



Scope of Public Libraries through Mobile Govt. Libraries in Gujarat State

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"Mobile Library is a brook of knowledge that waters the character, virtues and righteousness"

Origin of Mobile Library:

The first mobile library was started in Scotland in 1810 A.D. The mobile Library was used for religious propaganda. In the year 1870, the public library of Melbourne city in Australia, the boxes containing 50 books were sent to the libraries outside the urban areas of 18 locations and thereby about 8000 books were circulated for reading. The Oxford University had started sending educational books to the local education committees through mobile library. Thus, England is considered to be the Origin of mobile library.

'The Naval Association' of America used to send mobile libraries on the ship since long and its Govt. was also collecting and sending books to the light houses. Prof. Adams, the author of the book 'Public Libraries and Social nurture' say that in New York the system of sending boxes of books education as per the local requirement started in 1888, but actual mobile library was sent in 1893. Such mobile libraries were known as 'Depot'. In the year 1897, the services of mobile libraries were started in Free Public Library of New York, which are functioning even today as a mobile library branch of public library. In the year 1892, the various States of America had given legal approval to the mobile libraries.

A part from America, Italy and Russia had also started mobile libraries between 1892 to 1930. Italy had started about 2000 mobile libraries and by the time of 1929, Russia had started about 50,000 mobile libraries.

In Gujarat, the credit of starting Services of public library and mobile library (1911) as a part of Public Library Services in the province of Vadodara, goes to Maharaja Sayajirao Gayakwad (3rd). In 1947, due to formation of units of the provinces of Saurashtra, the activities of Libraries got promoted. Libraries were established in the districts of Rajkot, Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, Junagadh and Surendranagar. Under the 'Library Improvement Scheme' of Central Govt., Library building at these five places were build at the cost of Rs. 15 Lakh. Each of these libraries was give books worth Rs. 1 lakh and furniture. Besides these each of these libraries were given a jeep and books and thereby a scheme of mobile library was implement to provide reading materials (books) at the village level of the concerned district. At the same time, under the 'Community Development Programme' of the Govt. of India, the scheme of

mobile library was implementing at Trapaj village of Bhavnagar district under "Extensive Library Services." The mobile library services at Bhavnagar were started with the donation of Maharaja Krushnakumar Sinhji. With the implementation of Panchayati Raj, the administration of these libraries was handed over to the concerned district panchayat. But, due to lack of co-operation, organization and planning these libraries had become almost dead.

Public Library Activities in Gujarat:

Public library activities in Gujarat were started in 1910 by Maharaja Sayajirao Gayakwad (3rd), which were implemented in the whole province. With the formation Gujarat State on 1st May, 1960, the matter of developing public libraries in the state was considered and a separate library department was formed by the state Govt.

Library department prepared a plan for the development of the activities of the public library At present there are two central libraries in the state, district Govt. libraries at all the 26 district head quarters. State Central Reserve Library for the separate collection of unavailable and rare books, State Art and Culture Library at Ahmedabad, taluka Govt. libraries at 83 taluka head quarters, Swarnim taluka libraries at 33 taluka head quarters, 3 women libraries and nine mobile libraries are functioning.

With a view to developing the scopes of public library services up to the village level the state Govt. has started 4574 grant-in-aid libraries with the help of Local Self Government Institutes and voluntary organizations. Out of these more than 3500 libraries are established at village level and about nine libraries are for the blind people. These grant-in-aid libraries are paid maintenance grant by the State Government.

Services of mobile libraries in Gujarat :

The State of Gujarat consists of 18192 villages of 225 talukas of 26 districts. It is not an easy task & make planning for providing library services to the people of 18192 villages. But the State Government has established separate 'Gram Granthalay' in more than 3500 villages. Whereas, after 1985, the services of mobile library are started at Sabarkantha, Surat, Surendranagar, Vadodara, Gandhinagar, Bhavnagar and Bhuj district head quarters in the State. These district are supplying books to the village areas of the district and they are delivered to the selected operators of the centre and this operators and supplying books the villagers for reading.

Details of mobile libraries in the State:

Sr. No.	District of Mobile Library	Year of Starting Mobile Library	Operator of Mobile Library	Villages availing Service of Mobile Library	Total Villages of the District
1	Sabarkantha H.Q. Himmatnagar	1985	Dist. Govt. Library, Himmatnagar	170	1386
2	Valod Dist. Surat	1990	Taluka Govt. Library	95	758
3	Surendranagar	1990	Dist. Govt. Library	122	661
4	Vadodara	1990	Central Library, Vadodara	100	1548

5	Gandhinagar	1991	State Central Library, Gandhinagar	200	216
6	Bhavnagar	1991	Dist. Govt. Library, Bhavnagar	104	784
7	Bhuj, Dist. Kachchha	1998	Dist. Govt. Library, Bhuj	82	905
8	Bhavnagar	1972	Dist. Govt. Library	60 Schools of Bhavnagar City/	
9	Gandhinagar	2005	State Central Library, Gandhinagar	Gandhinagar Urban Areas (All)	

Looking to the scope of mobile library services in the state it reflects that out of 1386 villages of Sabarkantha district only 170 villages have the facility of mobile library. In the same way out of 758 villages of Surat district only 122 villages, only 100 villages out of 1548 villages of Vadodara district, only 104 villages out of 784 villages of Bhavnagar district, only 82 villages out of 905 villages of Kachchha district have the mobile library facility. These figures are almost Negligible. The facility of Gram Granthalay is available in only 669 villages, out of 6258 villages of these 7 districts. The remaining villages are deprived of mobile library facility.

Apart from these, the numbers of villages in other district of the state are as follows:

Sr. No.	District	Total Number of Villages
1	Ahmedabad	551
2	Amreli	613
3	Junagadh	969
4	Navasari	370
5	Panchmahal	804
6	Anand	354
7	Kheda	614
8	Jamnagar	701
9	Dang	312
10	Dahod	1102
11	Narmada	558
12	Mahesana	622
13	Patan	599
14	Porbandar	184
15	Rajkot	855
16	Valsad	241
17	Banaskantha	1246
18	Bharuch	717
19	Tapi	522

Thus, there are 11934 villages in the state. Out of the only 3146 villages have the Gram Granthalay facility and the remaining 8788 villages are deprived of even mobile library facility.

In this era of information, it's a call of time to provide the required reading materials to the people of all the rural areas of the state. State Govt. is giving priorities for the facilities like public hospitals, baking, post and telegram, police chawky, co-operative societies, dairy, anganwadi, primary schools, higher education schools etc. at rural level,

It is quite essential for the rural people that the state Govt. may give priority to the mobile library, on the same line. It is quite necessary to prepare plan to provide this primary facility at village level.

Till date, the operators of the centers of mobile libraries at 7 district head quarters were offering honorary services, now the State Govt. has decided to give honorarium of Rs. 500/- per month and effectively implement the services of mobile library.

Pre-requisites for development of mobile libraries in Gujarat:

- (1) The library department of the state has started District Government Libraries in all the district of the State. The existing 9 mobile libraries and managed by the concerned district libraries. It is necessary to start mobile library facilities at the remaining 19 district on the same line, in the phased manner. Proper vehicle and books may be provided to the mobile library.
- (2) Very few villages are provided mobile library facility through Nine mobile libraries of the state. Necessary provisions and planning may be made to provide mobile library facility to the villages of the concerned district.
- (3) At present the mobile libraries are providing only books to the operators of the centre and efforts are being made supply reading materials only. Instead of that, the reading materials catering to the needs of children, women, senior citizens, student may be provided to them at village level.
- (4) Planning may be made to educate and aware the rural people about adult education, addiction eradications, reading competition, book exhibition, various programmes with school children through mobile libraries and T.V./Video and there by encourage the rural people to free themselves from blind faith.
- (5) It is also necessary to subscribe two to three dailies and magazines which are useful to village people, students, females and children at the stipulated centres of mobile libraries.
- (6) Books for mobile libraries may be selected as per the requirement of the readers.
- (7) It is necessary to operationalise mobile libraries at all the district head quarters by the state Govt. If the Govt. changes its policy of grant-in-aid libraries and the mobile libraries are also covered under this policy, voluntary organisations, gram panchayats, municipalities may be given permission the start their mobile libraries. The responsibility of the State Govt. may get limited to the maintenance grant only. If this scheme is introduced, the mobile library services may be extended upto the rural areas.

Conclusion:

Public Library Activities of Gujarat are developing. But it is obligatory to educate people of rural area and thereby free them from blind faith and addictions. Knowledge may be available to all the people. It may be made through mobile libraries. Gujarat has enough infrastructures. It may be considered seriously to provide services of mobile libraries to all the rural areas of the state near future.

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