

Role of Libraries in Society (A case study of libraries in Balochistan)

Social Sciences

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Abstract

The study of this research is to check the nature and scope of libraries in Balochistan and their impact on society. Library is an educational device which helps the nation to knock the modern world. It helps to enhance the literacy rate and reduce illiteracy. The study also let the awareness that Government should cast and eye on the lack of libraries in Balochistan. The Government should give due importance to set up comprehensive library system in Province to District and Tehsil level to spread educational atmosphere.

Keywords: *Balochistan, Library, Literacy,*

Introduction

It is so easy to define the word library as according to Oxford Dictionary a building or room in which collection of books, tapes, newspaper etc. are kept for people to read, study or borrow. The words are very correct to define the library but when we explore the real meaning of library and its value in society then we regret to define the library as a building to keep the books because library is a rare promoter of education. It is a worship place where people come and increase their spirituality. Library is a symbol of civilization. It is precious identification of a society although library is not just a building with large number of books it is the production machinery for characters. It is a global opportunity for those who know the philosophy of time. It builds the personality and the history defines the nature of library as

one of the main pillars of society. Library is a place where people come and enhance their knowledge capacity. The word library justifies itself as a worship place for those who aspire to reach the pinnacle of success. Library collection of information (usually in the form of books) held for common use. (The Hutchison Encyclopedia 1998 p-630)

Libraries in the Developing World

Libraries in developing countries have an important role to play in the development and maintenance of a democratic society. They provide the conditions by which people achieve free access to information and knowledge. They provide opportunities to participate actively in the country's further development into a democratic society. The strengthening of libraries in developing countries forms the most efficient weapon in the struggle against the digital divide. Libraries can provide access to global information via internet. Libraries at all levels are tools for people to obtain better living conditions (IFLA report, 2003)

Summary

Balochistan, from its location point of view is an important province of Pakistan. It lies to the south west of the country. It has an area of 347190 square kilometer. It is the largest province of Pakistan as it forms 43.5% of the country (Baloch & Khalid, 1990). Education is a very important segment of the society which transforms a nation and takes it to the height of progress. It should be handled cautiously with proper planning. (Baloch & Khalid, 1990 p 131)

Education is one of the most powerful instruments of change and its mind imbued with the knowledge, skills and competencies to shape the future destiny of the nation. (Zafar, 2002 p-269)

It is fact that the Balochistan exist in last and least number of literacy rate in Pakistan. Balochistan facing the scarcity of libraries or library system, few public libraries are present but in worse condition and there is no proper system to manage them in good condition. Still these libraries are the sole providers of educational environment and the poor strata of Balochistan is facilitating by those libraries. If we look at the responsibilities of the Government we do not have any serious consideration to explore the duties about the enhancement of educational promotion. The education system depends on libraries but we do not see a highly performance taken in the favor of the establishment of libraries. The Balochistan because of its low literacy rate it could not get progress in the field of library.

Library is a primary source for education we cannot get progress until we do not give major priority to libraries. The libraries are very important institutions for societies it creates valuable track in spreading knowledge and education. Library is not just a building where books kept but also journals, magazines, newspapers audio video visuals stocked. It is the beneficial point for the readers to get knowledge. Libraries are only next in important to flourish the society.

Purpose of Public Libraries

Typically provide services free of charge to anyone who wishes to use them, although lending is often restricted to residents of the locality. Many provide literacy programmes, reader development promotions and act as information for the availability of local public services. Typically they collect and preserve a wide range of materials relating to the history and development of the locality. Special services have been developed to serve the needs of particular groups such as children (including storytelling programmes), housebound people, and visually impaired. Public libraries in particular strive to serve all sections of their communities without discrimination. (IFLA report 2003)

Sandeman Public Library

The sandeman public library established in Quetta. We can point out the sandeman library as first library in Balochistan which had eight thousand books. (Ali, 2002, p-324) the Sandeman Library, Quetta later started functioning in 1885. Unfortunately this precious collection was destroyed in 1935 earthquake and could not be revived before 1947. It was located on the Main Jinnah Road Quetta in a grand building until 1979. But with the passage of time, after heavy losses the Library was closed down and merged into the Municipal Library. Few leftover books were dumped into a separate room and locked. This precious library contained old magazines dating back to 1907. It was also rich in source material on Balochistan, including the Gazetteers. It had a complete set of Gazetteers of India from 1880 to 1926. Another specialty of this collection was H.N. Mitra's Indian Annual Register from 1922 onwards, The Indian Quarterly Register from 1924 to 1940, The Indian Year Books, The Indian Literary Year Books, The Linguistic Survey of India by Grierson, The Baluchistan Administrative Reports, 1885-1953, Administration Report on the Railways in India, Railway Board, Military Reports on Southern Baluchistan, The Indian National Congress Reports since 1886-1898, Presidential Speeches, The Indian Constitutional Reforms. This collection had also some of the manuscripts on its record i.e., Book

notes by Rai Bahadur Haitu Ram in twelve volumes 1877-1934, and also a hand-written report in Urdu on Settlement of Barkhan Tehsil was available. (balochistanarchives.gob.pk)

Balochistan public library

The Balochistan public library established in 1980 in small a building in capital city of the province. It is the largest library of Balochistan. The library being maintained by qualified librarian and skill full staff.

Archives Department Library

This selection of books, manuscripts, and original files the history of pre-colonial and colonial Balochistan has been digitized by the staff of Balochistan Archives as a seed for a larger digital repository. These include English language books and original files from the collections of Balochistan Archives as well as Persian, Urdu, Balochi, Brahui, and Pashto manuscripts loaned to us by private citizens for digitization. The first two books below include a Persian manuscript titled Akhbar-ul-Abrar on the History of Ahmadzai Khans of Kalat and its English translation by a British colonial officer titled The Country and Family of Ahmadzai Khans of Kalat. You can experience the pleasure of online reading by turning the pages of these rare books and manuscripts with the click of your mouse. Please visit our website regularly to see newly added books and manuscripts.

Rare Books and Manuscripts of Archives Library

The Rare Book and Manuscript Library (RBML) is Balochistan Archives' principal repository for primary source books and printed material collections. The range of collections in RBML spans about 150 years and comprises rare printed works and manuscripts. There are some 3,700 printed volumes including books, reports, and diaries that have been properly catalogued and are available for reference. Another 2,500 volumes are being classified and repaired and will be added to the library once essential repairs are carried out. Most of these books were originally part of the Library of the Agent to the Governor General in Baluchistan whereas others have been acquired from the old Balochistan Secretariat Library. These books cover a wide variety of subjects and contain unique source materials on colonial Balochistan and British India as well as countries adjoining British India such as Persia, Afghanistan, and the Persian Gulf Gazetteer of Baluchistan (Original Volumes with General Index, Maps, and Statistical Indices) (<http://www.balochistan.gov.pk/>)

Command and Staff college library

The Command and Staff College has a Main and a Fiction Library. The Fiction Library has a good selection of weekly and monthly magazines in addition to books that offer a variety of light readings. The Main Library houses books, mainly of professional nature. A large number of international newspapers and magazines on professional and general subjects are also available in the Main Library. (<https://www.pakistanarmy.gov.pk>)

High Court of Balochistan Library

The High Court of Balochistan houses 13737 volumes under 6611 titles.

This also includes 3089 Books, 226 Digests and 3296 Journals. (<https://bhc.gov.pk>)

District libraries

Balochistan comprises Six Divisions and 32 districts but unfortunately we found public libraries in few districts which are as under, Quetta, Nushki, Mach, Mastung, Zhob, Kanozai, Panjgoor, Kalat, Jaffarabad, Pasni, Khonazi, Loralai, Turbat, Khuzdar, Jafar Abad and Sibi. Balochistan is still backward in the field of Education the literacy rate is around 50% both male and female. The Government should pay specific attention to enhance the literacy rate while establish well managed libraries in every district even in every town this needs immediate attention to be solved.

Institutional Libraries

There are Seven Higher institutes in Balochistan spreading higher education which are following, University of Balochistan (UOB), Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University (SBKWU), Balochistan University of Information Technology and Management Sciences (BUIITMS), Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water & Marine Sciences Uthal, Balochistan University of Engineering and Technology Khuzdar, University of Turbat (UOT), and University of Loralai. In every institute a well-managed library is found inside it. The institutional libraries are playing vital role to flourish the students. University library collections are broad and varied. University libraries support the educational community through access to the collections (<http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/>). The roles of institutional libraries are really inspired to development of education among students.

Conclusion

Since the inception of libraries in world the main purpose of library was to motivate the entire population towards education still the library doing it same way. Library paid great attention to develop the society. Library itself as social model positively played its role in every society to aware the people to reach the pinnacle of success. Library with the capacity of its material are in the best place to offer good education. We have the system of libraries in Balochistan but because of the conditions of those libraries we cannot consider that major provider of the education. We analyses the role of libraries in our society but we did not get progress the effective system of libraries in our society. Balochistan it low literacy rate do not get increase until the major role of libraries come forward. The new era has brought huge challenges to every society but few of them welcomed those challenges because of their capabilities. It's true that we do not face those challenges because we did not burn the candle of education to spread the light in the society. Library needs specific attention to engage the people with education. We should strive to promote the libraries. Although the certain recommendations may get right space for strengthen the libraries in Balochistan.

Recommendations

- i. That well-managed libraries have to set up in every town.
- ii. That skill full staffs have to appoint to manage the library.
- iii. That library has to check by Government on regular basis.
- iv. The libraries have to digitalized
- v. That training has to start for librarians.
- vi. That elected member of the area should look after the library

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