
OPPORTUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Public Library / Reading Room

WHAT THIS INSTITUTION IS

Every district usually has a main District Public Library – the largest library in the district and the apex of a network that may include branch libraries, block libraries, and mobile library vans. Public libraries are a state subject, so each state has its own law governing management, staffing, and funding. The District Librarian manages the main library and coordinates smaller units. For a young person, the district library is a free reading space, a source of books and newspapers, and – in modernised libraries – a place to access computers and the internet.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you need a quiet place to study, want to read newspapers and books for free, or need to access a computer with internet for an online application, the district public library is one of the few public spaces designed for exactly this.



GOVERNANCE

LAW / POLICY	SCOPE
State Public Libraries Acts (in states that have enacted one)	State-specific laws for library management, staffing, and funding
M.P. Government Libraries Rules, 1963 (notified 1964)	MP has no dedicated Public Libraries Act; five state central libraries (Jabalpur, Bhopal, Gwalior, Rewa, Indore) are governed under these departmental rules
Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) Guidelines	Central matching and non-matching grants for books, equipment, building, and outreach
National Mission on Libraries (NML)	Selected district libraries (broadly one per State/UT) are upgraded as NML Model Libraries with central assistance for infrastructure up-gradation, technology modernisation (ICT), creation of facilities for specially-abled (Divyangjan) users, and outreach programmes

- **Centre:** Ministry of Culture → RRRLF (Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation) / NML (National Mission on Libraries) for grants and modernisation support
- **State:** State Education/Culture Department → Directorate of Public Libraries. In states with a Public Libraries Act, the Director of Public Libraries (heading the State Directorate) is the apex statutory authority responsible for the state library network – manages and organises the network, conducts inspections, sets standards, and coordinates district operations. Where there is no Public Libraries Act (PLA), this function sits within the Education / Culture department.
- **District:** District Library Committee – typically District Magistrate as Patron, District Librarian as Member Secretary, representatives from education and culture departments, and community representatives; reviews collection-development plans, service schedules for branch libraries and mobile vans, and utilisation of state budget and RRRLF grants
- **Funding:** State budget for salaries and operations. RRRLF provides matching grants (cost shared with the state government) for books, reading materials, furniture, computers, library equipment, mobile library services, and library building construction/renovation; and non-matching grants for children's corners, sections for women / senior citizens / neo-literates, facilities for Divyangjan users, milestone-year celebrations, central selection of books, voluntary-organisation libraries, and seminars/workshops. NML Model Library upgrades are funded 75:25 (Centre:State); 90:10 in North-Eastern States. Some State Public Libraries Acts impose a library cess on property tax.

KEY POSITIONS

POSITION	RESPONSIBILITY
District Librarian	Head of the library – services, collection development, supervision of branch units
Assistant Librarian / Library Assistant	Circulation, catalogue, and reader services
Library Attendant / Support staff	Shelving, issue/return, maintenance
Mobile library staff	Where a mobile van exists – field services and outreach



MANDATED SERVICES

- Provide reading and lending services: members borrow books; non-members read on-site
- Provide free access to newspapers and magazines daily
- Extend services to rural areas through mobile library vans and book deposit centres (where sanctioned)
- Develop and preserve collections using state and RRRLF grants
- Conduct reading promotion, school visits, and cultural/educational programmes
- Provide facilities for Divyangjan (specially-abled) users – accessible reading spaces, screen-readers, large-print and audio collections, and ramps
- Where library holdings include copyright-free manuscripts, rare books, old journals, or local historical records, digitise and contribute to the National Virtual Library / National Digital Repository
- In modernised libraries: provide computers with internet, automated catalogue/circulation using e-Granthalaya 4.0 (NIC's cloud-based library-automation software), and access to two national digital portals – National Digital Library of India (NDLI) (educational resources, Ministry of Education (MoE)) and National Virtual Library of India (NVLI) (library/cultural-heritage resources, MoC)

LINKED SCHEMES

- **RRRLF Matching Grants** – grants for books, furniture, computers, children's corners, and mobile vans
- **National Mission on Libraries (NML)** – one-time modernisation grants for IT and infrastructure upgrades
- **State library budgets** – annual funding for staff, periodicals, books, and building maintenance
- **Library cess (where State Public Libraries Acts impose one)** – additional revenue from a small charge on property tax

HOW TO LOCATE

Portal: punlib.net – the PunLib network covers Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Rajasthan with district library addresses and services

National Register of Public Libraries: online.rrrlf.gov.in/showNRPLPage (RRRLF portal – registered libraries, with state/district filters)

Also: Search "[district name] public library" or ask at the Collectorate – the district library is usually a known landmark near the government area

KEY FACILITIES

A functioning district public library should have: separate reading halls for general reading and newspapers with adequate seating and lighting, a book collection covering textbooks, reference works, local language literature, and children's books, a periodicals section with daily newspapers, and – in modernised libraries – computers with internet access.

WHAT A FUNCTIONING PUBLIC LIBRARY LOOKS LIKE

- The reading room is open during posted hours and has readers using it
- Current newspapers and magazines are available daily
- The book collection is catalogued and lending services are active
- Computers with internet are available for public use (in modernised libraries)
- The library conducts at least one outreach programme (school visit, reading event) per quarter
- A mobile library van (where sanctioned) runs on schedule with records of stops and users



GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL

During service delivery. The first point of contact is the District Librarian. For membership and lending disputes, the Assistant Librarian is a parallel front-line.

After service. Escalation is to the District Library Committee (where constituted) and the State Directorate of Public Libraries. For matters involving RRRLF grants (books, IT equipment, modernisation), RRRLF has direct jurisdiction.

External. Ministry of Culture runs Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) (pgportal.gov.in) for central-library complaints. RRRLF operates a grievance channel at rrrlf.gov.in. State library ombudsmen (where constituted) handle member-side grievances. For censorship or content-access disputes, the Copyright Office and the Indian Library Association have advisory roles. e-Granthalaya help desk: 011-24305489 / 011-24305813 (general support, for remote access); 011-24305481 (online training); email [egranthalaya\[at\]nic\[dot\]in](mailto:egranthalaya[at]nic[dot]in).

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