

Types of Libraries and Information Centres

Lesson No.	Title of Lesson	Skills	Activities
2	Types of Libraries and Information Centres	Desire to serve users, Initiative, Self-Awareness, Societal awareness, Analytical Thinking, ICT Literacy	Organising materials, Circulation of material, ICT skills, Societal role, User education

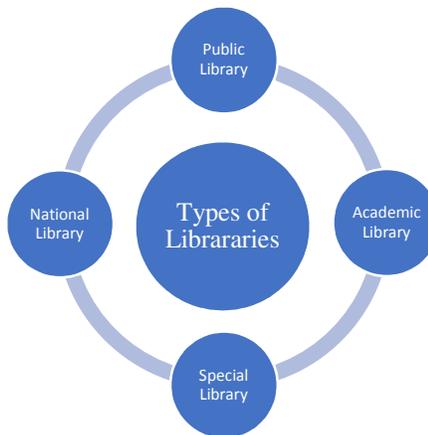
Summary

As knowledge and information are vital for all round development, libraries handle and manage both knowledge and information. Dissemination of right information to the right user at the right time is the dictum of the library and information centres.

The purpose of a library in modern society is to educate the community. Libraries play important role in the educational process or formal and non-formal learning; in research and development; in cultural and spiritual pursuits; in recreation and entertainment, etc. With advances in information technology, increasing category of users and their information needs in different situations, modern society is heading towards an information society.

With the above in view, and according to the mode of services rendered to the users, libraries are broadly divided into four types, namely, Public, Academic, Special and National libraries.

In this lesson, we will introduce you to different types of libraries that are required to meet the information needs of various categories of people.



Principal Points

- According to the mode of services rendered to the users, the libraries are broadly divided into different types. The definition, objectives, functions, user-groups and services rendered by each type of library varies.
- Different types of libraries that are covered in this lesson are - Academic, Special, Public, and National libraries. As a whole, these libraries serve the purpose of varied users from a general approach to a particular approach.
- Acquaintance with these types of libraries, their nature of collections, functions and services shall encourage you to know more and more about these libraries at higher level.
- Public libraries are social institutions that offer information dissemination services to various public groups. The collection is based on social, political, economic and cultural subjects.
- Academic libraries serve the students, teachers and research scholars and are attached to academic institutions like schools, colleges and universities. Chief objective of an academic library is to provide learning material to its users to support their educational activity. Academic libraries are categorized into:
 - School libraries
 - College libraries, and
 - University libraries
- Special libraries serve specialists/researchers in special fields. These libraries are usually established to meet the information requirements of only the users of the organisations to which they are attached.
- A national library is specifically established by the government of a country to serve as a repository of information for that nation. National libraries cater to entire nation having all types of collections in all languages. These, however, usually not allow people to borrow documents.
- There is no sharp distinction between different types of libraries. Management, engineering and medical college libraries are academic as well as special libraries. Public libraries can make positive attempts to develop collection for special groups of adult learners.

Build your Understanding

A public library is a non-profit organisation, that satisfies information needs of the general public. It also provides several services to the communities irrespective of their age, gender, religion, economic and employment status.

The purpose of academic libraries is to provide equitable access to information for students. The students may use this information in their daily lives, for academic success, to solve problems or to create new knowledge.

Special libraries are user-centric institutions that strive to fulfil the needs of information seekers of the organization. They provide value-added services to user and their funding relies on the parent organization.

The chief goal of a national library is to ensure that all the documents published by the particular country are acquired. It acts as a central agency for ensuring the bibliographic development of the nation.

What's Important to Know ?

1. Public library plays an important role in people's lives as a source of accessing information and a place for knowledge creation. It has been seen world over that public libraries are important informational, educational, cultural and social institutions.
2. Why is it important for schools to have libraries ? Every school must have a library because libraries are essential partners for all teachers by providing print and digital materials that are essential for meeting needs of student learning.
3. Some aspects that make special libraries important are- development of extensive collection, the ability of work with users toward specific services and opportunity to work with a wide range of materials and information resources.
4. College libraries play a fundamental role in enhancing the learning experience by providing students with all the materials and services they need to improve their knowledge.

Did You Know ?

1. The 'Library of Congress', United States is the world's largest library. (<https://www.loc.gov>)
2. The oldest library in the world dates back to 7 BC. It is the Ashurbanipal Library in Ninevah, Assyria (Modern Iraq). The library was created by the King of Assyria and archeologists discovered the remains in 1850. Interestingly, cuneiform tablets about law and history of the period were found and everything was arranged in systematic order.
3. The Haskell Free Library and Opera House are famous for located on the border between Canada and US. People can enter from any side and go about in any part of the library. But they have to go out the same side from they enter the library.
4. It is said about university libraries – “A university is just a group of buildings gathered around a library.” (Shelby Foote, American writer)
5. Hachioji Library, Tama Art University, Tokyo, Japan was designed by the famous Japanese architect Toyo Ito and looks like a palace.
6. National Library, Kolkata has several interesting facts. One of these is discovery of a hidden chamber by Ministry of Culture in 2010. While restoring building with help of ASI, a secret ground floor room of 1,000 sq ft was discovered. It was previously unknown.

Evaluate Yourself

1. List the users of university libraries.
2. Give a brief account of services of a special library.
3. What are the key missions of a public library ?
4. How are services of a college library different from that of a school library ?
5. In which ways is a special library different from a national library ?

Extend Your Horizon

1. Visit the website of the library of University of Delhi. Look for various services available for users. Record your findings.
2. In your city, go to a school library, a public library and a special library. Observe the collection, category of users and services. Record your findings and give a comparative account.