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LIBRARY AND ITS PURPOSES

INTRODUCTION

You all must have visited a library in your school or any library in your area. Have you ever thought how it works, functions, or what are its components? The concept of a library, its origin, growth, and functions have undergone a sea change. Present society is largely dependent on books, graphic records and other print/non-print material. In this lesson we will study about the origin, purpose and functioning of a library.



OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- define a Library;
- discuss the purpose and functions of a Library;
- identify the role of libraries in education and society; and
- explain the changing dimensions of libraries in the information age.

1.1 DEFINITION OF A LIBRARY

The word 'Library' is derived from the Latin word "libraria" meaning 'a book place'. It originates from the term 'liber' which means 'a book'. According to the *Oxford Companion to the English Language* edited by Tom MacArthur – "Library is a collection of books, periodicals and/or other materials, primarily written and printed." Harrods's Librarian's Glossary and

Reference Book defines 'Library' as:

1. A collection of books and other literary material kept for reading, study and consultation.



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2. A place, building, room or rooms set apart for the keeping and use of a collection of books, etc.
3. A number of books issued by one publisher under a comprehensive title as the 'Loeb Classical Library', and usually having some general characteristics such as subject, binding, or typography.
4. A collection of films, photographs and other non-book materials, plastic or metal tapes, disks and programs.

All of these, as well as printed and manuscript documents, may be provided in departments of one large library or they may be in collections restricted to one type of material.

The 'Library' as conceived by **Pierce Butler**, 'is a social organization' –necessary unit in the social fabric, effectively planned and organized for transmitting the accumulated experience of society to individual members of the society through the instrumentality of books and other graphic, acoustic and holistic materials – maps, charts, phono-records, microfilms, etc.

Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, father of library science in India describes *the library as a public institution or establishment charged with the care and collection of books and the duty of making them accessible to those who require the use of them.*

Therefore, it can be derived from the above definitions that library is an organization of records of human thought. These records are in a physical form, i.e., human thoughts embodied in the collection of useful manuscripts, books, periodicals, audio-visual records, microfilms, graphs, charts, etc. They are arranged, stored and preserved in a physical functional structure for its effective utilization by willing potential users in future.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.1

Fill in the blanks.

1. The Library as conceived by Pierce Butter is _____.
2. Library is an organization of records of _____.

Let us now learn the purpose and function of a library.

1.2 PURPOSE AND FUNCTIONS OF A LIBRARY

The purpose and functions of a library are given below to enable you to understand the need for the library.

1.2.1 The purpose of establishing a library is to serve as a means where by the records of human thoughts, ideas and expressions are made available to all.

1.2.2 The functions of the library are :

- To collect and provide books as well as other non-book material to help the

people to think and act independently. Thereby, they are able to develop their creative and critical capacities and powers of appreciation;

- To foster and promote the spread of knowledge, education and culture;
- To provide facility for formal and informal life-long self-education to all people in the community;
- To preserve the literary and cultural heritage of humanity for posterity as vehicles of culture and material for research;
- To provide reliable information for all kinds of users irrespective of age group, caste, creed, colour, religion, sex, etc.;
- In a nutshell, the functions of a library mentioned above can be broadly grouped into four concrete functions:

(a) Education

Education helps to foster and provide means for self-development of the individual groups at whatever stages of education, narrowing the gap between the individual and recorded knowledge. As an educational centre, the library has to support and promote all types of education (formal, non-formal, adult and life-long) by keeping adequate stock of books and other reading material and making them available to all sections of the community.

(b) Information

We have to provide accurate information to an individual or a group quickly and sufficiently, particularly on the topics of their interest and current in nature. The scope of information service is extended to include information on other socio-economic needs of the society. A library has to serve as an information centre or referral centre for specialized sources of information. The employment opportunities, public utility services, social awareness programmes are considered to be essential areas of information which are collected and stored for dissemination to the general public.

(c) Culture

Library is one of the principle centres of cultural life and promotes a keener participation, enjoyment and appreciation of all the arts. Promotion of culture has two aspects. Firstly, reading and thinking that widens mental horizon and develops creative capabilities of the individuals. Secondly, the library has to contribute to the cultural enrichment of the society by organizing extension activities like lectures, seminars, symposia, book exhibitions and cultural gatherings.

(d) Recreation

Libraries play part in encouraging the positive use of leisure and providing material for change and relaxation. Provision of scope for healthy and positive use of leisure is an important function of a library. Books of fiction, magazines and newspapers,



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etc. facilitate recreational reading. Audio-visual material such as films, television, radio, audio-video cassettes, etc. increase the utility of a public library. Various forms of performing arts may also be organized in the library to make them real community centers.



Activity 1.1

Students should be acquainted and exposed to a library environment, its collections and various services offered by arranging visits to a library.



INTEXT QUESTION 1.2

State True or False.

1. The Libraries do not provide any facility for formal and informal life-long education to people in the community.
2. A library has to serve as an information centre or referral center for specialised sources of information.
3. Libraries play part in encouraging the positive use of leisure and providing material for change and relaxation.

1.3 ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN SOCIETY AND EDUCATION

Let us now understand the role of Libraries in society and education.

1.3.1 Library as a Social Institution

Libraries play an important role in the socio-economic, cultural and educational development of a society. Library service is considered as a social necessity for a co-operative life of culture and for the steady development of the social being. Library as a **social institution** serves several purposes:

- i) It should help the life-long self-education of one and all;
- ii) It should furnish up-to-date facts and information on all subjects to all;
- iii) It should distribute in an unbiased and balanced way, all shared recorded views and thoughts to everyone;
- iv) It should provide a harmless and elevating use of leisure to one and all;
- v) It should preserve the literary and cultural heritage of humanity for **antiquarian** research; and
- vi) It should work for continued social well-being as the agency in-charge of all socialised recorded thought.

(a) Library for raising Cultural Level

Libraries not only enhance the level of intelligence and status of the common man in the society to a great extent but also increase the quantum of the common sense of the average man in the community. The library tends to increase the reading habits and change the reading tastes of the people by raising the level of culture.

By catering to all possible needs of the community, the readers get a scope to undertake research in every walk of life, provide recreation and information to all classes of the population.

(b) Library as an Instrument in Creating Refined Citizen

A civilized society is expected to have literate and educated community fully aware of the value, importance and use of libraries. L.J. Jast opines “*wherever there is civilization, there must be books and wherever there are books, there are libraries*”. The library is a driving force capable of building a better society by its nature, variety, quality and extent of service. It is a support for all types of educational development of an individual. It enables every reader an access to a wide range of reading material in order to broaden one’s outlook ,knowledge and ideas. The success of the democracy really depends upon the educated and enlightened citizens irrespective of their social status. An informed and refined citizen can judge what is right and wrong. It opens the windows of the mind and enables the reader to solve his/her crucial problems in a reasonable manner.

(c) Library Promotes the Desire for Books

Being a social institution, library not only satisfies the readers by providing books but also promotes the desire for books. In promoting the reading habit of the people, the library makes the readers library minded and draws attention of readers to love books. Demand for such books is fully met by librarian by making these available to the users. Therefore, the libraries play a vital role in the social life of the community. The growth in the size and stock of books is made possible by the increased desire for books by the innumerable readers giving due importance to libraries in the cultural and social life in the society.

(d) Library Facilitates Social Integration

As a social institution and as an institution for democratic living, library allows users to interact among themselves by organizing talks, lectures, films ,discussions on current topics, book exhibitions, and some socially useful activities. This is a right forum for social get-togethers within the premises of the library and making it available on equal terms to all groups in the community.

(e) Library Preserves Knowledge

Library maintains archives of old and rare documents for preservation of literary heritage for posterity. It stores the literary remains of humanity for **antiquarian** research in varied physical formats. Such collections help researchers to delve into historical aspects.



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1.3.2 Role of Library in Education

Education and training of the individuals is considered in every developmental and educational plan as an essential means of stimulating economic and social development. To make the people **erudite** and civilized, the society requires an effective educational system. This system requires the systematic use of the published reading material. If they are to be at the disposal of the whole population, libraries are inevitable. Without libraries, there can be neither any good schools, colleges or university nor the life-long integrated education of adults. It is believed that where formal education ends informal education begins and a life-long learning process is continued with the support of adequate and proper library services.

(a) The Library is People's University

The education aims at imparting knowledge and skills to individual human beings for their self development, so as to challenge the organization and functioning of the society. Libraries are the foundation in such an endeavor and are considered essentially "Universities of the people".

(b) The Library is a Centre of Mass Education

Libraries in general and public libraries in particular, have an important role to play in the future development of the country in the fields of political awareness, socio-economic growth, cultural and educational enlightenment. Library services to all classes of people act as an intellectual **catalyst** by providing facilities of acquiring education, information, recreation, **aesthetic** appreciation and research, irrespective of age and sex for the welfare of the society as a whole.

(c) The Library is a Centre of Continuing Education

People continue their reading habits with the help of libraries according to their desire, capacity or need. Being a centre of continuing education for millions of people, it develops the vocational and professional skills, learning skills of solving individual and community problems. Library informally provides a life-long continuing education to the learners throughout their life. This is also same for neo-literates.



Activity 1.2

Interaction between the students and professionals working in the library is necessary to feel that library really develops the educational standards of the individuals who want to avail the library service.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.3

Select the Correct option.

1. Libraries play an important role in _____ of individuals.
 - a) Personality development

- b) Physical appearance
 c) Educational development
 d) Old age
2. The use of the library by the people makes them _____ of society.
- a) Smart citizens
 b) Well informational citizens
 c) Politicians'
 d) Managers

We will now explain the changing dimension of Librarians in information age.

1.4 LIBRARIES OF INFORMATION AGE

Society does not remain static and goes on changing. Being is a social institution and social transformations, affect the role of libraries. The present day society has undergone fast changes in almost all sectors. Several factors responsible for the growth of libraries are:

- Political and social stability of the society
- Expansion of educational facilities and high rate of literacy
- National, regional and local socio-cultural traditions
- Urbanisation and globalization of population due to migration
- Growth in trade and commerce, industry and business
- Encouragement from national, local and state governments
- High standard of living
- Influence of leaders and individuals in different fields
- Well established book trade
- Mass communication
- Computer and communication technology

These social, political and economic conditions have great impact on all aspects of the growth of libraries. They play a vital role in radically changing the conventional functions of the library. It not only deals with books but collects information in multiple media for its clients. The modern library has under gone changes in handling the basic functions of library viz. collection, processing, storage, retrieval, dissemination and utility of information. The new and complex demands of the users have to be fulfilled by several activities such as documentation, information analysis, consolidation and repackaging and application of information technologies .Library is regarded as a service institution. The advent of computer, communication,



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information and networking technologies have posed a great challenge to the librarians. In order to render efficient services and assist the users to make effective use of the available resources, librarian has to understand, appreciate and accept these changes. They must be willing to cope up with the changes and adopt them by taking advantage of the same.



INTEXT QUESTION 1.4

Fill in the blanks.

1. The present day _____ have undergone changes due to modern technologies.
2. The new and complex demands of the users are fulfilled by application of _____.
3. Library is regarded as a _____ institution.



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

Libraries occupy a prominent place in the society in developing social and educational standard of the common citizen.

Libraries supports in promoting research, cultural, recreational, spiritual and ideological activities of a man there by contributing a lot to the nation building programmes.

Libraries as repository of knowledge are used by all types of users to build up a value system.

As society has undergone radical changes, libraries have also been affected by these changes.

New information, communication and networking technologies have completely changed the functioning of the libraries.



TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Write down the necessity of a library.
2. What are the implications of library services on a society?
3. “Knowledge is power” - Explain this statement by highlighting the importance of libraries in enriching the knowledge of the individuals.



ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

1.1

1. A social organization
2. Human thought

1.2

1. False
2. True
3. True

1.3

- 1 (c)
2. (b)

1.4

1. Libraries
2. Information Technologies
3. Service

TERMS

The terms covered in this lesson which require further explanation are given below in an alphabetic order. The learner is required to explain each term.

Acoustics:

Antiquarian:

Aesthetic:

Catalyst:

Erudite:

Microfilm:

Phono-record:

Repository:



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