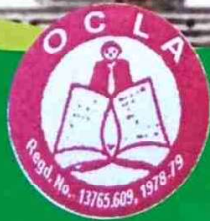
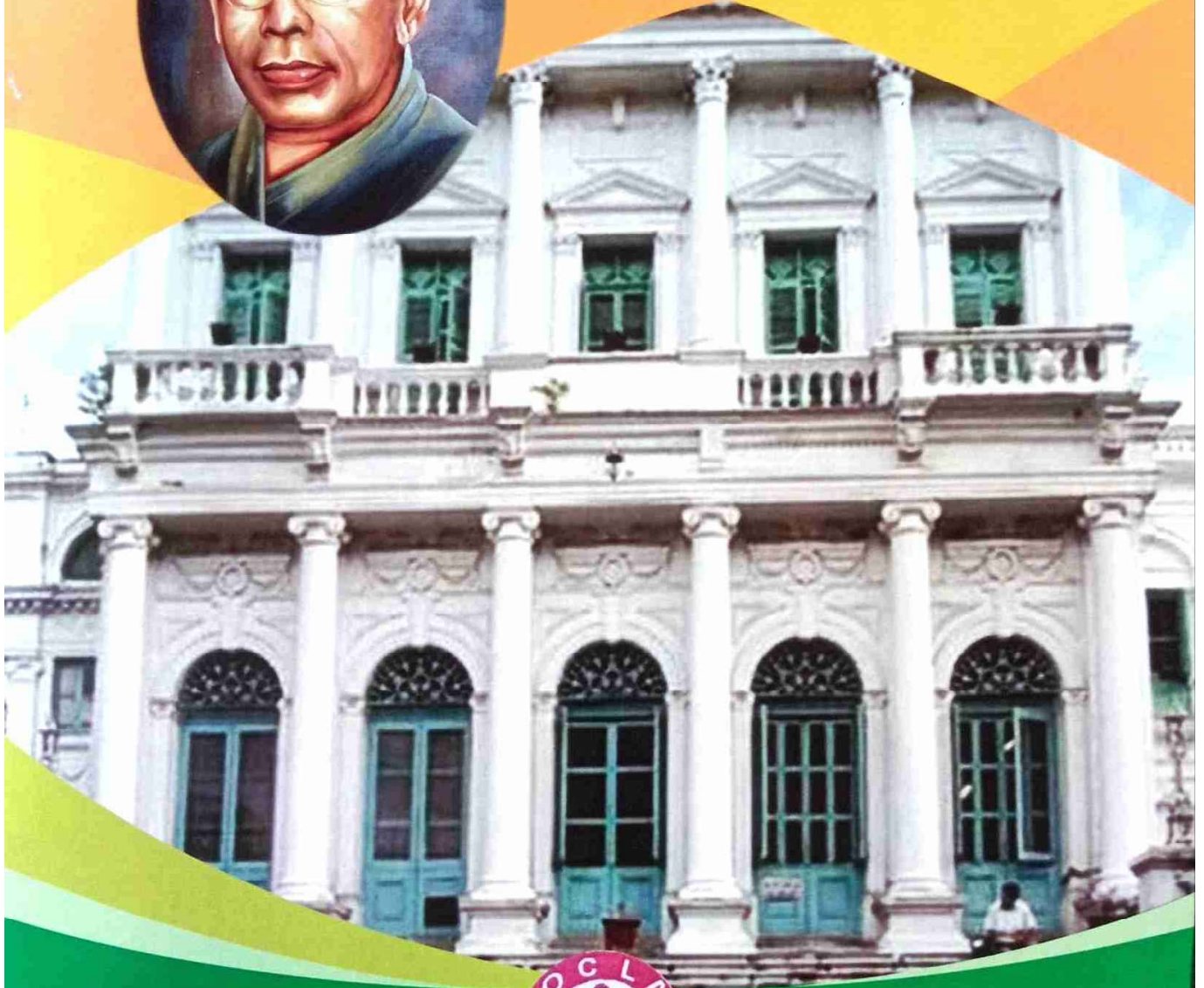


# Souvenir

2024



**ODISHA COLLEGE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION**  
**Bhubaneswar**

## CONTENTS

	Page No
1. Academic Libraries and Technologies <i>Hrushikesh Mishra</i>	4
2. Improving the Use of School Library by Secondary School Students <i>Lalat Kishore Mohanty</i>	6
3. Effective Management of College Library Resources <i>Krushna Chandra Pradhan</i>	8
4. Challenges and Opportunities of Odisha Public Libraries in Present Scenario <i>Nirupama Mishra</i>	11
5. Role of Public Libraries in Preservation of Socio-Cultural Heritage in Odisha <i>Abinash Dash</i>	13
6. Opportunities and Obstacles Faced by Public Libraries in India <i>Monali Mitra Paladhi</i>	16
7. Modernizing Academic Libraries with Information and Communication Technologies <i>Badri Narayan Behera</i>	18
8. State of Library System in Odisha: Needs Vibrant Library Movement <i>Niranjan Mohapatra</i>	21
9. Dasharathi Pattanaik – Father of the Library Movement in Odisha <i>Manoj Mishra</i>	25
10. Trilochan Kanungo: A Real Bibliophile <i>Pabitra Mohan Pradhan</i>	28
11. Role of Library in the Present Scenario <i>Nanda Kishore Dhir</i>	30
12. Preservation and Conservation of Library Materials in Digital Era <i>Biswanath Mohapatra</i>	32
13. Library Leadership: Challenges for Future Information Professionals <i>B. Chandrabati</i>	34
14. The Journey of Library Aspirants <i>Bhabani Shankar Rout</i>	36
15. Association Letters to the Government for Redressal of Grievances for the Benefits of Library Professionals	39

# State of Library System in Odisha: Needs Vibrant Library Movement

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## 1. Introduction

Odisha one of the leading states in the eastern India which has a very rich language, culture, tradition, heritage, and spiritual sphere. The state is a divine place due to presence of Lord Jagannath. The language of the state has been declared as classical by the Govt. of India. It has innumerable artifacts which are highly laudable by the visitors coming to the state. The architectural monuments in the state are unique which is available in temples. It is the hub of educational centre in eastern India. The state is the tourist destination of the people of the whole world. In spite of all these superlative entities in the state, the library system is very poor. This article intends to discuss what ails the libraries in Odisha and there is an emerging need of a vibrant library movement.

## 2. Problems in Libraries

The Odisha Public Library Act-2001 has not yet been implemented in the state for the last 23 years. The proposed Panchayat Library and Infotainment Center Rule 2018 does not mention the need for professional librarians, and the state government does not follow the National Mission for Library Upgradation. Libraries in Odisha are running without librarians, 5T schools, Higher secondary schools & especially in OAVS schools. Many old public libraries are going to be closed due to unavailability of staff. On the 127th birth anniversary of Dasarathi Pattanayak (Dasia Aja) a prominent figure in the library movement in Odisha, it is urged to restart the movement. Born in 1907, Dasia Aja's contributions include library promotion, establishment, community involvement, advocacy, and cultural preservation. Despite the state's poor library system, the government's assurances encourage progress.

## 3. Government's Assurances

Governor of Odisha announced "Library on Wheel" in his budget 2024-25 address, while Chief Minister Shri Mohan Charan Majhi announced the establishment of district-level e-libraries and promotion of reading habits. However, media and social media focus on other aspects of his speech, indicating insufficient awareness about libraries. To accelerate the library movement, it is crucial to increase love for reading and libraries, establish public libraries, and appoint experienced librarians. In union budget 2023-24, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the creation of a National Digital Library for children and adolescents, encouraging the establishment of physical libraries at panchayat and ward levels.

## 4. Importance of Library and Librarian

The library is an essential and integral part of the educational and research system, serving as its central component. Therefore, it is crucial to establish public library services as a societal institution that provides individuals from all socioeconomic backgrounds with unrestricted access to knowledge throughout the entire country. These services fulfil the functions of disseminating information, imparting knowledge, offering amusement, and safeguarding cultural heritage. Librarianship is influenced by both the global

social context and the social structure of each specific country. Undoubtedly, information workers bear a crucial professional responsibility today. Information professionals possess the ability to mitigate cultural and ideological disparities through their control over information. Consequently, public libraries must assume social responsibility in an evolving environment. The appeal of the Library Movement Odisha will be for establishing Libraries in all academic institutions as well as public facility centres and recruit professional librarians against the vacant posts and create new librarian posts as required in different libraries of the state. Libraries are the main component of quality education not only in school, college and university, but also the public platforms especially in rural areas.

### **5. Odisha Library System in Turmoil**

Presently the situation of Library system in the state is not in track. As per the report of Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF), only 27 public libraries are working under Department of Odia Language, Literature and Culture, Govt. of Odisha. However, the figure is high in other states. Harekrushna Mahatab State Library is the only option for public library service in the capital city of Odisha. But now this library provides time slots for reading due to admission of more numbers of readers companion to its seating capacity. Many old public libraries are going to be closed due to unavailability of manpower and proper care. Some educational institutions have no Library and those have a library it runs without professional Librarian. Almost people of the state are not aware about the State Govt, has passed Odisha Public Library Act 2001 since 2002. As per the Act they will get facilities of public library services in their local area. The state Govt. has been delaying implementing it. The result is students and aspirants preparing for competitive exam are adapting privet /paid library services in the metro cities i.e. Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Sambalpur, Berhampur, Rourkela etc. due to unavailability of public library service in the state.

### **6. Barriers in Academic Library**

Although other states have libraries at school level, the situation in Odisha is not good. Many e-libraries are established in some Govt. secondary schools through 5T and Mo School Program of previous Government in the state. These schools have no provision of appoint a professional staff for executing e-libraries. The model schools in Odisha named as Adarsha Vidyalaya works under OAVS also have libraries as per the CBSE Guidelines. However, these have sanctioned post of librarian, but since 2015 OAVS have not recruit Librarians in OAV schools. All colleges and Universities have a library as per UGC guidelines. But maximum libraries in colleges are running without professional librarian. Library without Librarian not only a barrier for Development of libraries, but also increasing unemployment of professional librarian aspirants in the state. Previous governments have repeatedly disappointed the hope of trained librarian aspirants. Every Library required professional Librarian, hope the new Govt. will fill the vacant posts. First people should be made aware to know the importance well as the need of libraries. Various methods could be adopted to promote reading habit among the public which can be done by an experienced librarian. So, the second step is appointment of professional Librarians in libraries. They can create different reader groups and increase reading habits among common people in their locality either rural or urban. Then the library movement can be made widespread and systematic.

### **7. Barriers in Public Library**

Odisha Public Library Act 2001 is not implemented till date, hope the present government will fulfil the long dream of establishing public library in every village/panchayat, town, block, tahsil and district and hiring professional librarians. Gram Panchayat Libraries and Entertainment Centres Rules 2018 has been lost inside paper file. Till date no library has been set up in Panchayats of Odisha, wherever already established, no activity functioning yet. Because the requirement of librarians to manage the libraries may be forgotten by the government which was not mentioned in the Panchayat Library Rule 2018. If the professional librarians will be appointed permanently in each Panchayat by amending the panchayat Library Rule, the spirit of education in the rural areas will be improved. Previously the Govt. had sanctioned special budget for Public Library in the year 2018. But no utilization of budget for Public Libraries were seen till date. However the present Govt. announced for Library Movement, it is time to wait till the reality happened. Library Movement is not the responsibility of government, it is a revolution of public. People of Odisha should come forward and demanding the need of public library in their locality. Academic libraries should open for public in its extra time out of Academic time. If the public will not ask for Library facility the Govt. never look for developing Library System rather than only announced or established without required resources including human resource (Library staff).

### **8. Suggestions**

Special budget for the implementation of the "Odisha Public Library Act 2001" and "Panchayat Library & Infotainment centre 2018" should be allocated with plans to establish new libraries and revive old ones in all districts and blocks, Gram Panchayat across Odisha. Every Library will appoint professional and skilled librarian for development of Library and reader satisfied services. The Public Library Directorate will consolidate redundant services into public libraries to save capital and operational expenditure. Modern public libraries will provide basic services such as internet rooms, audio-video-internet-enabled community centres, and reading rooms. The Digital Infrastructure Policy will include broadband internet connectivity, digital books, library automation software, and library cards to households. Library councils will be established at various levels to ensure measurable progress. The goal is to enable libraries to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Groups (UNSDGs), raise public awareness, and create world-class public libraries.

### **9. Conclusion**

Government initiatives often overlook sustainability, scalability, cost effectiveness, efficiency, and impact. Different communities have different initiatives, such as Bhagavad Tungus, Urdu Centres, Tribal development centres, Mission Shakti Gruh, senior citizen centres, Yubaka Sangha, child development centres, and labor department coaching centres. A modern public library could serve these communities, providing free facilities and ensuring equal access to education and library services. Policymakers, think tanks, and civil society should brainstorm on establishing modern public libraries in every Gram Panchayat, Block, and District in Odisha. This would improve library services, create jobs, and save public money by consolidating multiple schemes under one umbrella. Let's come forward and request the Govt. to target a period for establishing public library in every Gram Panchayat, Block, district. Hope it will be completed within a maximum period of two year. It is not a big challenge, however Mission Sakti Gruha in every panchayat and block built within couple of years and poor people build up PM Awas Yojana houses within

couple of months to get incentive Amount. Jharkhand established 118 community libraries in Gram Panchayats within 3 months, Jharkhand's Jamtara becoming the first district in India to have public libraries. Karnataka built 5573 village Panchayat Libraries, 4608 digital rural libraries. Why Odisha could not do it! So, establishing modern public libraries in all 6798 GPs of Odisha is not a big deal for the Govt. of Odisha.

**Declaration:** This is the personal view of the author based on discussions in different forums. This is not subject to the organization the author belongs to.