

## A Study of the Library Movement in Gujarat State

**Varsha Padhya**

Research Scholar,

Singhania University, Pacheri Bari, Jhunjhunu,

Rajasthan, India.

*Paper Received on: 010/09/2012*

*Paper Reviewed on: 15/09/2012*

*Paper Accepted on: 22/09/2012*

### **Abstract**

*In this research paper, I propose to discuss the library movement in Gujarat at pre-independence and post independence stages. The libraries of Gujarat are very rich and the readers are always benefitted by it. Many philanthropists and ardent lover of books have contributed in it in their own ways. This paper will also discuss some of the issues and challenges regarding the library science.*

**Key words:** *Library Movement, Government and autonomous libraries, Lack of readers.*

The role of the library in the development of the society and education can't be neglected. It is a well established fact. Gujarat, in recent times, is well-known for its development among the other states of India. The development at various levels, i.e., economical, social, educational, industrial and political is eye-catching. It requires a great deal of speculation about the library's contribution in this progress.

*"The history of the development of the public library may be said to be as old as that of education in India". (Ekbote;1987;2).*

Here while referring to Gujarat, we shall take into consideration all the areas where the speakers of Gujarati language reside, such as Mumbai, Surat, Vadodara, Ahmedabad, Saurashtra, Kacch, Junagadh, Morabi, Dwarka, Somnath, Veraval and North Gujarat districts Sabarkantha, Banaskantha and their prominent centers like Himatnagar, Idar, Modasa, Mehsana, patan, palanpur, Radhanpur, Ambaji etc. Till, 1947, Gujarat was divided in princely states of vadodara, Himatnagar, Junagadh, Jamnagar, Bhavnagar, Palanpur, Radhanpur state etc. Even after the independence, this region was the part of bilingual Mumbai state. Gujarat state came into existence as a full fledged state on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1960. Thus historically speaking; we shall divide the library movement in four parts which are as below.

-The Gujarat of princely divided states during the reign of the British.

-Gujarat from independence to 1960.

-Gujarat, at present.

-The Ancient Gujarat.

In the ancient timeline Nalanda and Takshila, there was a university in vallabhipur which was known as vallabhi, This university was world famous and students across the world used to come here to get knowledge. The hand written scriptures were also written during this time. The well-known grammarian and poet Bhatti had written ' Bhattikavya' which is a well-known example of this. Here princess Daksha established a library. The first step towards the library movement is the establishment of the library by this princess in vallabhipur.

Then, during the maitarn period. i.e, from 500 to 800 when Jain religion became famous in Gujarat, the handwritten scriptures regarding religion and literature came into the existence, in patan, Surat, Khambhat, Ahmedabad, Tharaprad (Thara of recent time).

During the Jain ruling Acharya shree Hemchandracharya and the king of Patan, siddhraj Jaysinh are prominent. The 'siddham' by Acharya Hemchandracharya was highly respected by the king. The innumerable scriptures were written by many students of Hemchandracharya. One of his students, Ramchandra only wrote 100 scriptures. Even today many hand written scriptures of Jain religion are stored in Patan. Hirvijaji, who inspired king Akbar to establish 'Dine Ilahi' hailed from Palanpur and he was the writer of many scriptures. There are innumerable names who contributed in this. The researchers had an easy access to this scriptures which we call library arrangement.

There are various traditions of library arrangement observed during the British rule and princely states. According to Dr.charan, this activity can be divided into four stages.

1-Mumbai state

2-Saurashtra state

3-Vadodara state

4-Kacch and other small states.

With reference to this, the library movement has its first step established in Mumbai in 1808. In Mumbai, a proposal was suggested to establish those libraries which can store the books, published by the monetary help for literature. With the help of European citizens, libraries were set up in the big cities. The dream turned in reality due to the sincere efforts of ardent lover of literature, like Farbes sahib.

In 1848, Gujarat vernacular society was established and at that time, one library was set up in Ahmedabad. It 1849 Native library and in 1850, Andrews library were set up in Ahmedabad.

The above mentioned, Gujarat vernacular society is known as Gujarat vidhashabha in recent time and in it we find a rare collection of books. It is very helpful for the research of Gujarati language and literature. The above mentioned native library was set up in 12<sup>th</sup> Feb, 1849. In 1851, Himabhai Institute was set up. This is the first public library Mr. Andrews, the then chief justice of Surat district inspired the Andrews library in 1850. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the below mentioned libraries were set up in various parts of Gujarat.

1-Aaparao Bholanath library (Ahmedad,1870)

- 2-Dhahi Laxmi library (Nadiad, 1891)
- 3-Raichand Dipchand library (Bharuch,1855)
- 4-Stuart’s library ( Godhra,1866)
- 5- Petit library (Ankleshwar, 1866)
- 6-victoria Dimond Jubilee library (Palalpur, 1897)

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century various rulers of princess states of Saurashtra established libraries in their states. The prominent among them are

- 1-Sen public library (Rajkot, 1856)
- 2-Lakhaji Rajnagar library (Rajkot, 1868)
- 3-Bhagvatsingji library (Gondal,1884 )
- 4-Rajkiy Granthalay (Junagadh, 1867)
- 5-Barton library (Bhavnagar, 1882)
- 6-Taktsinhji Granthalay (Botad, 1892)
- 7-Mahuva library (Mahuva, 1877)
- 8-Victoria Jubilee library (vankane, 1891)

The above mentioned late Meghji Pekhraj is known as the Karnagi of Saurashtra. He spent a huge amount of money for the development of libraries in villages. They were taken care by the ‘Grampanchayat’ which after 1960 was taken care by ‘Jilla Panchyat’.

The contribution of vadodara state in the field of library is beyond all doubts. The libraries were carefully nurtured there. Maharaja Sayajirao has lion’s share in the development of Gujarat.

*“ The contributions of His Highness the Maharaja Sayajirao III, Gaekwar of Baroda towards library movement in India cannot be overlooked. He is remembered today as the Father of Library Movement in India. At the age of 18, in 1881, he was entrusted with full power of the government of Baroda in the Gujarat speaking region of the Bombay Presidency and the Peninsula of Kathiawar. Baroda’s population was predominantly rural, the main occupation was agriculture. The people in general were economically poor and socially backward. According to him, education was the foundation to reconstruct a new social and economic life and education should be the right of the humblest villager. He introduced free and compulsory education in his princely states. Baroda became the first territory not only among the native states but also in British India to have compulsory free primary education. He opined that primary education was to be the very base and decided to preserve it by means of libraries, which were the only agencies for perpetual universal self-education. He decided to establish library as an*

*experiment in one of the towns of a taluka and in order to implement his idea immediately” (Nagar;1983;22)*

He was a ruler who always thought for the welfare of his citizens. He kept in mind the educational requirement of the time. He made primary education free and compulsory in 1907 for his citizens. Thus, no citizen of his state was deprived of education. He shared a noble thought of establishing a library in each village and city. The library movement has its root in 1910 in Vadodara, when the first public library was established. The king had established this public library keeping in mind the holistic development of his citizens.

*“The Library Department was created under Order No.9/19, January 30, 1911, for organizing libraries in Baroda. As the Director of state libraries, he planned a network of free public libraries consisting a state central library, four district or divisional libraries, forty-five town libraries, and more than a thousand village libraries-all integrated into one chain system. (Nagar;1983;3). Borden played a leading role for the establishment, management and organization of public libraries in India. As a result of system, within two decades 85% of the Baroda urban and rural population had access to libraries. (Patel; 2004;10). Borden developed library classification scheme to suit Indian libraries.*

*Another great contribution of Borden was the establishment of the first library school in India, in which he trained his own assistants and successors. Borden conducted the first formal library-training programme in India at Baroda in 1911. He was instrumental in the foundation of the Baroda Library Club and its journal, “Library Miscellany”, published quarterly in three languages between 1912 and 1919.”*

The list of the libraries is given here-

- 1-Gandevi library, (Gandevi, 1805 )
- 2-Sayaji library ( Dwarka, 1871)
- 3-M.K. library (Bhadran, 1873)
- 4- Jaysukh Rao library (Vadodara, 1879)
- 5-J.B. pissar library (Bilimora, 1882)
- 6-V.R.sarvajanik library ( Visnagar, 1878)
- 7-Sarvajanik library (Bet, 1889)
- 8-Sayaji sarvajanik library, (Valam, 1885)
- 9-sayaji sarvajanik library (Dabhoi, 1869)
- 10-Fatesinhrao library (Patan, 1890)
- 11-Manibhai sarvajanik library (Jamnagar, 1890)
- 12-Sayaji sarvajanik library ( Padra, 1893)

- 13-M.R. library ( Antarsuba ,1894)
- 14- sarvajanik library (Vagodia, 1897)
- 15-Sayaji vaibhav library (Navsari, 1898)
- 16-sayaji vaibhav library (Vyara, 1898)
- 17-sarvjanik library ( Dharmaj ,1899)

It should be noted that the national libraries, according to Bhattacharjee, are the following

*“Some of the important libraries set up in 19th Century in India are Andrews Library, Surat in 1850, Gaya Public Library, Gaya in 1855, Long Library, Rajkot in 1856, Connemara Public Library, Madras in 1860, Government Library, Janagarh in 1867, Adyar Library, Adyar in 1886 and Dahi Laxmi Library, Nadiad in 1892. (Sharma;1987;99). Apart from these, other libraries, like Gujarat Vernacular Society along with a library, in Ahmedabad 1848 and Barton Library, Bhavnagar in 1882 were also established. Some of the Indian states also established public libraries. Such as Baroda established Baroda State Library in Baroda in 1877, Cochin established Public Library and Reading Room in Trichur in 1873, Dhar established Victoria General Library in Dhar in 1856, Indore established General Library in Indore in 1852, Jaipur established Maharajah’s Public Library in Jaipur in 1899. Others states also established such kind of libraries, viz. Jammu and Kashmir in 1879, Kahtiawar, in 1886, Kolhapur in 1850, Nizam’s Dominion in 1891 and Travancore in 1829. (Patel;2004;9). The first significant date in the development of public libraries in India is 1808 when the Bombay Government initiated a proposal to register libraries, which were to be given copies of books published from the ‘Funds for the Encouragement of Literature’”. (Bhattacharjee;2002;82)*

It should be noted that late Motibhai Amin and his friend circle has lion’s share in the library activities of Baroda. He set up 150 libraries within two years. Thus, Gayakwad played a very vital role in the library movement.

Initiatives taken by Sayajirao Gayakwad towards Library Movement.

(A)The Department of Library Science:-

Shree Sayajirao Gayakwad did not just set up the libraries but he was the one who introduced the concept of library . He invited Mr. W.A. Borden from America and appointed him as the director of the library department. This is the golden chapter in the development of the library. He even set up the course of library science for the instruction of the employees of the library. This would be the first step of such a great endeavor in India.

(B) Publications of Magazines:-

Library Miscellany(1912-1919), a magazine of the department had four issues in the year. It was translated in English, Hindi, Gujarati and Marathi This is the first illustrated journal of the library science in India.

(C) Peti Pustkalay (Mobile Library) :-

He even introduced the concept of mobile library in which wooden boxes were used.

\*State library Department: - There are two bodies of it.

1-Vadodara central library

Central library:- Central library was set up in Vadodara and all the libraries of the state were taken care of and developed by state library department and central library. The state library department :- central library was set up in vadodara and various sub divisions such as reference department, reading room, library for the children, for the women, sports department, Sanskrit department, manuscript department and office were introduced. In 1957, Sanskrit and manuscript department were separated which is known as oriental Institute.

2-Libraries in rural area.

(B) Rural Department:- The libraries were set up in various big and small centres of the state . A library per village was the motto. Mobile libraries and audio-visual aids were all covered under this scheme. The libraries of the villages and cities were monitored by the state public department. After the independence in 1949, when vadodara state merged with the Mumbai state, there were total 44 cities and 1025 villages' four districts. 194 village libraries had their own buildings.

➤ Borden classification system:-

The contribution of vadodara state and shree Borden is in Borden classification system. Borden classification system was used in vadodara before independence also. Shree Borden had very tactfully prepared the classification system. Such kind of contribution is unique in the world history. A press was set up in 1925 for the publication of books. For the library movement, a magazine started to be published in 1925 in which criticism of books and reports were published. Shree Borden, at that time, wrote to his friend that the Americans are still nurturing dream about this where as library movement has started in vadodara state.

\*Kacch and other states:- We have discussed the library movement in Vadodara and Saurashtra. In addition to this, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, library activities started in kacch and other smaller states. Maharaja Vijayrajji started public library in 1867 in Bhuj. Besides more libraries were set up in other states, such as.

1-V.J.Granthalay (palanpur,1872)

2-chandrasingh: Granthalay (chota Udaipur,1876)

3-Raman pustakalay (Prantij,1881)

4-Maharana Navendrasinhji Granthalay(Dharampur,1866)

5-V.J.library (Rajpipla,1887)

We find the blossoming of library activities by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The modern public library movement has its root here.

\*Post-Independence library activities:-

We have discussed the library movement of 1947-1960 when Gujarat was a part of Mumbai state. Gujarat state came into existence on 1-05-1960 and after that also, library movement was in full swing. The public libraries, especially have performed a vital role. According to the knowledge commission,

*“Library is not a building stacked with books -it is a repository and source of information and ideas, a place for learning and enquiry, and for the generation of thought and the creation of new knowledge. 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 sectors and settings of society and the community across India have easy access to knowledge seek”. (NKC; 2007; 5).*

In the Mumbai state, on the recommendation of Faisi committee, Grant was given to the libraries of the state. There was uniformity in the rules regarding grant. To strengthen the library activity, various committees were formed, which are as below.

- 1-Rajya Granthalay salahkar samiti.
- 2Pustak Prapti samiti
- 3Rajaram Mohan Ray Granthalay foundation samiti.
- 4Takniki kshetra ni samiti
- 5Niyam sudhar samiti
- 6Pustak pasandgi samiti.

All these committees have been perfectly working and provide timely grant to all the libraries and each reader has an easy access to library.

\*Non-Government Granthalaysangh:- This sangh came into existence on 30-06-1912. This sangh made a free propaganda of the library movement.

\*Gujarat Granthalay sangh: - came into existence on 1939 and worked for the propaganda of the library movement. It also get an annual fixed grant.

- 1 For the reference books and the publication of books.
- 2 For the conferences and seminars.
- 3-To teach library science.
- 4-To spread the awareness about the library in the rural area.

\*The education of library science:-for the effective management of the libraries, the knowledge of the library science is required. We have seen that Mr. Borden had started the library science in Baroda. The Government of Gujarat has started the course of library science in 1961. The certificate course is of 6 months duration. In Gujarat, various universities offer U.G., P.G. and PhD in library science. In each college, library is Inevitable. In it, a qualified librarian is required. Thus, we have rich libraries in almost all the colleges of Gujarat and many students are benefitted by this. Besides, Koba , L.D.institute of Ideology are the autonomous bodies. Legislative assembly and court have their own libraries. The library movement has been in full swing till the day, but as a librarian I feel sorry to have fewer readers. There are libraries, books but very few readers. We have any book available at the click of the finger. A responsible librarian connects his library, using internet, with the world .Audio-visual aids have become an alternative for the books. It seems that the youth have become in different to library. I keep my fingers crossed that the library movement will help in the overall development of the human race.

### **Bibliography**

- Jagnayak, S. S. (1999). Public Library Development in India: An Historical Perspective since 1947. 50 Years of Indian Librarianship edited by G Devarajan. New Delhi; Ess Ess,. p.13.
- Jayaswal, P.K. (1997). Dr. B P Barua: An assessment of his Role in Institutional-Building. In. Public Libraries in Developing Countries: Status and Trends edited by P K Mahapatra and V K Thomas. New Delhi: Vikas.
- Khanna, J K (1987). Library and Society. New Delhi: Ess Ess Publications.
- Patel, Jashu and Krishan Kumar (2004). Libraries and Librarianship in India. Westport: Greenwood, 2004.
- Ramasamy, R. (2001). Gujarat. In. Library and Information Services in Indian States and Union Territories edited by P.B.Mangla, et.al. New Delhi: Shipra.