is used by the rural community and those far away from the technology and information. Not only has this study dealt with the development of public libraries. It presents the development of National Policy for Public Libraries, the development of public libraries towards modernization and networking and also how the legislations affect the library services. The paper deals with the present status of public libraries in terms of services and modernization.

Automation of library operations is gaining momentum because of the availability of digital computers at affordable cost and promise to create database, which is easy to retrieve desired and pin pointed information. The introduction of personal computers for library operations has been bringing a new revolutionary changes and new dimensions in the whole library and information science/ management and services. The Information Technology has diverse potential to grow in future.

**Keywords:**

M.J. Public Library, Public Library Automation and networking, Library Services, improvement of public library

**Introduction:**

Public libraries are founded wholly with government grants in the developing countries in agreement with the UNESCO public library manifesto (1972), which states that:

'A public library should be maintained by public funds, and no direct charge should be made to any users for its services. To fulfil its purposes, the public library must be readily accessible, and its doors open for free and equal use by all members of the community regardless of race, colour, nationality, age, religion, language, status, sex, educational attainment'.

Public libraries can educate, inspire and recreate the different age groups through the reading material. Public libraries must therefore, be allowed to play a role of fundamental importance in the development of future systems of lifelong learning. But public libraries today have to move outside and identify the changing information demands of the user and make available the most current and recent information.

**Value of Public Libraries:**

The value of Public Libraries is mainly dependent on how needs and their services are and how much

they are valued by the citizens and the communities they serve. In an age of digital technologies the role of Public Libraries needs serious reassessment to enhance its value and strengthen its role for furthering social inclusiveness in the Indian context.

### **Public Libraries in Gujarat:**

Public libraries in Gujarat are established throughout the state and are located at state capitals, state headquarters, talukas as well as village levels. Public Libraries are mainly supported by RRRLF. The development of the public libraries in Gujarat is the responsibility of the respective state government.

### **Improvement of Public Libraries of Gujarat:**

As suggested the major issues pertaining to the development of public libraries are listed below.

- Network of rural or village libraries to be linked up with the state library system and state central libraries all over the country
- RRRLF to provide assistance in addition to the state government for providing expansion of library facilities in the rural or village areas particularly to the growing number of educated people, women and youth
- Rural Public libraries must cater to the needs of both the students community and village folk
- School teachers with public library and information science training could function as part time librarians for a remuneration
- Public Libraries should contain relevant books written in regional languages and also translated from other Indian languages into regional language of the place
- National Book Trust to assist in the production of books needed for rural people on priority basis
- A scheme of intensification of rural or village libraries containing a modest collection of books in the regional languages should be taken up by appropriate authorities

### **M.J. Public Library:**

More than 90 years old, The Sheth Maneklal Jethalal (MJ) Library in Ahmedabad boasts of a collection of several lakhs of books, both old and new. The library attracts connoisseurs of old books as it stacks books and epics that are highly regarded in Hindi literature such as the Upanishads and Vedas. One can spot large-sized portraits of well-known leaders of old India at the library.

When the library began operating, great leaders of erstwhile India donated books here, most of which are intact even today. The library also has a mobile van facility for readers who cannot come to the library to issue books. The MJ Library has emerged as a prominent landmark of Ahmadabad and membership can be accessed for a nominal fee.

The MJ Library was inaugurated by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on April 15 in 1938. The library started with donations from Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Akhandanand. They gave 9650 and 8891 books to the library respectively. Sheth Shri Rasiklal Maneklal had also extended an initial donation of Rs 55,000 towards construction of the library. The library added more books with a handsome donation from Sheth Maneklal. About 98 employees work with the library at present.

Ahmadabad city has about six branches of the MJ Library. Seeing the present routine of its readers, the library also started a mobile van service that delivers books at readers' doorsteps. The library gets about 522 newspapers on a daily basis and magazines that are in eight languages. The technology boom has also prompted the library to have an e-books section and launch a digital library.

### **What to Expect**

As you make way to the Sheth Maneklal Jethalal (MJ) Library in Ahmadabad, history will turn several pages for you as the books here were donated by leaders like Mahatma Gandhi. You'll also be amazed by the magnificent architectural splendour of this library and its crisscross of corridors.

The grand architecture of the library is suitably complimented by life-size portraits of well-known freedom fighters. Some portraits here also depict important events that occurred during the fight for independence such as the Dandi March. Readers can also access a huge dictionary that is kept on a high pedestal. Several rooms stack books, both old and new on their shelves.

## **The Legacy**

The library has an approximate 7 lakh books with more being added on a routine basis. The library has books in several national and international languages such as Gujarati, Hindi, Bengali, English, French, Sindhi, Greek, Italian, German, Sanskrit, Portuguese and Urdu.

Readers can also access books on philosophy, religion, mythology, chemistry, media, mathematics, literature, politics, music and art. The library provides access to Vedas, Upanishads, Ayurveda books, autobiographies and biographies. You can also find books on competitions and more.

### **Mission of the public library:**

The following key missions, who relate to information, literacy, education and culture, should be at the core of public library services are;

- Creating and strengthening reading habits in children at an early age
- Providing opportunities for personal creative development
- Supporting both individual and self-conducted education as well as formal education at all levels
- Stimulating the imagination and creativity of children and young
- Promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of arts
- Scientific achievements and innovations
- Providing access to cultural expressions of all performing arts
- Fostering inter-cultural dialogue and favouring cultural diversity
- Supporting the oral tradition
- Ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information
- Providing adequate information services to local enterprises, associations and interest groups
- Facilitating development of information and computer literacy skills
- Supporting and participating in literacy activities and programmes for all age groups, and initiating such activities if necessary.

### **Funding, legislation and networks:**

- 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 governments. 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 specific libraries as well as libraries in schools, colleges and universities.

### **Types of public library:**

Mainly public library system is divided into two; urban public library system and rural public library system. The state level public library system is divided into following types of public libraries: Urban Public Library System and Rural Public Library System.

#### **Urban Public Library System comprises of following:**

- State Central Public Library
- Regional or Divisional Library
- District Public Library
- City Central Public Library

#### **Rural Public Library System comprises of following:**

- Sub-Divisional Library
- Block Public Library
- Village Public Library

An activity of M.J. public library comprises of as a society as a cultural centre, as an informal centre,

as a coordinator of social & cultural programme like birthday of well-known author, Exhibition on Great politician, providing extension services, literature search activities and many more.

### **Library and information services available at M.J. public library:**

The M.J. public library is expected to provide all such services which the diverse group of users requires for their academic, commercial/business, entertainment and recreational purposes for all age groups of users. It includes all services provided by the public libraries including urban and rural libraries to their users. Broadly it includes various routines/ housekeeping works either manually or computerized.

### **These services are as follows:**

- Lending Services/Loan of reading materials for home reading;
- Reading Room Services;
- Reference Services;
- Current Awareness Services;
- Computerized SDI Services;
- Abstracting Services;
- Indexing Services;
- Bibliographic Services through OPAC of in-house databases;
- CD-ROM based specialized subject databases Services;
- E-mail/Internet Services;
- Inter-library Loan Services;
- Consultancy Services;
- Organisation of book exhibition, lecture, seminar, workshop for developing book culture, literacy awareness, etc; and
- Counselling and Guidance Services, etc.

### **Why should we automate our M.J. public library?**

M.J.Public library play an important role in making the people more informed. Such library occupies a very important place in the various programmes like Adult Education Programme, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, Indian Literacy Mission, Rural Mother–Child Health Care Programme, and many other welfare programmes available in rural areas for overall development of the society. After 66 years of Independence, the development of public libraries of Gujarat is huge.

With the introduction of automation and networking in M.J. public library, the people will receive desired information and knowledge. With the introduction of Internet facilities, access to agricultural information, business based information, vocational information, and instant communication through e-mail, or social networking sites would be easier. People will be connected to mainstream and global access to information would be possible. Nowadays, information is considered as a strategic resource. It may become the place where people may use computer/Internet to access information. It should really be place for getting knowledge, education and recreation. With the introduction of ICT, the public libraries may act as community information centre or community Information University.

Due to advent of mobile, wireless and Internet technology, the public libraries should take advantage of these technologies for its modernisation and providing community information to the community for the overall development of the whole society. Adopting mobile and Internet can interlink the rural libraries for resource sharing and global access to information. From library point of view it is observed that the information storage and retrieval problem has become progressively more serious in recent years, due to increase of information at exponential rate. Keeping in view the tremendous flow of information, to organise information and to disseminate in systematic way, the computerization is only the answer. Computer aided system or ICT and networking is more convenient, more flexible and more comprehensive and in the long run more economical.

### **Purpose of automation and networking of libraries:**

Following are the purpose of automation and networking of library activities and services.

- ☐ To reduce the repetitive work and save time of library professionals in routine housekeeping operations and library services

- To bring accuracy and speed of work
- To bring economy and provide prompt library services; to increase efficiency of technical processing over a manual system
- To do financial savings due to automation; to improve library and information services for end users
- To improve the efficiency of library administration and management
- To facilitate resource sharing in networked environment at local, regional, national and international level; automation helps in providing enormous capacity of data storage and retrieval; To improve efficiency of work and provide consistency and improve work control
- To help in bibliographic control and updating of databases of documents and manuscript available in the remote areas
- To bring all this valuable information on indigenous knowledge to the people of Gujarat.

### **Areas of library automation and networking:**

Areas of library automation and networking are as follows:

Acquisition of reading materials; cataloguing and indexing; circulation control; serial control; library administration and management; on line public access catalogue; information retrieval and dissemination; CD-ROM databases searches; inter-library loan or ILL (cooperative sharing of library materials)/resource sharing through library network; access to e-Resources through INTERNET; developing local digital library/institutional repository; desktop publishing (DTP) for report generation; office automation.

### **Steps for improvement of public libraries:**

Following steps should be taken to improve the conditions of public library in Ahmedabad, which should be given more priority to up-lift the status of public library. Networking of libraries for resource sharing and avoiding duplication,

- Creation of compatible computerized databases,
- Formulation of preservation programmes for libraries which have rare books/manuscripts,
- Awareness creation among users and library staff regarding the need for libraries and preservation of books,
- Modernization and automation of libraries for easy accessibility to use,
- Resource mobilization for development of libraries to be made through different agencies involving industrial houses,
- Setting up of an apex body to oversee and monitor the library and information system.

### **Conclusion:**

The present paper is based on the development of M.J. public library network for automation, networking and digitisation of public libraries scattered throughout Gujarat.

There is a financial support from RRRLF to run the public libraries of Gujarat. For the overall development of public libraries in Gujarat, there is a need of enacting library legislation in all the district of Gujarat where library legislation has not been enacted till now.

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**Mr. Gunjan R. Patani**  
**Asst. Attd. Library**  
**M.J. Public Library**  
**Town Hall, Ahmedabad- 380009**

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