

# SOUVENIR

Odisha Library Academy : A decade of Journey...  
(2015-2024)

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## Echoes of Revolution: The Evolution of the Library Movement Odisha

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### Introduction:

The library movement in Odisha has significantly influenced the region's educational and cultural environment. The state has a long history of reading and preserving books, and its modern library system is overseen by the Directorate of Culture. The Harekrushna Mahtab State Library, located in Bhubaneswar, was conceived during the 1st Five Year Plan and is one of the top State Library's in India. The library was constructed in 1959, officially it was designated "Gandhi Bhawan" in 1967 and in 1987, changed to honour Harekrushna Mahatab, the first chief minister of Odisha. Throughout Odisha's history, people have consistently advocated for library services. Early temples and royalties provided reading materials. Pt. Gobabandhu Das included a library at Satyabadi Bana Bidyalaya for promoting education and Pt. Nilakantha Das also supported the establishment and development of public libraries, advocating for policies that enhanced library services. The Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation Schemes in 1972 boosted library development. Dasarathi Pattanaik, known as Dasia Aja, played a significant role in library movement, founding libraries, and museums. His collection includes 5 lakh books and 65 thousand magazines. Dasia Aja's contributions for Library Movement in the state is known as the father of Library movement in Odisha. Libraries in Odisha are facing challenges. Odisha producing around 600 professional librarians annually from 20 universities/institutions, but recruitment is very slow. When despite the state's Public Library Act-2001, the state's library system is in turmoil; then the "Library Movement Odisha" campaign, led by young librarians, aims to address this issue. The campaign aims to fight for the right of library service, save libraries, recruit librarians, respect librarians, and engage LIS professionals. Let's know about the transformative journey of the Library Movement Odisha, highlighting its historical roots, significant milestones, and ongoing impact on education and community development.

### The Journey of "Library Movement Odisha":

Young, energetic professionals couldn't tolerate the Government's neglect for libraries and librarians. To address issues Library Movement Odisha did not wait more to raise its voice i.e. 1. Long-standing librarian vacancies in schools, colleges, and universities, 2. Odisha public library Act 2001 was not implemented, 3. Panchayat Library and Infotainment Centre Rule 2018 did not mention professional librarians, 4. Some old libraries were closing due to staff shortages, 5. Odisha

Adarsh Vidyalaya (OAVS) was afflicted with CBSE and following the patron of KVS and NVS did not recruit librarians as per CBSE guideline posts were sanctioned by the Govt. Library and information science students from deferent universities were concerned about the 2015 OAVS Librarian vacancies in early 2019. Students consulted with Odisha Library Academy's young Librarian professionals to prepare a representation against OAVS vacancies. They met several times in Bhubaneswar at parks, public spaces, and university campuses to draft. The 6 January 2019 meeting of 17 young professionals at IG Park Bhubaneswar marked their unity. Candidates met after the OSSC Library Assistant-2015 exam. The Library Assistant post was advertised in 2015, and OSSC administered its written test in 2019. After a few days, a WhatsApp group called "OLPA-Odisha Library Professionals Association" was created on January 27, 2019. After expressing interest in representing OAVS, the students met retired Professor Pitamber Padhi for advice. As the group was a student forum, Prof. Padhi suggested renaming it "FFPGS (LIS), Odisha- Forum for Post-Graduate Students of Library and Information Science, Odisha". Students then met the State Project Director OAVS with an FFPGS (LIS), Odisha letterhead. OPLA still ran the WhatsApp group. OAVS published many recruitment ads until 2021, except Librarian Post. 314 librarian positions were granted from the beginning of OAVS school in 2015, but no recruitment advertisement was released. The government declared Bhubaneswar's iconic Adarsh Vidyalaya including 314 other schools. Advertisement of only 1 OAVS librarian position out of 315 in December 2021, warming librarian aspirants. They communicate on WhatsApp and social media regularly. A team from Odisha Library Academy met with the OAVS project director to request librarian recruitment on behalf of the students. Many newspapers highlighted Odisha's poor library system. Writers began writing about libraries and librarians on daily newspaper editorial pages. However, the state's COVID-19 situation was abnormal, so the OPLA group called a Google Meet meeting. More than 276 people responded to the meeting invitation. Professors, senior librarians, and information professionals couldn't miss the meeting. Professional support energizes the Library Movement Odisha. State LIS professionals' contact information was collected via 'Google Form' and connected to WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, X (former twitter), Blogger, Kutumba App, etc. The form used for collecting data was headed on the title "Library Movement Odisha", latter the name was the first choice of team and it & accepted by the professionals. The OPLA WhatsApp group was renamed, and all social media accounts were created on the name of "Library Movement Odisha". The "Library Movement Odisha" was originally started with a social media campaign, but currently it covers librarian recruitment, public library system, and user awareness etc.

### **Activities:**

1. **A Symposium on "Status and System: Addressing Current Problems of Libraries and Libraries in the State":** All library associations of Odisha, including Odisha Library Academy, Utkal Library Association, Odisha College Library Association, Utkal University and Sambalpur University's Alumni Associations, aim to improve libraries and

librarians in the state. On April 1, 2022, a virtual symposium was hosted by Library Movement Odisha to unite all associations and address current problems.

- 2. Celebration of World Book Day followed by state level talent hunt among School students on the theme "Today's Reader Tomorrow's Leader":** Library Movement Odisha organized a talent hunt competition on World Book Day 2022, involving debate, quiz, and drawing/painting. 247 students from 30 schools participated for promoting library awareness and student reading habits. The event was successful and appreciated by parents and teachers.
- 3. Supported to OSA Odisha Public Library Conference 2023:** The Odisha Society of Americas is advocating for modern public libraries in Gram panchayats. They have created a social media group called "Odisha Library Network" and hold annual conferences. The Odisha Public Library conference 2023 was supported by Library Movement Odisha and Odisha Library Academy that influenced the 2024 general election manifesto.
- 4. Representation to Government Officials/Ministry/Departments:** Library Movement Odisha volunteers meet with government officials, ministries, and departments to discuss library and librarian issues. They file grievances with various departments, including the CMO, Chief Secretary, and others, hoping for government responses.
- 5. Joined Library awareness program 'Asa Padhiba' (Let's Read) campaign:** The Odisha government and Bakul Library foundation held a 'Asa Padhiba' (Let's Read) library awareness campaign during the 1st World Odia Language Conference 2024. Library Movement Odisha and Odisha Library Academy volunteers promoted reading and library use in daily life.
- 6. Social Media Campaign:** Library Movement Odisha volunteers utilize various social media platforms to address issues and reach out to authorities, with the active X handle potentially aiding the movement's success. On its impact, the Govt. announced, "Reading habits will be promoted and the library movement will be made widespread and systematic."

### Future Road Map:

The "Library Movement Odisha" is a community fight for free local library services. It aims to recruit librarians and establish libraries in every village Panchayat, implement the Odisha Public Library Act-2001, revive government yojanas, and guide people about their reading and library rights. District-level representatives are encouraged to find volunteers for library awareness campaigns and demand public library services in their area, contacting district administrators, local MLAs, and MPs.

