

# PUBLIC LIBRARY NORMS, STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

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## **1.0 Introduction**

A public library can be considered as people's university. The information resources available there are accessed by anyone in form of document or non-document or others form without any boundaries such as age, gender, religion, and level of economy etc. A public library system consisting of a state public library, regional public libraries, district public libraries, divisional public libraries, block libraries, village libraries, book deposit centres, mobile libraries, and connections and subsidiaries as may grow up in connection with it.

According to BIS Standard (2003), public library is a social institution meant for over all development of all people. it is a basic instrument in promoting peace, understanding and is a vital source for information and culture. The UNESCO public library manifesto defines the public library as "gateway to knowledge basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision- making and cultural development of the individual and groups". All the public libraries should be located a suitable premises to discharge the function efficiently. The building of a library should be designed as per IS 1553 and IS 2672.

## **2.0 Public Libraries: Basic Norms:**

The Public Library Service: IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines for Development (2001) provides basic principles and policies to be followed for a successful public library system in a country. These have been grouped under six major heads ;

1. Contribution and Objective of Public Library
2. Statutory and Economic Frame Work
3. Session for Needs, Interest and Requirement of Information Seekers
4. collection development
5. Human Resource and
6. Management and Marketing of Public Libraries.

The public library is a community and locally based information service meeting the needs of the local community and operating within the context of the community. Following Guidelines have been framed to provide assistance to librarians in any situations to develop an effective public library service related to the requirement of the local community.

## **3.0 Rural Libraries:**

As regards norms for rural public libraries in India, the following minimum configuration may be followed so that basic needs of the local community can be fulfilled.

Space -1000 sq.ft.or more

Number of books -6000 or more

Periodicals and newspapers -10 or more

Reading seats –25 or more

Internet workstations -5 or more

The collection should include CDs and DVDs. Certain basic services based on local needs such as lending,

reference, photocopying, skill development training programmes (e.g. personality development and communication), social events, children's section, training to users, etc. should be provided.

#### **4.0 Urban Library :**

The size of an urban library in a municipal town or district headquarter should depend upon the size of the population. The following minimum configurations should be considered. They are:-

Space -5000 sq.ft.

Number of books -10,000

Periodicals and newspapers - 50

Reading seats - 50

Internet access points -10

A part from basic services, certain additional activities and services are to be designed keeping in view of the needs of the local community. It is important to give a facelift to all the existing library buildings, to make them "eye-catching" buildings are one way to increase the footfall. It is desirable to have a branded exterior, and to locate the library in an easily accessible location. All libraries should be provided with toilets, drinking water and parking (wherever possible) facilities. Ambience is becoming increasingly important. An inviting exterior, a smart interior with modern furniture and fitting, a friendly and imaginative layout with proper signage are essential for a public library.

According to IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines, library services have to be physically accessible to all members of the community. This needs well situated library building, good reading and study facilities as well as relevant technologies and suitable opening hours convenient to the users. The location of the public library and its service outlets is very important. They should be close to transport networks and centres of community activities such as cultural hubs, commercial centres and shopping complexes. Whenever possible a public library can share building with other public spaces such as art galleries, museums and community centres.

#### **5.0 Library Services for Differently Abled :**

Although physical disabilities are carried in nature, the most commonly observed disabilities relate to speech, hearing, vision and movement. The facilities should be available for differently abled groups are :-

- Provision of books in Braille.
- Provision of services of Library staff to read out to visually -challenged readers;
- Audio-recordings on cassettes to be made available;
- Easy entry to the library by constructing ramps;
- Construction of special toilets;
- Provision of special space in the reading room where the reader on a wheelchair can read and work in a comfortable environment;
- Easy access to general readers reading room and reference collection.
- Easy access to halls/auditorium for cultural activities;
- Development of special collections through audio (for visually impaired) and visual (for those with impaired hearing) media. The collection so developed should be shared among different centres through networking, so as to enable these advantages to reach out to the largest number of readers with special needs.

**6.0 Public Libraries: Norms for Modernization :**

National Knowledge Commission Working Group has recommended a Library Charter for each library to display their objectives. Four major objectives have been identified.

1. They are disseminate knowledge as widely as possible,
2. To serve as a major vehicle to facilitate creation of new knowledge,
3. To facilitate optimal use of knowledge by all sectors such as government, industry, rural sector and civil society, and
4. To ensure that people from all sectors and all parts of the country have easy access to knowledge relevant to their needs in their own language. Internet access is essential for all public libraries. Higher possible bandwidth with Static IP is provided.

Authentication mechanism and authorized access for off-campus users be ensured. Two to fifteen internet terminals particularly related to employment and educational opportunities should provided depending upon the size of the staff and users in each public library. Virtual Reference Service be provided free of charge to the public.

According to IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines, public libraries have an exciting opportunity to help to bring everyone into this global convention 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. Implementation mechanism for the modernization of public libraries be outsourced or done through public private partnerships. Each public library should be given a photocopying machine. Computer workstations for users, repair of old books, maintenance of hardware etc. be taken care of. Access to online resources of interest to the public should be provided to libraries particularly in urban areas. A consortium to ensure access to relevant journals for the public at reduced rates should be developed. Multimedia databases may be developed at State Central Libraries. Selected copyright free materials including paintings, photographs, manuscript etc. available in public libraries be digitized and made available to the public. A National Repository of Digital Works may be compiled. A digital preservation policy for digitized works is to be developed by the newly established National Mission on Libraries in consultation with the National Digital Preservation Programme. As a part of this a Disaster Recovery Programme should be established to safeguard the digitized and other materials in public libraries. According to the recommendations made by the NKC's Working Group Networking of public libraries should be undertaken in a phased manners and the agency doing this project should ensure application of state of the art technology with open source platform which support multilingual environment with multi user and multimedia content creation. In addition, storage, dissemination and replication of the data through mirror sites, gateways, portals and inter library loan facilities have to be developed. The networking agency is required to conduct suitable training programmes for the staff so that above mentioned facilities are sustained.

**7.0 Public Libraries: Setting Standards :**

In India, public libraries work in isolation. In order to promote resource sharing and networking, adoption of standard is necessary. The ability to create and maintain effective, as well as widely based system of library resources that works so the mutual benefit of a large number of public libraries is an important issue. A network can achieve this objective as it is an inter-institutional arrangement and intended to break information isolation. The basic purpose of public libraries is to promote access to desired information rather than ownership of documents and other information sources. Most of the work in a public library is done with the help of a standard and ICT infrastructure. Standards are be developed for public libraries keeping in view the local needs with regard to different parameters like size of collection, services, staff, special services for categories like children, women, adult, entertainment, extension activities, researcher group, social worker group etc.

**Guidelines for Developing Management and Marketing Public Libraries:**

Every public library, without even a single exception, shall maintain a children's section for developing, creating talents, and mental developmental in children. According to IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines a library should have a written communication, marketing and promotions policy to enable it to undertake a planned promotion of its services to the public. The policy should include a marketing and communications strategy and methods of evaluating promotional programmes.

1. Distributing leaflets and brochures with details of libraries and organizing discussions/public lectures.
2. Engaging corporate companies, firms, trusties, celebrities, undertaking in library development.
3. Acting as "pressure group" and meeting the decision makers regularly.
4. Librarians are required to create a peer group that can meet public intellectuals and the media to support library advocacy. Public lectures, workshops and seminars to be organized to promote library use and library services. According to IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines, public libraries should develop a coherent marketing and promotion plan based on library's policy.
5. Regular publications and preparation of lists of library's resources and pamphlets.
6. history of the library, history of the community/local
7. Book exhibitions, extension activities, conferences etc
8. Annual library week celebrations and other collective promotional activities such as seminars, symposia, workshops, and other society meetings as centre for knowledge community and social development.

**8.0 Special library Publications:**

Public libraries need to spend at least 10% of their budget on above mentioned promotional activities which may also include advertising, customer relations oriented programmes (like seminars, symposium, indoor games, debate, awareness programme, quiz, storytelling etc.), interviews with readers and surveys of information needs and reading habits. One of the foremost requirements is the training of staff in library service marketing strategies. Development of soft skills (better communication and behavioural pattern) to be paid due attention and short term training programmes for the LIS staff should be organized. Performance measurement is an important part of library management. It should be a planned process carried out in a consistent manner for a definite period time. One can get further details about library performance indicators in ISO 11620.

**9.0 Library Performance Indicators:**

A systematic and regular collection, compilation analysis and reporting of data about library activity and users' feedback can be a basis for developing a culture of assessment in a library. Objectives, facilities and utility of the services of the public libraries are also indicators of library performance.

Legislation and Budget Provision According to IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, 1994:-

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'. There are different types of relationships between public libraries and government. Since public library is a service developed for the local community, the local government institutions such as municipalities/city.

Corporations are the appropriate agencies for funding of libraries. Nineteen states have passed library laws in India and library cess is levied in some states to run a library system within a state. Another module is also suitable for a federal country like India where an organization i.e. Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) has been set up by the Central Government primarily to provide financial assistance to public libraries. Under this system RRRLF provides matching grants to the State Governments and their public libraries for purchase of books, development of infrastructure like building, furniture, modernization etc. On the basis of recommendation of National Knowledge Commission, a National Mission on Libraries has been set up by the Government of India in

March 2012 for a period of three years. The commission has mentioned in its report that the National Mission must be set up for a period of three years with statutory back up and a regular budget. The Mission should be converted into a permanent National Commission on Libraries to become an important part of the library development process.

According to IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines, public libraries should be based on legislation which assures their continuity and long-time survival in the Government structure. However, public library legislation may take various forms. In certain countries the legislation is specific to public libraries where as in others it is normally made a part of wider legislation which includes different types of libraries.

Regarding sources of funding a number of options are available to for public libraries. The main sources are:

- a) Axation at local region or central level,
- b) Block grants from central region or local level,
- c) Donations from funding bodies or private individuals
- d) Revenue from activities such as book publishing, sales of books, sales of works of art and handicrafts,
- e) Sponsorship from internal organizations/business houses under corporate social responsibility,
- f) Revenue from individual services i.e. photocopying and printing facilities, fines etc. According to IFLA/UNESCO public library manifesto, a public library should not charge fee from the readers. In other words charging users for services and membership should not be used as a source of revenue for public libraries.

According to BIS 15339 (2003) - Budget provision is the minimum ratio of staff to other expenditure shall be 50 : 40 percent.

### **10.0 Conclusions**

Library buildings, equipment and ICT facilities should be well designed and kept up – to –date. Library resources in all media (print, audio- visual, online) should be contemporary, provide a wide range of information, ideas and works of creative imagination, and be sufficient in quantity to meet the needs of library. Staff should be helpful, knowledgeable, welcoming and well- trained. They should be involved in a workforce development programmed. Public libraries throughout the world are facing the problem of lack of funds for creating new positions and hiring new personal. The roles of librarians change with changes in user needs and demands and the technology employed. Should be branches are of public libraries in most popular locality of society which can make most applicable and usable norms. The library service should also offer a programme of activities and events that reflect the important role of the library in the local community. These may include: Activities for parents and toddlers, children and young people, Libraries have developed in concert with their local and national history, Job search and resume writing, National library week, National children’s book week, Debate within different age groups of society, Quiz competition in different age groups of society etc. An important challenge before the library sector is the change in the very nature of libraries and librarians i.e. the public libraries must change from collection oriented institutions to service oriented organizations and librarians have to change from custodians of books and documents to information managers and disseminators while taking advantage from the IT sector for qualitative improvement, public libraries will have to ensure the following:-

- I. Take stock of public libraries in the country and their users through a nationwide survey.
- II. Resource sharing and networking of libraries.
- III. Consider both preservation and access on vital components of library service.
- IV. Marketing and awareness campaign for the promotion of library and information service.
- V. Utilization of management techniques for dealing with the new objectives.

However, the societal context in which public libraries operate is changing fast. The current economic slowdown in most part of the world has made it essential for local regional or national government to critically evaluate the amount of money spent on cultural institutions. In such a situation, public libraries are required to show their value and demonstrate their relevance to the citizens, governments and political masters.

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