

# Public Library

**Management, Functions and  
Sustainability in the Knowledge  
Society**



**Edited by  
Dr. Ranjan Samanta  
Dr. Soumen Mondal**



Universal Briefing

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Public Library : Management, Functions and Sustainability  
in the Knowledge Society

*Edited by* : Dr. Ranjan Samanta & Dr. Soumen Mondal

*Chief Advisor* : Prof. Udayan Bhattacharya

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This publication is designed to provide information to the LIS professionals. The authors of the chapters are fully responsible for the content of the chapters of this publication.

## P R E F A C E

Welcome to **"Public Library: Management, Functions and Sustainability in the Knowledge Society"**. It is a matter of immense pleasure and opportunity for us to publish the valuable research papers in this edited book. This book celebrates the profound impact of public libraries as vibrant spaces of learning, connection, and empowerment. In an era marked by rapid technological advancements and evolving societal needs, public libraries remain steadfast in their mission to provide equitable access to information and foster inclusive communities.

Each chapter of this book is meticulously crafted to explore a different facet of the library experience. From the essential role of libraries in promoting literacy and lifelong learning to their innovative approaches to technology integration and community outreach, we aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of libraries in the 21st Century.

As we navigate the complexities of the modern world, public libraries stand as bastions of knowledge, empathy, and resilience. They serve as democratic institutions that bridge divides, foster understanding, and empower individuals to shape their own destinies. It is our hope that **"Public Library : Management, Functions and Sustainability in the Knowledge Society"** will inspire readers to engage with their local libraries, advocate for their continued support, and recognize them as indispensable pillars of our shared humanity.

In the publication of this book, we express our deepest gratitude

to Professor (Dr.) Udayan Bhattacharya for his invaluable cooperation and unwavering encouragement throughout the entire process. His expertise and guidance have been instrumental in shaping this work and we are truly fortunate to have had the opportunity to collaborate with him. We are very grateful to eminent teachers and library professionals of different national and international institutions. We are also thankful to the members of the Publication Sub-Committee and other members of Universal Briefing for their encouragements and cooperation. We also owe gratitude to the publisher "**Universal Briefing**" for giving us the opportunity to publish this volume. Mr. Susmit Mondal and Gita Press, Kolkata-700009 deserve special thanks for their cooperation at every step of this publication. At the last, we would like to express our gratitude and thanks to all the contributors who contribute the Chapters and any person anyway associated with us throughout the span of this publication. We are responsible for anything that goes wrong and we are always waiting for your valuable suggestions.

Together, let us celebrate the extraordinary legacy and enduring relevance of public libraries as cornerstones of our communities.

Warm Regards,

Howrah  
2024

**Dr. Ranjan Samanta**  
**Dr. Soumen Mondal**

## INTRODUCTION

Universal Briefing organized the International Seminar on **"Library beyond Campus: Resurrecting Public Library Service for the Generation Next"** in the month of February, 2023 with a vision, important for professional as well as academia. The theme of the Seminar had drawn the inspiration from the fact that public libraries are facing hard challenges in every aspect of their daily activities. The changes in services and activities are happening at a global speed and to keep up each public library must have to take innovative strategy to maintain the pace in the race.

There are more than 3,20,000 public libraries worldwide, 73 percent of them in developing and transitioning countries and more about 70,000 public libraries in India, which again is an unestimated figure. Another estimation puts the figure at 1 lakh plus libraries in India which are at all levels—beginning at the state level, district level, block level, village level. Presently there are 2480 Public libraries in West Bengal out of which, there are 13 Govt. Public Libraries, 2460 Govt. Sponsored Public Libraries and 7 Govt. Aided Public Libraries. It is very sad that many public libraries in West Bengal are closed for lack of library staff. But despite being situated probably in one of the best architectural set ups in our country remain in a dire state of deprivation.

It has started very interesting initiatives for resurrection and transformation of public libraries. There is a nodal agency squarely to work for public libraries which is called RAJA RAMMOHUN ROY LIBRARY FOUNDATION set up by Ministry of Culture. Then there is National Mission on Libraries. Their initiatives are going on in the area of digitalization of knowledge resources and setting up of virtual libraries. But the point here is that, all these efforts despite sincerity in their approach and vision are yet to yield results.

So how should a public library look like in present scenario? We are at a stage and an era where digitization of most of the knowledge resources is happening. If we pick up our mobile, we will find all kinds of knowledge resources which are available around the globe in a digital format. That is a matter of concern as what would be the role of public library. We need to probably rethink about the new role of a public library. We need to create it as a kind of place where we can undertake new services and activities for the user communities. Public Library can also be used for career counseling or for a lot of knowledge dissemination services about government programs. But for this we require a lot of fund, resources and kindness of Authority. The librarian and the public library are to be capacitated, to be able to receive or acquire the funds and put those funds in use in a manner in which communities are able to make use of services which are offered using those funds.

The Two day International Seminar had witness the flurry of six thematic sessions comprising "high powered invited lectures". The paper presentation tracks provided opportunities to the presenters to showcase their 'academic & practical mettle' under technical session chairs of eminent academicians in the field of Library and Information Science.

The Seminar became more exhilarating with the responses that it received from India and abroad, covering the central and state universities, international organisations, which further added to the grandeur of International Seminar on Library beyond Campus. The various research papers threw light on the different dimensions of public libraries as viewed through lens of future possibilities. The occasion provided a conversant environment for the researchers, academicians and professionals to freely exchange their views and ideas with others. Few research papers among them have been selected in this book.

In an age where information is abundant yet access remains unequal, public libraries stand as beacons of knowledge, community, and empowerment. From bustling city centers to remote rural towns, public libraries serve as dynamic hubs where individuals of all backgrounds converge to explore, learn, and

connect. "Empowering Communities: A Comprehensive Guide to individuals of all backgrounds converge to explore, learn, and connect." **"Public Library: Management, Functions and Sustainability in the Knowledge Society"** delves into the multifaceted role of these vital institutions, illuminating their profound impact on society and individuals alike.

This edited book is a culmination of extensive research, practical insights, and inspiring anecdotes gathered from library professionals, patrons, and community leaders. It aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the modern public library landscape, exploring its historical roots, evolving functions, and innovative initiatives. Through a blend of theoretical analysis and real-world examples, readers will gain a deeper understanding of the transformative potential embedded within public libraries.

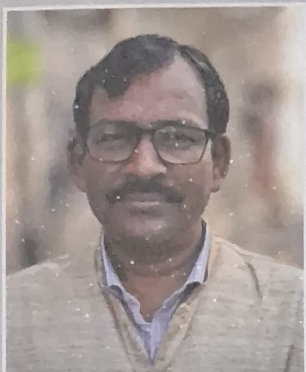
The chapters within this volume cover a diverse array of topics, ranging from the foundational principles of librarianship to contemporary challenges and opportunities. We examine the pivotal role of public libraries in fostering literacy, lifelong learning, and digital inclusion, ensuring equitable access to information for all members of society. Additionally, we explore how libraries serve as dynamic community centers, facilitating cultural enrichment, social engagement, and economic development. Furthermore, this book highlights the vital role of library professionals as champions of intellectual freedom, information literacy, and social justice. Through their dedication and innovation, librarians continually adapt to meet the evolving needs of their communities, leveraging technology and partnerships to expand services and reach new audiences.

As we navigate an increasingly complex and interconnected world, public libraries remain steadfast in their commitment to serving as democratic institutions that empower individuals and strengthen communities. **"Public Library: Management, Functions and Sustainability in the Knowledge Society"** serves as a tribute to their enduring legacy and a roadmap for their continued evolution in the 21st century.

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He contributed many research articles in different reputed journals & seminar-conference volumes. He is the author / editor of few books and author of many book & proceedings Chapters and content developer of Netaji Subhas Open University for study material on Research Methodology, Public Library Services, Resource Sharing and Networking. He was also a reviewer of some National Seminar Volumes. He was appointed as one of the reviewer of the UGC Project under University with Potential for Excellence, Phase-II (UPE-II) at DLIS, Jadavpur University.

He is an Ex-member of Book Selection Committee, State Library Council, Department of Mass Education & Extension, Government of West Bengal. He was assigned as North Region Evaluator of West Bengal Central School Service Commission (WBCSSC) for Librarian selection. He is the life member of IASLIC, BLA, Jadavpur University Alumni Association and Universal Briefing. He is also the General Secretary of Universal Briefing.

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