



# National Library and Information Policy

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## Abstract

The Library and information services are considered vital for all developmental activities of a nation. A policy document with regard to Library and Information service envisages the optimum utilisation of such services by all types of users in a planned manner. As part of the policy planning process, goals or objectives are defined, components are identified, guidelines are indicated how to achieve these objectives and implementing agencies are entrusted to follow the guidelines so as to make the services more effective, the ultimate purpose of such policy is to make the Library and Information service available to all classes of users. The policy would also state that how the resources of all these libraries in the country are pooled together and placed at the disposal of all the citizens towards the achievement of the goal.

**Keywords:** Modernisation, man power, sources, information, library, professional.

## Objectives

Realizing the importance of library information sources and services in national development government should takes all necessary steps to evolve a national library and information policy with the following goals to ensure that.

- (a) Easy availability and access to information and knowledge with speed and efficiency for all those who are involved in the activities of national development;
- (b) It is recognized as a national resource by national authorities as well as by other sections of the society.
- (c) Effective and efficient use of information contributes socio-economic education and cultural development of the country.
- (d) The quality and standard of the people are improved through the creation of a more."
- (e) Effective and optimum use of information by the professional experts develops knowledge and skills in all areas of human endeavour.

National Policy on Library and Information System (NAPLIS) document 1986 prepared by a Committee under the chairmanship of Prof. D.P. Chattopadhyaya constituted by Department of Culture, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India analyses the objectives of Library and information policy as under:

Library and information sources are vital for all sectors of national activity. The availability of information, expeditiously and pin-pointedly, supports all decision-making processes at all levels. Relevant information accelerates the pace of national development. An informed citizen is an asset to a democratic system of government and the proper utilisation of information can improve the quality of citizens. The government of India therefore realizes the value of co-ordinating and upgrading the existing library and information systems and services and initiating new programmes relevant to our national needs, taking advantages of the latest advances in information technology.

The following will be the main aims of library and information policy:

- (i) To foster, promote and sustain, by all appropriate means, the organisation availability and use of information, in all sectors of national activity;
- (ii) To take steps for mobilizing and upgrading the existing library and information systems and services and initiating new programmes relevant to our national needs, taking advantages for the latest advances in information technology;
- (iii) To encourage and initiate, with all possible speed, programmes for the training of library and information the library and information services and to recognise personnel, on a scale and of a calibre adequate to provide their work as an important component of the quality and level of such services;
- (iv) To set up adequate monitoring mechanisms for ensuring a rapid development of library and information facilities and services for meeting the information needs of all sectors and levels of the national economy;
- (v) To encourage individual initiative for the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge and for the discovery of new knowledge in an atmosphere of intellectual freedom;
- (vi) In general, to ensure for the people of the country all the benefits that can accrue from the acquisition and application of knowledge; and
- (vii) To preserve and make known the nation's cultural heritage in its multiple forms.

#### Components

Library and Information Services are required to provide the basic inputs for planning and modernizing different sectors of education, culture and economy. Such services are based on the types of libraries, users, availability of professional manpower, modernisation of the system and implementing and financial agencies. Therefore, it is essential to know the various components of such policy which play a major role in the whole process.

These are: Public Library System: A public library is an institution established and administered under a state law by a local government or autonomous library authority or a government department maintained wholly out of public funds open to all without distinction, free of charges.

It caters to the needs of the public at large. The most important task is to establish, maintain and strengthen these public libraries and enable them to work as a system. A policy on public library system should clearly spell out the type of libraries at various levels and services to be rendered. These libraries include: Library Science: Functions and Practices.

#### Academic Library System

To make the teaching, learning process more effective, all educational institutions have to be supported by adequate library resources and services. The types of users, their needs and resources available to fulfil those needs to be the objectives of each type of library,

(a) School Library: The children should be guided by the librarian to get themselves introduced to the pleasure and importance of books and other learning aids at an early age. The teachers/librarians should mould the students to develop reading habits by making use of the libraries. Provision of library period at the primary and secondary levels, adequate provision of reading another types of material to meet academic recreational activities to promote reading habits of both students and teachers, take initiative developing and introducing users education programme in the library,

(b) College and University Libraries: These libraries have been supporting, teaching research and extension activities. Since most of the university and college libraries are not provided with adequate facilities such as funds, staff, building furniture and equipments and reading materials etc. It is essential that universities and college libraries in one region/state must establish linkages and share their resources. Common acquisition programme, resource sharing may avoid duplication of resources in academic libraries. University libraries should widen their scope by adding bibliographical and current awareness service including Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI).

#### Special Libraries and Information System

The special libraries and information centres cater specific clientele to support their Research and Development (R&D) as well as scholarship. These specialized libraries are attached to either scientific organisations or social science research institutions specialized in arts and culture, humanities, industries and business houses in private and public sector. Information needs of the researchers and subject specialists are catered through these special libraries, a National Policy for Special Libraries and Information System need

to be more developed, modernized and service-oriented. One system should have connectivity with other Information System and Network at the local national and international level.

### **National Library System**

The main objective of National Library System is to meet the library needs at national level. The system is to be developed, upgraded and modernized at par with international level and also provide universal access to information at the national level. The National Library should bring cohesiveness between the libraries, documentation centres, publishing industry and the users at national level. National Library should publish a comprehensive coverage about the nation's output of documents and it should be brought out regularly as one of the essential functions. Delivery of Books Act, 1954 and Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867 should be reviewed and amended suitably so as to ensure continuous supply of publications to the National Library.

### **Manpower Development**

The rapid development of library and information service and application of information technology in the management of libraries and information centres, have necessitated suitable manpower for this profession. Education and training in the new areas of library and information service should be imparted to the existing library professionals to cope up with varied technological changes. Library and Information Science Education (LISE) at different levels run by the universities should stress more on information technology and modern management methods to create efficient manpower in this field. The government should set up more National Research and Development Centre and National Library and Information Service Cadre in the profession. Such efforts shall strengthen the national network of library and Information System and save stagnation and improve quality of service.

### **Modernisation of Library and Information System**

Modernizing the library and information system needs application of information and communication technologies. Each library should procure necessary hardware and software requirements for library automation and network purposes. For a large library system, there has to be common linkages for sharing of resources among all the libraries within system and out of the system also. Local Area Network (LAN) and Wide Area Network (WAN) are very much helpful in involving such linkages. Document Delivery Service, CD-ROM and other multimedia packages should be made available to the users of their interest. For the sake of preserving collections of national important and the rich cultural heritage, the libraries should adopt modern methods for converting more and more printed methods into microfilm or compact disc (CD) formats. Modernizing the public libraries school, college and university libraries, special libraries and national libraries need a comprehensive national policy of the government which will show the way to all the leading organisations to work out their own plans and programmes.

### **Finance**

Adequate financial support is required to provide library service to all type of users through these libraries. It is not only the responsibility of the State or National government to take the entire financial burden, but it should be shared by other agencies and private organisations. Each Ministry/ Department under which these public, academic, special, national libraries are functioning should allocate 6-10% from their budget to provide library services. Besides for rendering public library service in the states each government should enact Public Library Act or Library Legislation which should levy library cess in the form of surcharge if the concerned government is not in a position to fully finance these libraries from its own budget. Similarly special libraries functioning under R&D organisations should get more funds from their parent organisation to provide quality service to its users. A National Policy should incorporate all these financial aspects so as to evolve a sound system for the country. The ever-increasing cost of reading material and diversity of collections to meet users needs in different libraries, proper funding should be made available within the framework of National Library and Information Policy. Library and Information Services should be fee based or free based should be decided by each organisation in the present age of information.

## Conclusion

The National Library and Information Policy has been changed to National Information Policy (NIP) in the present day of information society in which information has become the strategic resource. Information professionals are employed in collecting organizing, storing, retrieving and disseminating, information to its users. In the process of change from library service to information service, the policy must take into account all facets and sectors of our complex and inter-related economy such as publishers, libraries, database providers, on-line vendors, telecommunication engineers hardware manufactures, software providers and last but not least the end users of all of the above services and products. A coherent and comprehensive national Information Policy is need with the help of professional organizations, Library Associations, School of Library and Information Studies, Government, Information Technologists; primary producers such as authors editors, database and data bank compilers and ultimately users of the various services. The success of such policy depends much on the co-operation and coordination among these bodies to provide maximum service to the users.

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