

**Interdisciplinary Course (IDC) – 101 (FYUG I<sup>st</sup> Sem.)****Library & Information Science (LIS)****UNIT 1: BASICS OF LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE****1.1 Library**

Libraries represent different things to different people – from a place where students can go and study, to a service allowing anyone to borrow a book, access the Internet or do research. Quite simply, libraries offer a means by which students, scholars, teachers, professionals and others can gain access to information/knowledge.

Libraries are service oriented institutions that provide access to information and knowledge. To perform this role, libraries collect, stock, process and organise documents published in print, electronic, digital, or multi-media formats; build tools to search material for use; and offer user services for information dissemination.

**Definitions of Library**

*Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines the library as “a place in which literary, musical, artistic, or reference materials (such as books, manuscripts, recordings, or films) are kept for use but not for sale.”

*Oxford English Dictionary* defines a library as “a building or room containing collections of books, periodicals, and sometimes films and recorded music for people to read, borrow, or refer to.”

*ALA* (American Library Association) glossary of library and information science has defined library as “a collection of materials organised to provide physical, bibliographic and intellectual access to a target group with a staff that is trained to provide services and programs related to the information needs of the target groups.” *It is more acceptable definition in present day context.*

**Functions of a Library**

Libraries serve multiple functions and play essential roles in society. Here are some common functions of a library:

- 1) **Access to Information:** Libraries provide access to a wide range of information resources, including books, periodicals, newspapers, reference materials, online databases, and digital content.
- 2) **Reading and Learning:** Libraries promote reading and learning by offering a diverse collection of books, both fiction and non-fiction, for all age groups. They provide a quiet and conducive environment for reading, studying, and conducting research.
- 3) **Borrowing Materials:** One of the primary functions of libraries is to lend (issue) materials to library members. Library users can borrow books and other information resources for a specific duration, allowing access to a wide range of materials without the need for ownership.
- 4) **Reference Services:** Libraries offer reference services to assist users in finding information and answering their questions.
- 5) **Digital and Online Resources:** Libraries provide access to electronic information resources such as e-books, e-journals, online databases etc. Libraries often offer computer and internet facility to users for accessing online resources and engage in digital learning.

- 6) **Community Gathering Space:** Libraries serve as community hubs, providing a welcoming space for people to come together, collaborate, and engage in various activities. They may host author talks, book clubs, workshops, exhibitions, lectures, and other events that foster social interaction and cultural enrichment.
- 7) **Preservation of Knowledge:** Libraries play a vital role in preserving and archiving cultural heritage, historical documents, rare books, manuscripts, and other valuable materials. They ensure that important works are safeguarded and made available for future generations.
- 8) **Support for Lifelong Learning:** Libraries support lifelong learning by offering resources and services for individuals of all ages. They may have dedicated sections for children and young adults, providing age-appropriate materials and educational programs. Libraries also offer adult education resources, job search assistance, and skill development opportunities.

## Importance of a Library

Libraries hold significant importance in society for several reasons. Following are the some of the reasons

- 1) **Access to Knowledge:** Libraries provide access to a vast range of information and knowledge resources, including books, periodicals, research materials, digital content, and databases. Libraries promote lifelong learning and enable individuals to explore new subjects, enhance their skills, and stay informed.
- 2) **Promoting Literacy:** Libraries play a vital role in promoting literacy and fostering a love for reading. They offer a diverse collection of books for all age groups, including children and senior citizens.
- 3) **Supporting Education:** Library plays a vital role in the education process. It expands and supplements the curricular learning and teaching process of the institution by providing resources for research, study, and academic support.
- 4) **Bridging the Digital Divide:** In today's digital world, libraries play a crucial role in bridging the digital divide. They provide computer access, internet connectivity, and technology training to individuals who may not have such resources at home.  
(Digital divide means the economic and social inequality among individuals with regard to access to modern digital technology, including computers, smartphones, tablets, and the internet.)
- 5) **Community Hub:** Libraries serve as community gathering spaces, fostering social interaction, and community engagement. They offer meeting rooms, exhibition spaces, and host a variety of cultural and educational events, such as author talks, workshops, book clubs, and art exhibits.
- 6) **Preserving Cultural Heritage:** Libraries preserve and safeguard cultural heritage, historical documents, and rare materials for future generations. They collect and archive important works, manuscripts, photographs, and artifacts, ensuring their long-term preservation and access.
- 7) **Information Literacy and Critical Thinking:** Libraries support the development of information literacy and critical thinking skills. Library professionals assist users in navigating through vast amounts of information, guiding them how to evaluate sources, distinguish between reliable and unreliable information, and conduct effective research.  
(Information literacy means the ability to find, locate and evaluate current, relevant and accurate information and to use this information effectively in order to meet one's need.)
- 8) **Equal Access to Information:** Libraries uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and provide equal access to information for all individuals. They ensure that information and knowledge are available without censorship or bias.



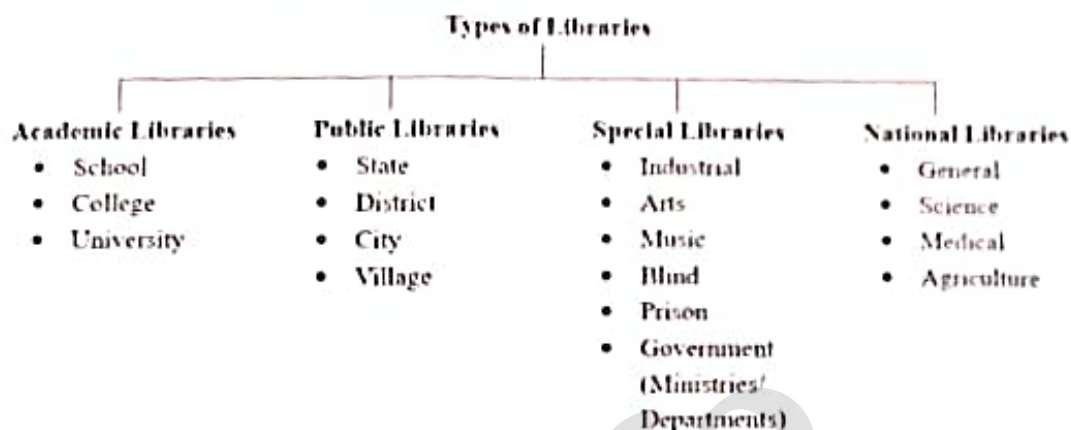
## Role of Libraries in Society

Libraries as social institutions have become integral part of the society. Library and society are interlinked and interdependent, not mutually exclusive. Libraries play a vital role in socio-economic, political and cultural development of a community and society. The roles that libraries play in supporting modern societies can be grouped under five major categories: (i) higher education roles, (ii) user education roles, (iii) recreation roles, (iv) library as a place and (v) social and cultural roles.

Role Type	Library Role
Roles in Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ (Supporting education, teaching research, and training in the society) by providing access to knowledge resources, materials and by providing referrals</li> <li>• Dissemination and distribution of information/ knowledge stored in such documents to stakeholders in education</li> <li>✓ Supporting informal self-education and learning</li> </ul>
User Education Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Building good reading habits</li> <li>✓ Information literacy, computer literacy</li> <li>• Encouraging use of library collections and services</li> </ul>
Roles in Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Supporting the educational, civic, and cultural activities of groups and organisations</li> </ul>
Library as a Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ (Offering architecturally designed building as a place) that inspires interest in every one for academic pursuits</li> </ul>
Social and Cultural Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Democratisation of information and knowledge in the society</li> <li>• Linking people to knowledge and information sources</li> <li>• Giving under-privileged sections of the society awareness about opportunities available in the society for their social and economic development</li> <li>• Organising cultural activities to promote social harmony such as book discussions, lectures on important topics</li> <li>• Supporting the civic and cultural activities of groups and organisations</li> <li>• Capturing and preserving traditional knowledge</li> </ul>

## 1.2 Types of Libraries

Libraries can be grouped under four broad categories:



### 1.2.1 Academic Libraries

An academic library has been defined as “a library associated or attached with any educational institution to support its educational programmes”. Schools, colleges, universities and engineering/medical institutions are some of such institutions, which may vary from one another in respect of courses offered by them.

The following table broadly indicates the various types of libraries attached to different educational institutions:


School Libraries	College Libraries	University Libraries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primary School</li> <li>Secondary School</li> <li>Higher Secondary School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under Graduate College</li> <li>Post Graduate College</li> <li>Professional College</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conventional Universities</li> <li>Agricultural Universities</li> <li>Medical Universities</li> <li>Institutes of Science, Technology and Management (NIT, IIT, IIM, IISc, etc.)</li> </ul>

All types of academic libraries have some common qualities in many respects. It is because all academic libraries exist to support the teaching, learning and research programmes of their parent institution.

#### Functions of Academic Libraries (Need / Objectives)

The major functions of an academic library are as follows:

- 1) Serve the curricular and general educational needs of the academic community
- 2) Selects and procures documents and other sources of relevant information;
- 3) Processes the procured information or documents with the help of classification, cataloguing, shelf arrangements, etc. to make them easily available for the users;
- 4) Provides lending (issue/return) service to different types of users
- 5) Generate curiosity, eagerness and reading habit among the students
- 6) Provides reference materials for supporting teaching and learning
- 7) Provides study/reading areas for users/readers

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- 8) Provides active information services
  - 9) Provides inter library loan (ILL) facility to the users
  - 10) Provides online access to electronic resources (*e-books, e-journals, databases etc.*)

**School Libraries:** A school library is a library within a school where students, teachers, and staff have access to a variety of resources. The primary aim of a school library is to provide students with access to resources that support their academic success.

**College Libraries:** A library attached or associated with a college and used by teachers, students and staff of the college is known as College Library. College education provides a totally different environment for boys and girls who go for higher studies. Usually, the classes comprise a large number of students and unlike school education, the students of college get much less individual attention from the teachers. The students, therefore, have to rely much more on self-learning. Therefore, the college library is the automatic choice for students to supplement their class room teaching.

**University Libraries:** A university library is a library attached to a university. It exists to cater to the needs and requirements of students and teachers and to support the teaching, learning and research programmes of the university. Libraries have become so much important for a university that the university can hardly go without a library. The nature and mode of university level education is such that a student or research scholar is put into a situation so as to find a solution to problems, do some creative thing or conduct a study on a project. The libraries extend facilities to support such specialised academic and research activities in universities.

### 1.2.2 Public Libraries

A public library is a library that is accessible by the general public and is generally financed from public funds (such as taxes). Public libraries provide a wide range of resources and services, including books, magazines, newspapers, audiovisual materials, and digital resources.

Public libraries are distinct from research libraries, school libraries, and other special libraries in that their mandate is to serve the general public's information needs (rather than the needs of a particular institution or organisation).

#### Characteristics and Functions of Public Libraries

Following are the few characteristics / functions of public libraries:

- 1) **A Centre for Information:** It acts as a centre for information for the general public. A variety of information is needed by users. Information may be required about local history, local industries, local personalities, career opportunities, government schemes, etc.
- 2) **A Centre for Self-Education:** It acts as a centre for self-education to the school/college dropout students, unemployed youths, senior citizens, persons of varied interests etc. It provides information resources suiting one's own interests throughout one's life span.
- 3) **A Centre for Culture:** A public library serve as a centre to promote local or regional culture. A modern public library identifies and collect cultural material of importance (*i.e., works of art or sculpture, paintings, literary documents, etc.*) available in this area.
- 4) **An Impartial Service Agency:** Public libraries are open to anyone in the community, regardless of one's age, status, income, language, religion, sex, literacy level or culture. They aim to serve the entire community, including individuals, families, students, professionals, and senior citizens.



- 5) **Community Engagement** Public libraries serve as community hubs, fostering social interaction and community engagement. They host events, exhibitions, art displays, and cultural programs. Public libraries often collaborate with local organizations, schools, and businesses to offer programs and services that meet community needs.
- 6) **Digital Inclusion** Public libraries play a vital role in bridging the digital divide by offering free computer and internet access to individuals who may not have access at home. They provide technology training and support to help users develop digital skills and navigate the digital world effectively.

### 1.2.3 Special Libraries

Special Libraries are specialised libraries which focus on specific subject areas, industries, or professions. Special libraries often have a more specific clientele (*users*) and deal with more specialised kinds of information. Special libraries are also sometimes known as information centres.

Special libraries are formed in research and development establishments, government departments, industrial and business undertakings, hospitals and health services, social and welfare organisations, museums, national gallery of arts; etc.

#### Functions of Special Libraries

A special library performs primarily the following functions:

- i) It selects and procures documents and other sources of relevant information;
- ii) It processes the procured information or documents with the help of classification, cataloguing, shelf arrangements, etc. to make them easily available for the users;
- iii) It subscribes to a good number of journals related to its area;
- iv) It provides indexing and abstracting services to the users to save their time;
- v) It provides reference services to the users by telephone, by post or by e-mail;
- vi) It gives Current Awareness Service (CAS) regarding new arrivals and latest services to the users;
- vii) It provides Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) service to the users as per their subject interest and requirement;
- viii) It also gives document delivery service to its users at their doorstep;
- ix) It gives translation services to provide the desired information to the users in their convenient language;
- x) It provides inter library loan (ILL) facility to the users;

### 1.2.4 National Libraries

National Libraries are established and funded by governments to preserve the national heritage, culture, and knowledge. National libraries hold important collections of books, manuscripts, archival materials, and other national treasures. They often serve as a permanent depository for all significant publications published in the country.

Almost every country has a national library. Some examples of great National Libraries are - National Library of India, the Library of Congress (USA) and the British Library (UK).

Some specialised national libraries have also been established in India on the basis of subjects, user groups, materials etc. Few examples are – National Digital Library of India, National Science Library, and National Medical Library.

## Functions of National Libraries

Following are the few important functions of National Libraries:

- i) To provide leadership among the nation's libraries
- ii) To serve as a permanent depository for all publications published in the country
- iii) To acquire and maintain documents about the country or its people or activities, published outside the country
- iv) To collect and preserve select manuscripts and such other archival records of national relevance and importance
- v) To prepare and publish national bibliographies of books, periodicals and other non-print materials
- vi) To provide indexing and abstracting services
- vii) To provide specialised services to government departments, organisations and industries such as answering technical enquiries, preparation of special lists/bibliographies on specific topics etc.
- viii) To provide facilities for reading, consulting, etc., on the premises, including research rooms for serious readers such as researchers, scholars and writers

## National Library of India

The National Library of India is located in **Kolkata, West Bengal, India**. It is India's largest library by volume and public record. The National Library is under Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

The origins of the National Library, Kolkata begins with the establishment of Calcutta Public Library on 21st March 1836. The Imperial Secretariat Library came into existence in 1981 by integrating all Secretariat Libraries. In the year 1902, the Calcutta Public Library and the Imperial Secretariat Library were amalgamated and gave way to establishment of The Imperial Library. After Independence of India, the National Library came into being in place of Imperial Library by the "Imperial Library (Change of Name) Act" in 1948. It was accorded a special status of an Institution of National Importance in the Article 62 in the 7th Schedule of the Constitution of India and was opened to Public on 1st February 1953.

The National Library serves as a permanent repository of all books, newspapers and periodicals published in India. The National Library receives all publications published in the territory of India under the provisions of "the **Delivery of Books and Newspapers (Public Libraries) Act, 1954**". The Act was amended in 1956 to include periodical publications, newspapers and maps within its purview.

## National Digital Library of India (NDLI)

National Digital Library of India (NDLI) is a virtual repository of learning resources *(in digital format)* such as textbooks, articles, videos, audio books, lectures, simulations, etc. It is sponsored and mentored by Ministry of Education, Government of India. It is developed, operated, and maintained from **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kharagpur**. It was launched (started) in pilot form in May 2016 and dedicated to the nation on June 19, 2018 for online access.)

The NDLI provides free of cost access to many e-books of various languages and provides interface support for 10 most widely used Indian languages.