Library landscape of Goa

Dr Gopakumar V.
University Librarian
Goa University, Goa
gopan@unigoa.ac.in

Anuradha V
Librarian
BITS – Goa campus
anuradhav@bitsgoa.ac.in

When ever we think of the name 'Goa', the first images that come to our mind are the beaches, the sandy shores, the fishermen flock and the spill of tourists from inside and abroad. The natural beauty and its unique ambience made Goa a centre of tourist attraction. But beyond all these, this tiny state of India has a rich tradition and culture which differentiates it from the rest of the nation. An analysis of the social structure of Goa will reveal a well developed society with very high rate of literacy. According to the 2001 census report, the state boasts of a remarkable literacy rate of 82%. Several social development indicators like the status of women and their literacy rates clearly reveals that the state is much developed than its neighboring states.

This tiny patch of land has got liberated from the Portuguese very late after India got independence from the British Empire. On 19th December, 1961 the Goan soil has become part of Independent India. This Portuguese influence still remains as a minor differentiating factor from the neighboring states. Goa remained as a union territory till May 1987, when it was given the statehood of India. Goa shares its northern boundary with Maharashtra. Karnataka covers the eastern and southern boundary of the state.

We know about the role played by libraries in the educational and cultural development of a society. Similarly libraries have played a significant role in the cultural and educational development of Goa. too. This write up is an attempt of introspection into the library scenario in Goa and its impact on the society. The libraries in Goa can be grouped as public libraries, academic

libraries and special libraries. Let us see the public libraries in the state, the social movement and role of government in the library development.

Public library system in Goa

Goa has a well knit network of public libraries. The Central library at Panaji is the apex library of the state. Beyond this there are Taluka libraries, Municipal libraries, and village libraries.

State Central Library

The apex library of the state, the State Central Library situated at Panaji is under the control of the Directorate of Arts and Culture, Government of Goa. The history of this library dates back to 1832, when the precursor of this library was opened by the Viceroy Dom Manuel de Portugal e Castro by an order dated 15th September 1832. The library was part of the Academia Militar and the main objective of the institution was to induce interest in military among younger generation. This library was renamed as Bibliotheca Publica on 5th October 1836. Later in the year 1870 it was named as Bibliotheca Publica da Nova Goa. This library was upgraded as the National Library in the year 1925 and was renamed as Bibliotheca National Vasco da Gama.

The library was made a depository of all documents published from Portugal and all its colonies during March 1956. The library came under the direct control of the Education and Health services department of the Government in the year1959. It has completed 175 years and the Government of India released a commemorative first day postal cover in the name of this library.

After the liberation of Goa the library was renamed as the Central Library and its activities were expanded by introducing several services including book lending and reference service. The library also provides access

to current periodicals like the newspapers, magazines and journals. The lending facility is available to all registered members of the library.

The Central Library of Goa is the library that collects books published in Goa under the Registration of books Act 1956, of the Government of India. All publishers must send three copies of their publications to the Central Library. The collection of pre-liberation period consists mainly of Books and Journals in Portuguese, French, Latin, English and very few books in local language like Konkani and Marathi. The total pre-liberation collection was about 40,000 volumes. The Central Library publishes annual bibliography. The Central Library has its website with the URL *http://www.goacentrallibrary.gov.in/*. The Online Public Access catalogue of the library is available under the URL *http://scl.goa.gov.in/jopacv11/html/SearchForm*. This provides a union catalogue of the Central Library and the Taluka Libraries. Curator is the Head of State Central Library.

Taluka Libraries

Presently there are seven Taluka libraries in Goa. The first one was that of Curchorem Taluka Library which was started in the year 1975. It was followed by the libraries in Valpoi and Canacona. The libraries in Bicholim, Sanguem were started in the year 1988 and those of Ponda and Mandrenm were started in the year 2004. The collection of these libraries range from five thousand to twenty five thousand and they offers book lending, reference and reading facilities. The oldest libraries have standard reference sources and books in addition to the books for lending.

Municipal Libraries

There are some libraries run by the municipalities in Goa. The earliest among them is the library attached to the Mapusa Municipality. It was inaugurated in the year 1833.The name of this library was Bibliotheca Municipal Athaide. After the liberation of Goa it was renamed as Atahide

Municipal Library. The Margao Municipal library was established in the year 1914. Its name was Bibliotheca Municipal Circulante de Salcete. Majority of the other municipal libraries are not functional in Goa. The library attached to the Murmagao Municipality is now known as Janatha Vachanalaya and is run by private initiatives.

Village libraries

The village library movemnet was started in the year 1975 with the opening of libraries in the villages of Agarwada-Pernem, Thane-Sattari, Shristal-Cancona and Bali-Cuncolim. But many of them were closed due to the retirement or transfer of the school teachers who were in charge of these libraries. The government took initiative to revive these libraries by transferring them either to the panchayaths or Non governmental organizations. Presently more than 120 village libraries function in the state. The collection of these libraries ranges from one thousand to five thousand books and the services are limited to reading and lending.

Private libraries

Along with the libraries established by the governments, some communities established and maintained libraries to promote reading habits and to conserve the traditional knowledge available with them. The earliest library was Saraswath Vidyapith Pusthakalaya, established in the year 1899 by Shankarananad Maheswar Bhat Sukthankar in Marcel. This library functioned for 25 years. Many such libraries started by private initiatives could not be continued due to various hardships. Presently many libraries run by private initiatives are provided with financial support by the Government of Goa. Sri Mahalaxmi Prasadik Hindu Vachan mandir established in the year 1907 in mala, Panaji is the oldest surviving private library in Goa. This library is a government aided first grade library and its centenary was celebrated in

the year 2007. Another private library was started by late B. V. Savardekar in 1902 with the name Shantadurga Vachanalay.

The Saraswath Brahmin Samaj started a library in Margao during 1912. Its name was later changed to Gomanth Vidya Nikethan. Presently its collection consists of more than 45000 books and it is a grade I library aided by the government. Dr Purushotham Waman Shirgaokar founded the Saraswathi mandir library. It was established in 1913 on a Dusserah day. It is situated in Panaji. All these libraries provide reading, lending and reference services to its users.

Academic Libraries in Goa

Goa has some of the best educational institutes of the nation. The academic scenario is much better than other states of the nation. As already mentioned the literacy rate is comparatively high. There are well equipped libraries attached to the educational institutions. Some of them are that of the Goa University, Goa Medical College, Goa College of Engineering Goa College of Pharmacy and V. M. Salgaocar College of Law.

Goa University Library

Bombay University had a Centre of Post Graduate Studies and Research in Goa, which was established in the year 1965. Later in the year 1985 this centre was converted to the Goa University and the Library of the Center was merged with Goa University. There were 35000 books at that time in the library. At present the University Library collection is about one lakh forty thousand books and about twenty four thousand bound volumes of periodicals. Library subscribes to about 450 journals annually which include 158 foreign journals. The Chemical Society has commended the library with a plaque for its complete collection of Chemical Abstracts.

Library has been bestowed with e-journals through the Infonet consortium of the INFLIBNET. It has a cyber center with 30 computers connected to the Internet. The Infonet facility is available over the Intranet of the campus.

The University library also has special collections donated by various well wishers and organizations. The best of them are those donated by Dr P. Pissurlencar and Dr Nunu Gonsalves. These are having unique documents relating to the history of the Portuguese India.

The library home page can be accessed through the URL http://goalnet.unigoa.ac.in/gulibrary/index.htm. Goa University Library is a member of the DELNET consortium.

BITS – Pilani, K.K. Birla Goa Campus Library

Established in the year 2008, the Library complex of BITS-Pilani, K.K. Birla Goa Campus comprises of a spacious building covering an area of 50000 sq ft. It is designed to provide several reading halls, an exhibition room and a digital library with 11 public access internet terminals for convenient internet reference, apart from a large area earmarked for books storage. The Library has been provided with a wireless network whereby users can access the internet using their laptops.

The library is automated using the Libsys software and the OPAC is available on the Internet. The library offers services like lending of books, reference services and e-journal access. The library has a collection of thirty thousand volumes pertaining to the subject areas taught in the campus. The Library subscribes to 110 Indian Journals and 30 Foreign Journals of different disciplines. Online databases like IEL online, ASME and Science Direct are also available. Apart from this there is online access to more than 3000 journals through INFLIBNET. A list of journals subscribed by the library can be accessed from the Library home page. Useful articles, news, newspaper

clippings are displayed from time to time on the notice board for the information of readers.

Goa Medical College Library

Goa Medical College got established from the erstwhile "Escola Medicao Cirurgica De Goa", one of the oldest centers of medical education in Asia. It was established by the Portuguese during 1842. After the liberation of Goa it was upgraded to Goa Medical College. The library has a collection of around 18000 books. There are 12000 bound volumes of periodicals. The library is subscribing to 120 journals out of which 66 are foreign periodicals. Library has Xeroxing facility and an Internet center with 50 terminals.

Dental College Library

The Goa Dental College and Hospital library was established during 1980-81. This is also one of the famous professional colleges in Goa. The library has a very good collection of books on dentistry and other related subject areas. It is being updated regularly. It also maintains a collection of periodicals on Dentistry.

V. M. Salgoaocar College of Law

The college has a well-equipped library which is divided into two parts, a reading hall on one side and office cum stack room on the other side. The college Library is presently having over 14,000 books, including 484 books from Book Bank Section and 254 books & reports of Portuguese pre-liberation period. Besides, the College subscribes to a host of national and international legal periodicals. It has over 2,500 bound volumes of periodicals that are available for reference. Almost all the Journals are preserved from Volume I onwards till date.

The College subscribes to almost all the national dailies, local newspapers, weeklies and magazines. Books on Law and all law-related subjects, like political science, economics, and history are available for the use

of the students in the LLB reference section. Books on General Knowledge, Encyclopedia, Competitive Examination Journals, textbooks are kept in this section for the use of all the students is available in the General Knowledge Section. The College is also recognized as a center for studies on Intellectual Property Law under the sponsorship of the Human Resource Ministry. The College library has a separate section dealing with Intellectual Property wherein reading material as well as reference material on Intellectual Property Law is available to the students.

There are several other institutes like the Goa Institute of Management and Goa College of Architecture which have well equipped academic libraries in the state.

Special Libraries

There are some internationally reputed research centers in Goa. They have well equipped library and information system to cater to the needs of their scientists. Some of them are listed below.

National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) Library

The NIO was established at Dona Paula, Goa in the year 1966 under the CSIR. It has a very good library specializing on marine sciences and which is one of the best in South East Asia. The NIO library has been recognized as the National Information Centre for Marine Sciences (NICMAS) since mid 90s. The library caters to the needs of the researchers from India and abroad. Most of the operations in the library have been computerized and it uses ISIS based softwares at backend. The electronic resources are open to the institute staff on the Intranet library server. The Catalogue of Books and Technical Reports is named as Oceanline. Literature search and Document delivery services are offered from the library. A database of abstracts on Indian Ocean literature is compiled and updated every year. There are over 34000 records so far on this

database and each item listed in the database is available in this library. the National Information System for Science and Technology (NISSAT) had recognised this library and its services as the 'National Information Centre' in mid 90s. NICMAS provides user services as a part of the centre's activity.

Xavier Center of Historical Research Library

The Xavier Centre of Historical Research provides facilities for research in areas related to Goan, Indo-Portuguese and Indian history. The library of the centre has a good collection of published and unpublished research material. Private family collections form the bulk of the holdings of the XCHR Library and they continue to increase through donations.

The centre was set up by the Jesuits of Goa, Pune in 1977. From 1983, the centre is functioning at Porvorim. The main objectives of the research centre are to promote research about Asia during the Portuguese presence in the East, the church in India and about the third world countries. Besides reading, reference and research facilities the library offers photocopying services, and computer print outs of indexes.

Conclusion

The library landscape of Goa is promising and has a lot of potential. The Government of Goa has given continuous support to the libraries in Goa. However, there is no centre for training library professionals in the state. Only certificate level and diploma level courses are conducted. The professional library association of Goa is now in a state of dormancy, which needs to be energized. We can say that the over all library scene in Goa, is satisfactory and a good number of libraries are of high standard. We can think of a network of all these libraries in the state to cater to the information needs of the users.

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