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PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM IN PUNJAB: DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT

¹Dr. Mohd Shikoh and ²Mrs. Shadiya

¹Guest Faculty and ²B.Li. Sc

^{1&2}Department of Library and Information Science, Himachal Pradesh University
Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT

Public Libraries plays a significant role for the imparting education among the people of country. It is generally says that Public libraries are thought of as a means of bridging the information gap between the ‘information wealthy’ and the ‘information poor’ by facilitating simple access to knowledge for individuals from all spheres of Indian society. Currently, web and Internet technologies provide new opportunities for interactive contact between public libraries and the general population. The development of information and communication technologies (ICT) makes it possible for remote individuals to communicate via a variety of technical means at a lower cost. Due to this, the Government of India has assumed responsibility and is assisting every State in creating high-quality public libraries across the nation as part of the Digital India Project. Public Library in India has achieved its most remarkable development in large cities. But in Punjab, the development of Public Library was initiated after the enactment of Public Library Legislation from 1989. In the present research paper, an attempt has been made to know the current scenario of the Public Library System in India with special reference to Punjab State. It also covers the initiatives taken by the Government towards the development of public libraries particularly in Punjab, along with the challenges and opportunities encountered by the library professionals in the development of public libraries. It also describes the future scope for the development of public libraries in Punjab state.

Keywords: Public Libraries, Punjab, Government Initiatives, Infrastructure.

INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage depends very much upon libraries and information centers. Libraries throughout world work as the repositories of knowledge and information. The main objective of the libraries is to create, store, process and disseminate information to the local, regional, national and international community. It can only be attained with the support and application of information and communication technology in libraries in true spirit and form. Information and communication technology enables access to digital information beyond time and space. It can be accessed anywhere with the help of this technology. Free flow of information and knowledge at the end of the masses remains the main objective of the information and communication technology (Das, 2012).

UNESCO defined a Public Library as the local gateway to knowledge which provides a basic environment for lifelong learning, independent decision making and cultural development of the individual and social groups. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC), of India, constituted in June 2005 described libraries as ‘gateways of knowledge’ and it said that a Library is not a building just stacked with books. Rather it is a repository and source of information and ideas, a source for learning and enquiry, and for the generation of thought and the creation of new knowledge (Ghosh, 2003). Public libraries in particular have the potential to bridge the gap between the ‘information poor’ and the ‘information rich’ by ensuring that people from all sects of society and the people across India get an easy access to knowledge seeking. Public libraries are the service agencies which serve the general public as a whole without considering their age, gender, profession and socio-economic background. The libraries are run under Department of Higher Education in Punjab at different district headquarters and these are called District Libraries. The libraries working under municipal committees, municipal corporations, village panchayats, rural youth clubs or those which come under any other social organization are called and treated as public libraries (Kaur, 2008).

ISSUES BEFORE THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF PUNJAB

Inadequate ICT Infrastructure: Automation requires a lot of machinery and other equipment like computer hardware, software, communication and networking systems; electricity backup system; furniture and other infrastructure. Financial provision for the infrastructure is required for automation and development of public libraries.

Human Resources Scarcity: Human resources are the key source of development of a library. Strength of the staff directly reflects the strength of the organization. Housekeeping, operations and services including automation of public libraries are based on educated and trained staff availability which is not sufficient in Punjab Public libraries.

Scarcity of Funds for the Development Public Libraries: The finance always remained the key need of any development. Automation and administration of a library also requires financial assistance. Every plan requires adequate funds for proper success. The finance is

the pivot of every plan and its success. The paucity of funds remained the root cause of the crawling pace of the success in the automation of the libraries of Punjab.

PUNJAB STATE: AN OVERVIEW

Punjab state is North-Western State of India, bordered on the North by Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh, on the South by Haryana, on the South- West by Rajasthan and on the west by Pakistan Country as depicted in figure 1. Punjab has been the most successful state of India with distinctive heritage. Punjab has witnessed many upheavals throughout its history. It is also called the 'Gateway of India'. Presently, Punjab has twenty districts as mentioned in table 1.

Figure – 1 Punjab State



Source: Government of Punjab

Table – 1 List of Districts of Punjab

District	Population	Area (Km ²)
Amritsar	2,49,0891	2647
Barnala	5,96,294	1,410
Bathinda	13,88,859	3,385
Faridkot	6,18,008	1,469
Fatehgarh Sahib	599,814	1,180
Fazilka	1,180,483	3,113
Ferozepur	2,026,831	2,190
Gurdaspur	2,299,026	2,635
Hoshiarpur	1,582,793	3,365
Jalandhar	2,181,753	2,632
Kapurthala	817,668	1,632
Ludhiana	3,487,882	3,767
Mansa	768,808	2,171
Moga	992,289	2,216
Muktsar	902,702	2,615
Nawanshahr (Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar)	614,362	1,267
Pathankot	676,598	929
Patiala	1,892,282	3,218



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Rupnagar	683,349	1,369
Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar (Mohali)	986,147	1,093
Sangrur	1,654,408	3,610
Tarn Taran	1,120,070	2,449

Source: Government of Punjab

The word Punjab is a compound of two Persian words, Panj (five) and ab (water), thus signifying the land of five waters, or rivers (the Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej). In 2001 census, Punjab had a population of 24,358,999; with an average density of 482 persons per sq km. Chandigarh is the state capital. The population of Punjab consists mainly of Punjabis, Jats, and Rajputs. The official language is Punjabi, which is spoken by about two thirds of the population; the rest speaks Hindi. The religion of more than 60 percent of the people is Sikhism, which originated from the teachings of Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru. Hindus make up most of the remainder, although there are significant minorities of Muslims, Christians, and the commercially prominent Jains in some areas. About 30 percent of Punjab's population lives in cities and towns. Its major cities are Amritsar, Ludhiana, Jullundhar, and Patiala. Though the cities are fast-growing centres of industry and manufacture, more than 70 percent of the state's population is still dependent on agriculture. The state is divided into 17 districts, 72 Tehsils, 12,673 villages and 157 towns (Wani, n.d.).

The state of Punjab was formed on November 1, 1956, by merging Patiala & East Punjab States Union (PEPSU). Subsequently, the Sikhs in the new state demanded a Punjabi speaking state. In 1966 most of Punjab was divided into Punjabi speaking Punjab State and Hindi-speaking Haryana State.

Chandigarh is the capital of two states, Punjab and Haryana. The total area of the state is 50,362 square kilometres (19,445 square miles). The total Population of the Punjab is 2,43,58,599 consist of mainly Jats and Hindu Rajputs. About 30% Punjab people lives in Cities and 70% Punjab people lives in villages. So, we can say that Punjab lives in villages. Public libraries arise worldwide along with growth in education, literacy, and publications. Every country has its own public library history with influential leaders. Monarchs, wealthy people, and philanthropists have all made a contribution to society in the form of public library development. Services to children and young people aged from birth to adolescence provided by public library.

Community information may be information about an organization that can help people in particular circumstances. The relationship between literacy and library remains strong. In a non-literate community, a public library is inconceivable. Without a good public library communities may not retain literacy already acquired, may be unable to extend cultural and scientific literacy and may find it difficult, if not impossible, to engage in processes of lifelong learning. Today's library, in seeking to serve an information society, has changed drastically and yet remains unchanged in its essential cultural mission –as the public repository of imaginative and collective constructions of reality and as an agency to serve different publics in the intra- generational and intergenerational dissemination, utilization and validation of currently held knowledge. The public library system did not prevail. Few monasteries, temples and kings had private collections of manuscripts and books. Library facilities were available only for very few. There were few public libraries largely sponsored by book loving kingdoms (Wani, n.d.).

EDUCATION SYSTEM IN PUNJAB

Schools are maintained largely by the state. Education is compulsory and free for pupils aged 6 to 11. Secondary education is also free in state schools. There are 13352 Primary Schools, 2503 Middle schools, 3980 Secondary & Senior schools, 212 Colleges, 6 Universities. (60) The state has good number of educational institutions for higher education. The renowned Punjab Technical University Jullundhar which offers courses in varied disciplines was established in January 1997 for advancement of technical education & development. The University has under its affiliation 40 Engineering colleges, 56 Management, 17 Pharmacy colleges, 6 Architecture 2 Hotel Management and 13 colleges imparting courses in Medical Lab Technology & IT disciplines.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN PUNJAB

The tradition of learning and education in Punjab has been very old, so much so that the 'Rigveda' which is deemed to be the oldest book in the world was composed in Punjab. In Ancient times Punjab developed such great centres of education and learning as the old Taxila. This tradition continued in the medieval and modern periods also. Similarly, the tradition of libraries could also be traced back to the ancient times. A glance over the history of Punjab reminds us that the world's first seat of learning, Taxila University, set up in Vedic Period had a beautiful library attached to it. The Sanskrit grammarian Panini, the political theorist Kautilya were the products of this university and the Ayurvedic healer Charaka studied at Taxila at various points in time. Kautilya, who later became adviser to the founder of the Mauryan Empire, is believed to have composed his treatise on statecraft the Arthashastra in Taxila (Kumar et al., 2016).



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The Punjab Library Association has been making attempts since 1948 to have library law enacted in the state and its first provincial conference was held in 1948 in which Mr. Trehan submitted a memorandum to the Govt. for enacting Public Library Law which should provide for:

- Directorate of Public Libraries;
- Public Library Authority;
- Legal Library Authority;
- Institution of Library Fund;

In 1959, Punjab Library Association approached the Local Self Government, Department of Punjab which took action in 1964. Mr. Trehan again submitted a fresh draft of Punjab Public Libraries Bill to Central Library Committee in 1968 but the finance could not be met out of the normal revenue of the state. In 1989 the association revived with a new enthusiasm, organized a book exhibition and a seminar on Public Library System on 22-23 November 1991, Punjab Library Association organized seminar on Public Library System and Library Legislation and decided to have the public supported network of public library system up to the block and village level on the statute Book of the state. The draft Bill prepared by and Expert Committee of Punjab Library Association is ready with association and is going too submitted to the state government as soon as possible (Kumar et al., 2016).

History of Punjab Public Library

The partition of India shook the Punjab because many good libraries went to Lahore, Pakistan and there was disorder in the state. The Punjab divided into East Punjab, India and West Panjab, Pakistan. The public, institutions and libraries suffered a lot and most important materials lost due to exchange and passage of public. Five important libraries were established in Lahore, Pakistan including the Punjab Public Library Lahore, 1884.

First Punjab Public Library, Lahore was established in 1884 by the Government of India. This Library was not rooted through the law, nor did it form the apex of any system of libraries. It was solitary, though the second biggest library in the country, next to the imperial library, Calcutta. Being the first central library of Punjab, it occupied a significant place and played a vital role in the library movement of Punjab. The library is still functioning at Lahore in Pakistan and is a proud heritage of British India. The road leading to Library has been named as Library Road. Only the members had the facility to loan out books from the library. The library used to receive grants from the Punjab Government and some of the local bodies in the state (Kumar et al., 2016).

The Great Philanthropists, S. Dyal Singh Majithia and S. Ganga Ram can be called the “Humanitarian of Punjab”. They promoted development of libraries in undivided Punjab. As such S. Dyal Singh Public Library was established at Lahore in 1896. He made a trust in the name of S. Dyal Singh for the maintenance of public library for diffusing education in citizen and to enlighten the people with new learning. S. Ganga Ram commercial.

Public Library was established through a trust in 1923 to organize and control the money donated by charities. This Library had a rich English tradition collection of nationalism and liberalism which extend the glory of England. The ‘Dwarka Das Public Library’ Lahore was established in 1921 by Lok Sewak Mandal made by Lala Lajpat Rai. The library houses an excellent collection of political collection of political leaders. The membership of the library is open to the public as well as for the students of Tilak School of politics founded by Lala Lajpat Rai for youth who could not continue their studies during non- Cooperation Movement. After the Partition, the Library was rehabilitated at Chandigarh, Scetor-15 and is functioning as Cultural Centre. The first Municipal Library in Ludhiana was started as early as in 1878 even before the Punjab Public Library, Lahore 1884. Thereafter, Municipal Libraries were established in Various Cities e.g., Municipal Library, Patiala 1897, Moti Lal Nehru Public Library, Amritsar 1900, Municipal Library, Kapurthala 1904, Central Public Library, Sangrur 1912, Patiala Union Public Library, Sangrur 1914 (Wani, n.d.).

Small Public libraries and reading rooms were also opened by local bodies in small towns of the state. The development society in Punjab during the 1920’s also contributed towards educating the people through Public Libraries. The Arya Samaj society made the teaching of Vedas, Puranas and other post Vedic literature the property of common people by publishing them in regional language and providing them in the Public Libraries. The Singh Sabha Society led to the publication of literature in Punjabi Language for the most part the religious literature. Bhai Vir Singh and other Sikh missionaries worked much in this direction. Reading rooms were opened in the Gurdwaras at Amritsar, Nankana Sahib and Mukatsar under the charge of Granthis (Golden, 2012)



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Central State Libraries in Punjab

In 1955, Tirlok Singh Central State Library, Chandigarh was established. Central State Library, Patiala and three district libraries at Dharamsala, Jalandhar and Ambala were also set up. The district library of Narnaul in 1962, The district library of Gurdaspur in 1966 were set up by the Government. The T.S. Central State Library, Chandigarh went to Union Territory Chandigarh and the District Library of Dharamshala went to Himachal Pradesh and Ambala and Narnaul were transferred to Haryana. The Punjab was left with only two District Libraries of Jalandhar and Sangrur. The New District Libraries were established after 1966 are: The Central Public Library, Patiala became the Central State Library and was renamed as Musafir Memorial Central State Library. After this many District Libraries were established such as District Libraries Amritsar 1982, Fatehgarh Sahib 1995, Ropar and Kapurthala 1966, Public Library Mohali 2007, and Mansa District Library 1995 (Pandey et al, 2011).

Present Situation of Punjab Public Libraries

Presently, the Punjab Public Library System is managed by the Directorate of Public Instruction which is assisted by Assistant Director, Cultural Affairs. At Present there is 01 Central State Libraries, 14 District Libraries, 104 Municipal Libraries, 1200 Rural Libraries, 3000 Reading Rooms in the State. So, out of 20 Districts, the Six District of Nava Shahr, Taran Taran Taaran, Moga, Mukatsar, Barnala and Ludhiana have not their District Libraries. All the 14 District Libraries are selected for study as mentioned in table 2.

Table 2 Public Libraries in Punjab

Library	Year
M.M. Central State Library, Patiala	1955
District Library, Amritsar	1982
District Library, Bathinda	1974
District Library, Fatehgarh Sahib	1995
District Library, Faridkot	1980
District Library, Ferozepur	1980
District Library, Gurdaspur	1966
District Library, Hoshiarpur	1974
District Library, Jalandhar	1956
District Library, Kapurthala	1971
District Library, Mohali	2007
District Library, Mansa	1995
District Library, Patiala (Nabha)	1956
District Library, Ropar	1971
District Library, Sangrur	1956

Source: Government of Punjab

SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF PUNJAB

- Charging and discharging of documents
- Reprographic and printing services
- Newspaper clipping services
- Inter library loan
- Assistance in the searching of documents
- Reservation of books
- Reference service
- Library orientation service
- Internet services
- Extension services
- OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue)
- Readers advisory service
- Bibliographic and documentation services



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PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN PUNJAB: THE CHANGING SCENARIO

The first thing to do when considering services to adults with special would need to create a plan. Some advance planning and preparation can go a long way in library make wise programming choices. Because resources are limited, staff of public libraries needs to identify priorities and offer those services that will meet a community need and deliver the greatest benefit. The planning process and the planning document do not need to be lengthy or involved. The extent of the planning effort depends on the staff and budget resources the library is willing and able to devote (Aabo, 2005). Planning is a continual cycle of assessment, forecasting, goal setting, implementation, and evaluation. A library that maintains a regular planning cycle can emphasize various aspects at different times or after examining community demographics and talking to others in the community, a library may decide to focus on one particular special needs group. The amount of work to be invested in every step depends on library resources and past planning efforts. The library should be able to recognize success when it happens and make midcourse correction when necessary. Written plans help clarify ideas that in turn provide the information needed for good communication with the library staff and the community.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives are drawn in order to accomplish the aim of the study.

- To discuss the present position of public libraries in Punjab.
- To study the issues and challenges in the implementation of IT based services in public libraries of Punjab.
- To suggest the remedial measures to improve the position of district libraries of Punjab.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is analytical in nature. It has been conducted by taking primary as well as secondary data. The primary data has been collected by using the survey instrument by conducting the study on the public library system in Punjab. There is total 15 public libraries in Punjab including one central library. A structured questionnaire was designed to satisfy the objectives of the study and it was distributed among the library professionals as well as users' in selected nine public libraries and one central state library. The convenience sampling method was adopted for the collection of data. Also, an attempt was made to personally contact and meet all library professionals in their respective libraries to have first-hand information and to have an understanding of the existing infrastructure in terms of IT and staff. The list of selected public libraries of Punjab State are as follows:

Table 3 Public Libraries in Punjab

S. No.	Public Library
1.	Central State Library Patiala
2.	Public Library Amritisir
3.	Public Library Fatehgarh Sahib
4.	Public Library Gurdaspur
5.	Public Library Jalandhar
6.	Public Library Kapurthala
7.	Public Library Mansa
8.	Public Library Mohali
9.	Public Library Ropar
10.	Public Library Sangrur

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data collected through personal survey and questionnaire has been presented in the table form and the analysis of the data has been done. Results are presented here.

Present Status of Public Libraries in Punjab

In Punjab, there are total 15 district public libraries operating presently. For the present study, the researcher surveyed 10 districts public libraries of Punjab covering one State Central Library from both states as shown in Table 3.



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Equipment's Available

Table 4 Equipments Available in Public Libraries of Punjab State

Equipment	Amritsar	Fatehgarh Sahib	Gurdaspur	Jalandhar	Kapurthala	Mansa	Mohali	Patiala	Ropar	Sangrur
Photocopy Machine	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Wheel Chair	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Computer	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	1
Basic Amenities	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
AC	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0

Table 4 highlights the equipments available in public libraries in Punjab state. The public library at Mohali is the only public library in Punjab which has its own photocopy machine and the public library of Jalandhar has three-wheel chairs for the physically challenged users. There are two computers available in Amritsar Library, Mohali, Patiala, Ropar and Sangrur has One, three, two, one and one computer respectively. The common facility in public libraries of Punjab is available in all the public libraries. The air conditioner is available in the public library of Jalandhar, Mohali, Patiala, Ropar and Sangrur.

Table 5 Total Collection in Public Libraries of Punjab

Particular	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Amritsir	44500	46200	47500	49700	51300
Fatehgarh Sahib	17000	17200	17700	17900	21000
Gurdaspur	46000	48500	49700	50702	54715
Jalandhar	93000	94602	94702	95000	97000
Kapurthala	47000	49700	49900	50200	51500
Mansa	20000	21250	22500	23600	24000
Mohali	19000	19700	20600	21540	23000
Patiala	139852	136353	137733	138925	141856
Ropar	42900	43600	44500	45100	46000
Sangrur	75000	76500	77800	78700	81000

Total collection of books in Public Libraries of Punjab is presented in table 5 from 2015-16 to 2019-20. The public library of Amritsar had 44500 books in 2015-16 which increased over the period and finally the collection of books was 51300 in 2019-20. The public library of Fatehgarh had 17000 books in the year 2015-16 which has reached to 21000 books in the year 2019-20. Among all the public libraries in Punjab the public library of Patiala has maximum number of books as it had 139852 books in 2015-16 which increased over the years and finally in 2019-20, it had reached to 141856 books. The Jalandhar Public Library had the second largest collection of books as it had 93000 books in the year 2015-16 which reached to 97000 books in the year 2019-20.

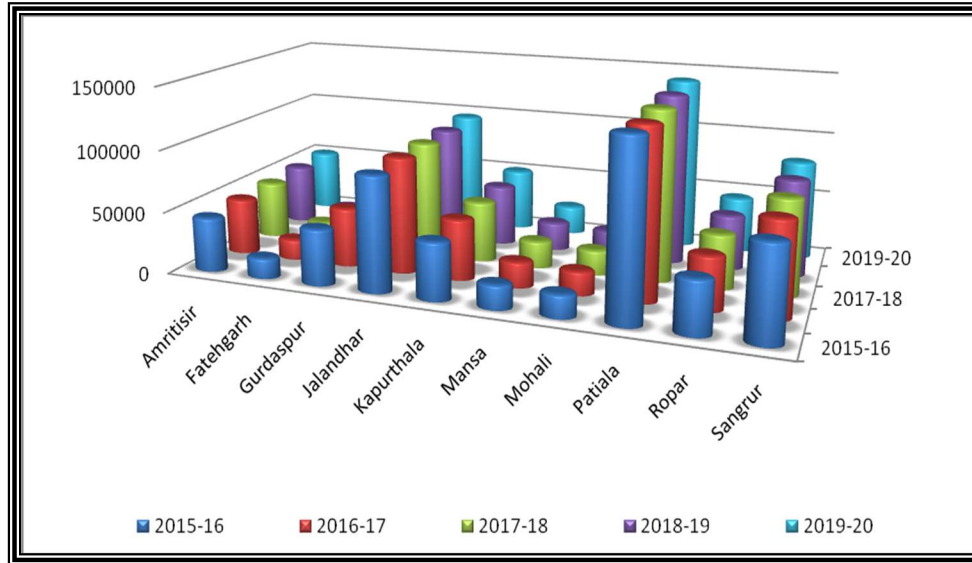


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Figure 2 Total Collection in Public Libraries of Punjab



Newspaper and Magazines subscribed

Table – 6 Newspapers and Magazines subscribed in Public Libraries of Punjab

Particular	Newspaper	Magazines
Amritsir	8	3
Fatehgarh Sahib	6	0
Gurdaspur	3	5
Jalandhar	9	10
Kapurthala	14	11
Mansa	00	00
Mohali	08	0
Patiala	9	8
Ropar	9	3
Sangrur	7	5

Table 6 presents the availability of newspapers and magazines among the public libraries in Punjab State. Maximum number of newspapers and magazines were subscribed by Kapurthala Public Library as it subscribed to fourteen newspapers and eleven magazines while the Mansa public library does not subscribe any newspaper nor magazines. The Amritsar public library subscribed to eight newspapers and three magazines while the public library of Sangrur subscribed seven newspaper and five magazines.

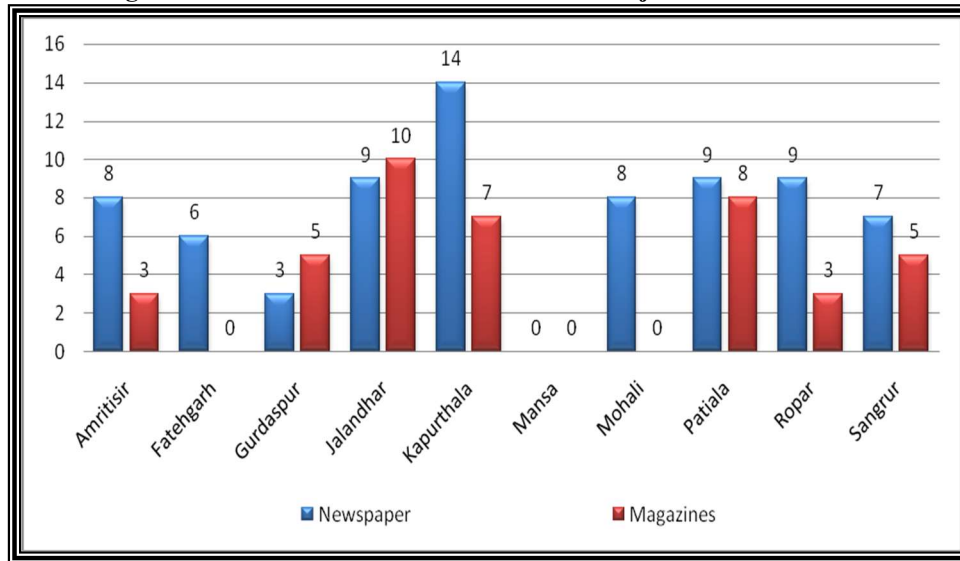


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Figure – 3 Newspapers and Magazines subscribed in Public Libraries of Punjab



E-facilities Available

Table 7 E-facilities available in Public Libraries of Punjab

E-Facilities	Computer	Printer	Internet	Supporting Staff
Amritsar	√	√	√	√
Fatehgarh Sahib	x	X	x	x
Gurdaspur	x	X	x	x
Jalandhar	X	X	x	x
Kapurthala	√	√	x	x
Mansa	x	X	x	√
Mohali	√	√	x	x
Patiala	√	X	x	x
Ropar	√	X	√	√
Sangrur	√	√	x	x

Table 7 shows the e-facilities available in public libraries of Punjab State. It has been found that public library at Amritsar has its own computer, printer, internet and supporting staff for the smooth working of library. The public library of Fatehgarh Sahib, Gurdaspur and Jalandhar did not have any e-facility. The public library of Kapurthala, Mohali, Patiala, Ropar and Sangrur had their own computers too.

Learning Support:

Table 8 Learning Support in Public Library of Punjab

Nature of Support	Training the Users	Personal Support	Tutorials/Manuals	Others
Amritsar	√	√	x	√
Fatehgarh Sahib	x	x	x	x
Gurdaspur	x	x	x	x
Jalandhar	x	x	x	x
Kapurthala	x	X	x	x
Mansa	x	X	x	x
Mohali	√	√	x	x



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Patiala	√	√	x	x
Ropar	√	X	x	√
Sangrur	x	X	x	x

Table 8 shows the different kinds of support provided by the public libraries of Punjab State. It has been observed that the public library of Amritsar provided training to its users and personal support along with other kinds of support. The public Library of Mohali, Patiala, Ropar and Sangrur are providing training for users along with personal support and other kinds of support to their users.

Total Annual Budget of Library

Table 9 Total Annual Budget of Public Libraries of Punjab

Particular	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Amritsir	1375700	1470500	1470500	1400000	1396700
Fatehgarh Sahib	450000	451000	449000	449000	451000
Gurdaspur	800000	759000	770000	870000	900000
Jalandhar	5861300	5970000	5900000	5760000	5675000
Kapurthala	870000	999500	997500	997500	997500
Mansa	1300000	1270000	1310000	1320000	1300000
Mohali	1300000	1370000	1290000	1120000	1250000
Patiala	11251010	11503800	10200000	10502000	10083824
Ropar	4900000	4800000	4860000	47200000	4850000
Sangrur	900000	8400000	9100000	865000	950000

Table 9 presents the total annual budget of Public Libraries of Punjab from 2015-16 to 2019-20. It has been found that the total budget of Public Library of Amritsar was Rs. 1375700 in 2015-16 which reached to Rs. 1396700 in 2019-20. The public library of Fatehgarh Sahib had the minimum budget i.e. Rs. 450000 which increased to Rs. 451000 in 2019-20. The maximum budget of public library was recorded in Patiala i.e. Rs. 11251010 in 2015-16 which fluctuated over the years and finally reached to Rs. 10083824 in the year 2019-20. The total annual budget of Public library of Sangrur was Rs. 900000 which reached to Rs. 950000 during 2019-20.

MODERNISATION OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN PUNJAB

Insufficient ICT Infrastructure: Automation requires a lot of machinery and other equipments like computer hardware, software, communication and networking systems; Electricity backup system; furniture and other infrastructure. Financial provision for the infrastructure is required for automation and development of public libraries.

Human Resources Scarcity: Human resources are the key source of development of a library. Strength of the staff directly reflects the strength of the organization. Housekeeping, operations and services including automation of public libraries are based on educated and trained staff availability which is not sufficient in Punjab Public libraries.

Library Legislation in Punjab: Non- implementation of library legislation in Punjab remained the main reason behind the poor public library system in Punjab. According to UNESCO (1991), only legislation can empower the appropriate authorities to provide the service and endure adequate financial support and efficient administration according to national standards. Library legislation ensures the development and maintenance of libraries on an approved and uniform pattern for the service of the community by laying down the structure of libraries.

Paucity of Funds for the Development Public Libraries: The finance always remained the key need of any development. Automation and administration of a library also requires financial assistance. Every plan requires adequate funds for proper success. The finance is the pivot of every plan and its success. The paucity of funds remained the root cause of the crawling pace of the success in the automation of the libraries of Punjab.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- The public libraries of Punjab has overall percentage of all the components of ICT is quite low.
- The infrastructure facility available in the public libraries of Punjab is not satisfactory. The state and district library system in Punjab presents a dismal picture.
- It has been found that all sample public libraries are facing lack of professional and non-professional personnel. Due to unavailability of professional staff, most of the libraries are facing various issues with technical work like classification and



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cataloguing and process of automation.

- The central state library has a shortage of librarians against the sanctioned strength besides other supporting staff.
- All the district libraries are not able to implement ICT in their library systems because of paucity of funds, shortage of staff, inadequate infrastructure to support ICT and lack of training facilities for the existing library staff.

SUGGESTIONS

- The enactment of library legislation is taken to be essential for the purpose of an integrated library development. There should be a set-up of a separate and an independent directorate of libraries for administering and managing the public library system in Punjab.
- Public library should be made approachable to all with the help and use of modern technology and internet. The circulation of cultural heritage should be made available beyond walls and boundaries, for the use and advantage of the public, by putting whole collection just a mouse clicks away.
- It has been found that most of the sample libraries are providing referral service. The researchers observed that libraries provided handbooks, bibliographic information regarding the district and other necessary information.
- On-line access to information is of utmost importance with the development of information technologies and their use. Smart public libraries are thus required to play a vital role as e-learning centers and should be providing free access to electronic information and free access points for the users of the libraries.
- Automation is also mandatory in the libraries because to locate and issue the required book to the reader needs to take a very little time and effort. IT related training should also be imparted from time to time to whole library staff on regular intervals. There should be conducted regular meetings with the staff and users to judge the scope for improvement of services in district libraries.

CONCLUSION

The public libraries in Punjab plays an important role in the education system of the state. Automation of Public Libraries in Punjab requires a lot of work to be done yet. The main requirement at the present time is the willingness of the state government to support the cause of library automation. The Punjab state has its own Library Legislation which provide a platform for the smooth functioning of public libraries in the state. Library automation depends upon adequate infrastructure, manpower and financial resources which unfortunately public libraries of Punjab do not have. The Punjab State has 19 district public libraries and one state central library. The present study was conducting by taking 09 public libraries and one central library from the state. The public libraries of Punjab are providing various facilities to their users in order to impart knowledge and fulfill the requirements. It is found that neither the state library nor the district libraries are providing services beyond the walls of respective cities. The public libraries need to have mobile library concept in order to reach out the people in countryside.

In general, public libraries in Punjab are unable to provide the informational requirements of their present patrons. There are several factors responsible for the uneven deployment of IT such as lack of financial assistance can slow down the infrastructure update and automation process is a lack of technical expertise create local or internal databases while utilizing existing technologies, etc. Governmental libraries in Punjab needed modernized resources, infrastructure and highly qualified labour that could only be a law governing libraries needs to be passed in the country.

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