PUBLIC LIBRARY
&
DIGITAL DIVIDE

Editor
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ODISHA STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY
SAMBALPUR

PUBLIC LIBRARY AND DIGITAL DIVIDE
OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

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CONTENT

#9

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTRES IN ODISHA: A STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

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Introduction:

In the context of the globalized world, information and its accessibility play a vital role in the development of human competency. The information era with its electronic gadgets will come across many challenges in all the sectors of development since the information has become a basic need for any activities of development. Public libraries and information centers will have their challenges and risk to take part in this major activity. To meet such challenges, Odisha will need to have a vision for the future millennium to adopt the latest Technology in the sphere of developmental activities. It may include a change in the function of the library to make it service oriented rather than collection oriented. To strengthen the system, perennial financial support from different agencies is required. The corporate social responsibly of the public enterprises also need to be taken into consideration apart from government assistance. Under such a situation, the social responsibility of the public libraries for its clienteles has to be decided from various angles leaving traditional service approach.

Conceptual Definition:

Librarianship exists within the world social context as well as within the social structure of each individual country. There is no doubt that information workers carry a professional responsibility that is of most important in today's society, though it is believed that the scope of this responsibility is now much broader than earlier with the effect of global cultural imperialism communicated through media and endemic information overload. Information professionals can play a role in reducing cultural and ideological differences because of their influence over information, thus there is a need for social responsibility of public libraries in a changing scenario.

Social responsibility and libraries is a complex term with two facets. ALA defines "Social responsibility as the relationship that librarians and libraries have to non-library problems that relate to the social welfare of the society". But this definition does not spell out the true definition of social responsibility. The definition of social responsibility is the obligation of an organization towards the welfare and interests of the society in which it operates. When libraries have to take into accounts of social issues and inequalities, which are beyond library's purview and work with patrons and co-workers for the upliftment of members of the society, it becomes the social responsibility of the library. However, a

library's social responsibility is to answer the information needs of its user and to be responsible to those needs is a librarian's foremost duty and therefore his chief social responsibility.

Social Responsibility and Library:

The library is a social institution. It is established by the people, for the people out of the social necessity of the individuals in a given society. Thus, social development and libraries are regarded as two sides of the same coin. One cannot think of social development without the library. Hence, the obligation of the library as a social organization towards the welfare of the society in which it operates is the need of the hours. In a library set up, while working with the patrons and workers, one should take account of social issues and inequalities because; these are the essential ingredients of social responsibility. With the creation of Social Responsibility Round Table (SRRT) in 1968 by ALA, the purpose was to provide a forum, whose responsibility membership discussion, can take place to examine current library effort to face issues and to propose action programs. But the issue as opposed to an agreement that the library has a unique and traditional role to play in society by providing educational information and recreation. This uniqueness has distinguished the library professionals from other service organizations. By performing a task outside the basic function, libraries are delving areas, where they have no competency to handle effectively.

Identification of Non-Library Issues as Social Responsibility for Library Professionals:

With the emergence of information technology, communication technology, and multimedia technology, the libraries are not attracted by the users as they easily get their required information from the internet at their doorstep. In such a situation the library professionals equipped with latest ICT knowledge skills and know-how of digital information handling must reach to the users of different communities with non-library issues having potential requirements for physical, economic, social, healthcare including facilities for upliftment and care of women, senior citizen and differently able persons.

- **Physical facilities:** It determines the standard of living of the people in a particular area such as road connectivity, telecommunication, installation of transmission towers, broadband facilities, road transports, sewage, irrigation, energy, forestry, environment, and conservation of natural resources. When such information for the above narrated areas is given by the library employees it may create interest among the non-users of the library in a particular area providing a boost to visit the library space.
- **Economic wellbeing:** It is very much dependent on agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, small scale and cottage industries, business, trade, and marketing. If related information of this nature is provided to the local people by the library staff, then they will develop an interest to visit the library for the required information.
- **Social development:** It is very much dependent on education, culture and political consciousness of the people. Information to such field of interest is to be furnished to people in a particular village or town so that they can actively

participate in the democratic and political process of the country as responsible citizens.

- **Health care information:** It is equally necessary for the field of nutrition, sanitation, prevention against health hazards like HIV, Dengue, Brain malaria, Waterborne diseases, and Air pollution. In this regard library, people can conduct the awareness programme in the above-mentioned areas so that the general public will be well aware of the facts and can rise to the occasion for maintaining good and sound health.

- **Raising consciousness**: Gender justice, empowerment of women, prevention of child labour, self-help group for thrift, credit, participation in cooperative activities, protection of senior citizen and other social security programme are some of the important activities which attract rural mass to the libraries if such programmes are conducted at regular interval in the library premises under extension programme.

- **Information literacy:** Conducting information literacy programme both for library staff and users are very much essential for digital knowledge and skill development so that more people will feel like attending the library and library staff can also efficiently deliver the information to the visitors. Also, participate with National Literacy Mission under the adult education programme may also help the library professionals to continue the post-literacy programme in a rural area through prepared handouts that may save from relapsing into illiteracy.

- **Self-employment:** Related information for career opportunities and counseling for young students, setting up of enterprises by using local resources, traditional skills and know-how and marketing of local products are some of the lucrative programmes for young people in a village. Hence, such areas are to be tapped for the interest of youngsters so that they will be attracted towards libraries without wasting their valuable time in unnecessary engagements.

- **Public Welfare:** Govt. information relating to welfare plans and activities in various sectors, forms/certificates, voter lists, electoral records, licenses, permits, adhaar cards, welfare schemes for below poverty lines are some areas where people need information if provided at the library. Web sites developed under E-governance programmes are the best examples.

- **Agricultural Support:** Information of crops, pesticides, seeds, credit societies, equipment and tools for mechanized cultivation, soil testing, water supply, irrigation, floriculture, etc. may be of essential information services to the rural community, if provided through network and different websites development and E-Governance programme.

- **Legal Support:** Access to legal information relating to rights, duties, and responsibilities of the citizens, economically deprived classes, women, children, senior citizens and physically handicapped including legal aid programmes for those will be of very much useful to the people both in urban and rural areas.

- **Community information:** Under this service, the library staff can actively participate and identify different information needs of the communities like

agriculturist, poultry farmers, weavers, fisherman, blacksmith, porters, bamboo crafts-man and provide them information relating to the availability of raw materials, marketing, Govt. subsidies, loan facilities, etc. Their information needs are to be prepared and repackaged by the public library staff in the form of a handbook, guides, and directories, preferably in local language and made available to different occupational groups and communities that will serve as a best attraction for utilization of library resources.

Status of Public Libraries in Odisha:

Generally, Library Legislation plays an important role in the provision of national and public library services. It helps in the establishment of an organized network of public libraries, a sound administrative set-up, proper and continuous financial support, coordination in administration and management of public libraries, centralized services like purchase, processing, bibliographical and other services can be provided conveniently, and possibility of providing quality library service, at qualified hands, free of charge. In Odisha, though it was passed by the Legislative Assembly of Odisha in 2001, unfortunately it has not yet implemented. It has been a long pending issue and has always been a matter of discussion all most all professional programs.

The primary objective of the Public Library system in a State is to provide a comprehensive free Library Service to its people in an organized manner. At present, the responsibilities of Providing Public Library Service in the State of Odisha at Government level are mostly vested upon the Odia Language Literature and Culture (OLL&C) Department. Besides, Information & Public Relation (I&PR), Housing & Urban Development (H&UD) Department, Govt. of Odisha are also providing Public Library services to some extent in the urban and semi-urban regions of the State. Recently the Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water (PR & DW) Department of Odisha Government have planned to established Panchayat Library and Infotainment Centre in Gram Panchayat level to develop an intellectual fervor with an objective of 3Es as Empowerment, Enlightenment, Entertainment,

Category of Public Library by different Scenario:

In Odisha, Public libraries may be categorized into two types by different scenario i.e. Government and Privet. The details of the general Scenario of Public Libraries in the State of Odisha are enumerated below:

Government Scenario		Privet Scenario	
Functioning Under Govt. of Odisha	No of Libraries	Functioning Under privet bodies with support/Grant from Govt.	No of Libraries
OLL&C Dept.	30	NGO/Clubs	314
I&PR Dept.	83	Individual Efforts	9
H&UD Dept.	12		
Total	**125**	**Total**	**323**
Grand Total		**448**	

Table-1: Public Libraries in Odisha Functioning/Supported by the Government)

Functioning of Public Libraries in Odisha
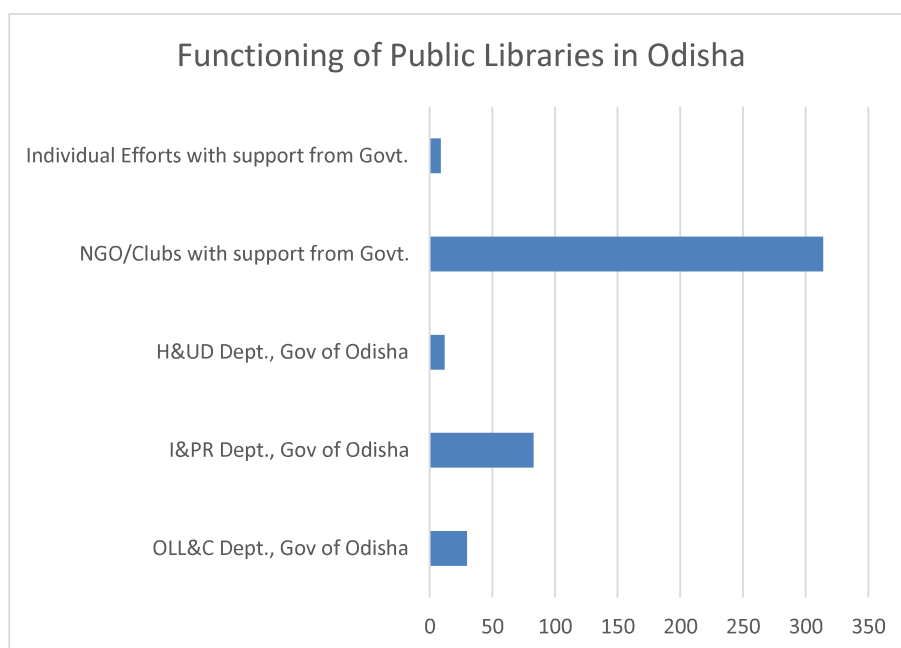
Figure-1: Functioning of Public Libraries in Odisha under Different Departments/Organizations

PUBLIC LIBRARY SCENARIO IN ODISHA
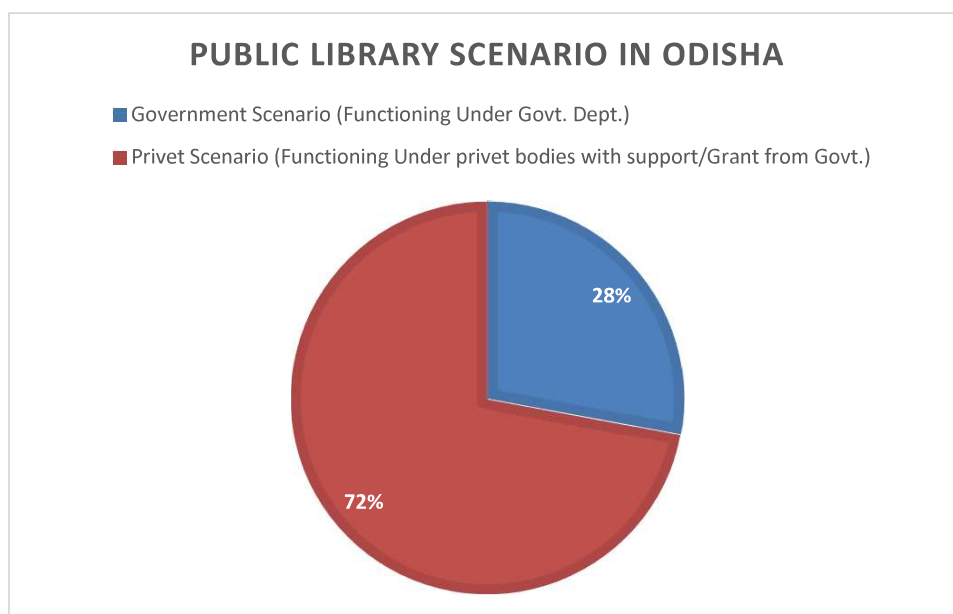
Figure-1.1: Public Library in Odisha from Different Scenario

Government Scenario:

- **Odia Language Literature and Culture Department-** At present 30 Public Libraries are functioning under the Culture Department such as:

Library Level/Type	No of Libraries
State Library	1
City Library	1
District Library	17
Sub-Divisional Library	1
ExDistrict Library	6
Memorial Hall Library	4
Total	**30**

Table-2 & Figure-2: Public Libraries functioning under ILL&C Department, Govt. of Odisha

- State Library-1 at Harekrushna Mahtab State Library Bhubaneswr, Khurdha
- City Library-1 Bhubaneswar Public Library, Bhubaneswar, Khurdha
- District Libraries-17
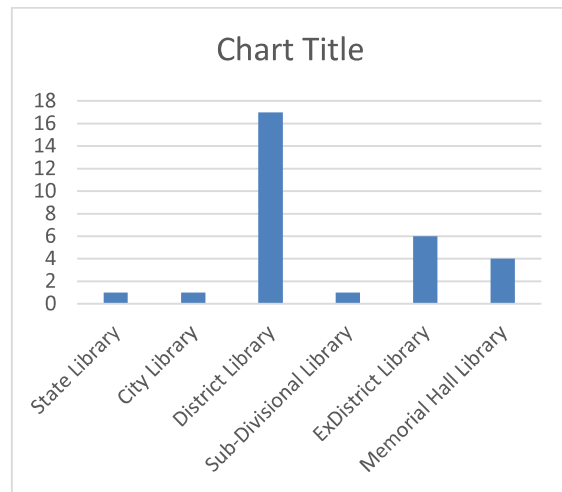 Angul, Baragarh, Balasore, Bolangir, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Ganjam, Kandhamal, Mayurbhanj, Kalahandi, Koraput, Puri, Sambalpur, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Nuapara, Rayagada
- Sub-Divisional Library-1, Rairangapur, Mayurbhanja
- ExDistrict Board Library-6 in Ganjam
- Akhanda Pathagar, Chikiti, Ganjam
  Jayakrushna Bahinipati Pathagar, Rambha, Ganjam
  Kanak Manjari Pathagar, Kavisurya Nagar , Ganjam
  Upendra Bhanja Pathagar, Tanarada, Ganjam
  Public Library, Khallikote, Ganjam
  Raghunath Pathagar, Ballipadar,Ganjam
- Memorial Hall Library-4
  Panchasakha Memorial Hall Library, Sakhigopal, Puri
  Gangadhar Memorial Hall Library, Barapali, Baragarh
  Utkamani Memorial Hall Library, Suando,Puri
  Mahavir Jain Library, (Defunct), Dhenkanal,

- **Information & Public Relations (I&PR) Department-** Like Culture Department I&PR Department, Government of Odisha is also providing free Public Library Service by establishing Information Centre-cum-Reading Rooms at urban areas of the State. Besides, Soochana Bhavan Library at Jayadev Bhawan in the State Capital is regarded as Apex Information Centre, the I&PR Department have established 13 Grantee District Libraries and 70 Centre-cum-Reading Rooms in Odisha.
  - Grantee District Libraries-13
  - Information Centre-cum-Reading Rooms-70

Table-3: Information Centre & Reading Room and Grantee district Libraries managed by I&PR, Dept., Govt. of Odisha

Sl.No.	District Name	Place/Location	Inf. Centres	Grantee Dist. Lib.	Total Lib. & Inf. Centres
1	Balasore	Balasore	4		4
		Nilgiri			
		Simulia			
		Jaleswar			
2	Bhadrak	Bhadrak*	1	1	2
		Aradi			
3	Cuttack	Cuttack	5		5
		Athagarh			
		Banki			
		Salepur			
		Chahapada			
4	Jajpur	Jajpur*	1	1	2
		Jajpur Road			
5	Jagatsinghpur	Jagatsinghpur *	2	1	3
		Paradeep			
		Tirtol			
6	Puri	Puri	4		4
		Konark			
		Sakhigopal			
		Pipili			
7	Khurda	Khurda*	3	1	4
		Bhubaneswar (State Level)			
		Begunia			
		Balipatna			
8	Sambalpur	Sambalpur	4		4
		Rairakhol			
		Charmala			
		Kuchinda			
9	Bargarh	Bargarh	2		2
		Padampur			
10	Dhenkanal	Dhenkanal	4		4
		Kamakhyanagar			
		Bhuban			
		Hindol			
11	Angul	Angul	5		5
		Talcher			

		Palalahada			
		Athamalik			
		Bamur			
12	Sundargarh	Sundrgarh	3		3
		Rourkela			
		Bonai			
13	Bolangir	Bolangir	4		4
		Titlagarh			
		Patnagarh			
		Kantabanji			
14	Sonepur	Sonepur*	1	1	2
		Birmaharajpur			
15	Ganjam	Chhatrapur	5		5
		Berhampur			
		Bhanjanagar			
		Aska			
		Digapahandi			
16	Mayurbhanj	Baripada	5		5
		Udala			
		Rairangpur			
		Karanjia			
		Jashipur			
17	Kalahandi	Bhawanipatna	4		4
		Keshinga			
		Dharmagarh			
		Junagarh			
18	Nuapara	Nuapara	2		2
		Khariar			
19	Keonjhar	Keonjhar	4		4
		Champua			
		Anandpur			
		Ghatagaon			
20	Koraput	Koraput	2		2
		Jaypur			
21	Rayagada	Rayagada	2		2
		Gunupur			
22	Kandhamal	Phulbani	3		3
		Baliguda			
		G.Udayagiri			
23	Boudh	Boudh*		1	1
24	Deogarh	Deogarh*		1	1
25	Gajapati	Gajapati*		1	1
26	Jharsuguda	Jharsuguda*		1	1

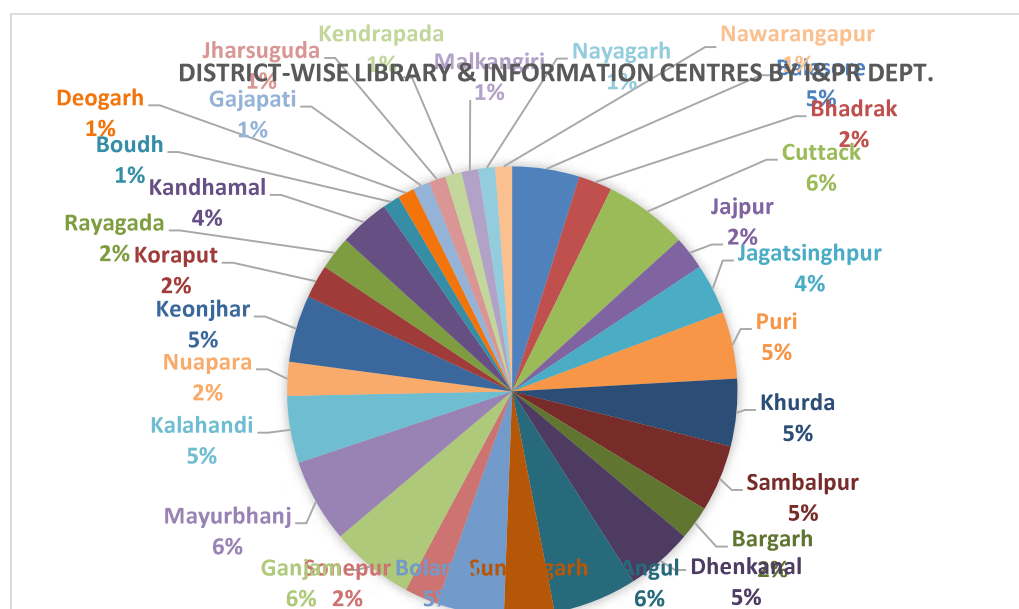| 27	Kendrapada	Kendrapada*		1	1
28	Malkangiri	Malkangiri*		1	1
29	Nayagarh	Nayagarh*		1	1
30	Nawarangapur	Nawarangapur*		1	1
		Total	**70**	**13**	**83**

Figure-3: District-wise Library & Information Centre in Odisha functioning under I&PR Dept. Govt. of Odisha

- **Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) Department-** This Department is also providing Public Library Service in some of the Municipalities and NACs. Saheed Bhawan Pathagara, Cuttack is one of them which is serving to the needs of the people of Cuttack City. Name of some Municipality and NAC Libraries managed by the H&UD) Dept., Govt. of Odisha.

    Municipality Library, Puri

    Municipality Library, Balasore

    City Library, Cuttack

    Municipality Library, Bhadrak

    Municipality Library, Kendrapara

    Municipality Library, Jajpur

    Municipality Library, Sambalpur

    Municipality Library, Berhampur

    Municipality Library, Paralakhemundi

    Municipality Library, Talcher

    N.A.C. Library, Choudwar

    N.A.C. Library, Purusottampur

Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water (PR&DW) Department- Recently the PR & DW Department, Govt. of Odisha have released a guideline for the establishment of Panchayat

Library & Infotainment center. In the present backdrop of information explosion throughout the world, common people cannot keep pace with the multi-faceted information needs of everyday life without the aid of panchayat public library. Panchayat Library can play the role of a catalyst bringing tremendous social and economic changes in rural society. It will reduce the intellectual divide by providing access to books, information and internet facilities to rural youths of each district and above all disseminate information on all kinds of welfare schemes, agriculture, rural marketing, etc. Since information has become a national resource, information-based society will increase the quality of life of the rural people to a large extent.

Private Scenario:
- **Non-Government Organizations-** Apart from the above Departments, a number of NGOs/Clubs are also providing Public Library Services mostly in rural areas. But the services of these libraries are not in an organized manner. The Department of OLL&C is providing Book Assistance, Building Grant, Furniture grant, Assistance for Storage, Development of Special Corners, etc. from the existing RRRLF Schemes with a matching Share of State Government. As per a report, there were 314 block level libraries functioning in Odisha during the year 2006-07.

- **Individual/Institutional Efforts-** Some individuals have great contributions in this field. The bright examples are as follows:
  - BanchhanidhiPathagara, Nayagarh (managed by Trust & help from OLL&C)
  - Raghunandan Pathagara, Puri
  - Vivekananda Pathagara, Ramakrishna Mission, Bhubaneswar
  - Utkal Sahitya Samaj Library, Cuttack
  - Manmohan Digital Library, Srujanika, Bhubaneswar
  - Kedarnath Pathagara, Bhubaneswar
  - Bakula Pathagara, Bhubaneswar
  - Pragati Utkal Sangh, Rourkela
  - Sambalpur Public Library, Sambalpur

Action Plans of the Government for Development of Public Library in Odisha:
- The Government of Odisha has enacted the Odisha Public Libraries Act, 2001 with a view to bring all Public Libraries under one umbrella and to develop Public Library Systems and Services in an organized manner.
- Accordingly, Odisha Public Library Rules, 2016 has been Framed for implementation of the Act in an effective manner
- As per provisions made under the Rule, Directorate of Public Libraries has been constituted by a Government Notification bearing No. 7974/TC, Dated. -16.12.2016 and other ancillary works are under process.
- Recently, in the Heritage Cabinet meeting, separate Post of Director, Public Libraries has been created.
- Action is being taken to constitute Public Library Authority and Public Library Council and also to create additional staff members of the Directorate.

- Steps are also being taken to congregate the Public Libraries functioning under other Departments such as Information &Public Relation, Housing & Urban Development, Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water.
- Plans are being taken to expand Public Library Service to all 30 districts of the State by establishing 13 new district Libraries in the left-out districts and for up-gradation of existing 17 District Libraries as "Smart Libraries".
- The PR & DW department of Odisha Government plans to open Panchayat Libraries and Infotainment Centres in Gram Panchayat Level. Notification No. 17 NREG-11-1165-18657/PR&DW and Dated: 02.09.2018

Recommendations for improvement of Public library Services in Odisha:
- Provision of the budget may be made for the progressive expansion of the public library system in the state state in a phased manner i.e 57 sub-divisional libraries, 314 block libraries, and 6,799 Panchayat libraries.
- As 51352 nos of villages are existing (as per 2001 census) in the state, the leading NGOs / Club /*Jubakasangha* having infrastructure potentiality may be identified to cope with the public library service for time being. The regular annual library grant may be provided for the maintenance and management of the village libraries.
- As there are 51352 villages (according to the 2001 census) in the state, the NGOs / clubs with an infrastructure potential may be identified to address the public library service from time to time. Regularly the yearly library grant may be provided for the maintenance and management of village libraries.
- An ideal model staffing pattern may be framed in the libraries along with library frame rule for the smooth running of the libraries along with their supervision and maintenance works.
- Library automation may be made on a priority basis by the networking of all public libraries at least up to district level at the first phase with a provision to expand the said system to the grass root level.
- Provisions may be made for establishing of self-book study Centre in the cities to promote reading the atmosphere of the downtrodden people.
- City library service started at Bhubaneswar in the year 1987 (now housed in the State Library building). This may be extended to branches of the city library in different corners of the city as well as all other cities in a phased manner.
- Provisions may be made for preservation & digitization of rare materials i.e palm leaves, manuscripts, paper documents, etc. available in different places of the State.
- The corporate house / NRI personnel may be requested to adopt any public libraries for its management and development with their own source.
- Provisions may be made for engaged the LIS professionals in the activities of the proposed Panchayat Library and Infotainment Centre in the state. (As per the guidelines, there is not any role of a librarian in this Centre.

Conclusion:

Library and Information services that are in the interest of social, cultural and economic wellbeing is at the heart of Librarianship and therefore, Librarians have a social responsibility in areas such as:

- Good Access to information;
- Privacy, Secrecy, and Transparency;
- Open access and intellectual property;
- Neutrality, Personal integrity, and professional skills

It is not only a responsibility of Librarians and Library Professionals but also the support of the Government and the cooperation of the public is required to fulfilling the social responsibility of the public libraries in the state. As a library professional, we feel that the term "Social Responsibility" and "Duty" of the library professionals is not exactly the same. Although there are similarities in both the terms, "Social Responsibilities" are those which are directly linked with the society as a whole, while "Duty" refers to the bounded tasks that one library professional has to perform. What we mean to say that "Duty" is compulsory while "Social Responsibilities" are not, rather these are voluntary in nature.

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In a traditional sense, libraries are storehouses of books. They are repositories of knowledge and ancient wisdom. Civilizational footprints are markedly found in a well organised and soundly managed library-may that be in the public domain or privately owned. But are the resources stocked and stored in a library accessible to the discerning scholar, the inquisitive student, the lay reader? Can the desired book, journal, or article be retrieved with ease and at the right time? Can a person seeking information and knowledge from a distance be able to access the resources without moving out of his or her space.? Or is there a gap, a chasm that separates the source and the resource from the intended beneficiary-the user of the library? These are a few questions that were raised and answers were attempted at a two-day Seminar jointly organised the Sambalpur Public Library and the Odisha State Open University. The theme was 'Public Library and Digital Divide: Opportunities and Challenges'. This book is the outcome of that exercise. In the essays derived from the proceedings of the seminar and collated here by senior academics and library professional throw light on interesting aspects of knowledge flow and the need for digitalisation of library for easy and universal access to knowledge sources and academic resources.