

Library Funding in Pakistan: A Survey

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The paper reports on a research study conducted to find out the funding situation of large libraries in Pakistan. It considers their funding sources, satisfaction with present funding, funding needs and the activities for which they demand more funding. The methodologies used included a literature review and a questionnaire survey. The results reveal that libraries in Pakistan have been provided funds without the use of any formula. Provincial governments are the major source of library funding in the country. Libraries also receive funds from the federal government and from their parent

institutions. Some libraries also generate their own funds, which include endowments and bank profit (interest) on library security money. Most of the libraries are dissatisfied with their present funding. Among them college and university libraries are more dissatisfied. Libraries demand large increases in their budgets to fund a variety of services including the purchase of the latest materials, the use of modern technology, the improvement in professional status, the organization of materials and the improvement of the standard of library services.

Introduction

Pakistan, located in South Asia, is a developing country that was born on August 14, 1947, as a result of the partition of British India. The total area of Pakistan is around 800,000 km. It is one of the ten most populous countries in the world with a population base of more than 150 million. Two-thirds of the population lives in villages. The economy of Pakistan is primarily driven by agriculture, which contributes about 24 percent to the GDP and employs 48 percent of the total work force. Pakistan is one of the world's largest producers of raw cotton, which serves as the input to drive the textile industry – the mainstay of industrial activity in Pakistan. Pakistan's per capita annual income is US\$492. Nearly one third of the population can be classified as poor. The rupee is the currency of Pakistan (in 2005, 1 US\$ = 60 rupees).

Pakistan is a multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic state. Urdu, the national language, is the language of instruction in secondary schools. English is

widely used in commerce and business and continues to be the official language of Pakistan. It is also the language of instruction at the higher levels of education, particularly for the science and technology courses. Pakistan's literacy rate is 49 percent.

Politically, Pakistan is a federation of four provinces (Punjab, Sind, North-West Frontier Province and Balochistan) and the Federal Capital Area of Islamabad. Administratively, the provinces are made up of districts. The book trade is poorly developed and the volume of publishing is small, ranging between 860 and 1,525 titles per year. With the exception of textbooks up to grade 12, all instructional materials are acquired by libraries from the United States and United Kingdom.

Library scenario

Modern library services in the territories now constituting Pakistan began in 1915 with the arrival of Asa Don Dickinson, an American librarian and

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pupil of Melvil Dewey. His goal at the University of the Punjab was to organize the university library and to teach modern library methods to the librarians of the Punjab. The impact of this school on successive library developments throughout British India was tremendous. The city of Lahore from 1915 onwards became the centre of library activities. Following independence, however, library development was largely neglected in the face of more pressing problems. The present library scenario is not impressive at all. There were 6,034 libraries in 1989, with a total collection of 13,354,500 volumes (Khurshid 1990).

Compared to other types of libraries, the university libraries are better placed with respect to resources, organization and staff. However, presently there exists a climate of stagnation and decline in university libraries. The main factors responsible for this state of affairs are shrinking budgets combined with ever-rising inflation, which has obviously affected library growth and its services.

There is no organized public library system. The existing public libraries, mostly subscription libraries, are under the charge of municipal and local bodies. The majority of these libraries occupy temporary buildings and their holdings are mainly out-of-date fiction and books on history and religion. Only a few are properly staffed and one seldom finds a qualified librarian. The services of these libraries are quite limited and their main source of income is regular grants from the annual budget of the municipal body and the subscription charged to the public. This sad picture of public libraries could also be attributed to the absence of public library legislation.

The majority of special libraries are attached to government departments and institutions or to universities and colleges. A far smaller number of such libraries have been set up in recent years by industries and firms. These libraries are mainly concentrated in the large cities and metropolitan areas. The collections of books in such libraries are not large. Books and periodicals still form the largest segment of these collections; non-print and audiovisual materials are almost nonexistent. With respect to services, these libraries have not succeeded in freeing themselves from the traditional approach that places emphasis on the collection, organization and use of material rather than on analysis and use of data. The most common and

popular service provided by a specialist library is the listing of its current acquisitions.

At present, eight university library schools provide training facilities at the postgraduate level leading to Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Library and Information Science. The PhD program is available at the Universities of Karachi, Punjab, and Bahawalpur, and the MPhil is offered at Sind and Balochistan. Regional library associations offer courses of short duration. Library science is available as an optional subject at the higher secondary and BA levels.

Over a dozen local, regional, provincial and national library associations exist at present. All of these associations have contributed to the growth and improvement of library services, but their contributions seem to result from random programs rather systematic planning. Their activities have been focused on current problems rather than established objectives and long-range goals. For the most part they have concentrated their activities on securing better salaries and status for their members, and perhaps the least attention was paid towards betterment of library services. Amongst the associations having some kind of impact on the country's library scene, mention may be made of the Pakistan Library Association (PLA), the Pakistan Bibliographical Working Group (PBWG), the Karachi University Library Science Alumni Association (KULSAA), the Punjab University Library Science Alumni Association (PULSAA) and the Society for the Promotion and Improvement of Libraries (SPIL). Most of the professional associations were active until the 1990s and now they are dormant. Some new but active associations include the Pakistan Library Automation Group (PakLAG) and Medical Library Association of Pakistan (MELAP).

Library funding in Pakistan

In Pakistan, libraries have never been provided with funding adequate to offer services to their users in a satisfactory manner. During more than fifty years after the independence of Pakistan all plans for library development in the country have proved fruitless due to lack of funding. Results of poor funding in libraries include inadequate collections, gaps in periodical holdings, lack of necessary equipment/buildings and poor quality of services. The funding pattern of public, academic

and special libraries of Pakistan, as depicted by the professional literature, is presented here.

Public libraries

Public libraries today, almost universally, are run on government funds. Governments at national/federal, state/provincial and local levels finance public libraries. Funding formulas and share each of the three levels of government provides vary to a great extent in different countries and even different states/provinces of the same country. However, in most of the cases local governments provide funding to public libraries. In some cases local bodies allocate funds for libraries out of their general budget, while at some places a separate library tax is collected. This is in the form of a fixed ratio of levy on property. Due to political, economic and social changes, the funding pattern of public libraries has also been frequently changed in the past three or four decades.

Except for some large libraries, most of the public libraries in Pakistan are run by the local governments. In the absence of public library legislation in Pakistan, various library experts recommended different formulas for public library funding. Moid (1949), who is known as the "Father of Librarianship" in Pakistan, suggested a plan for library service in his personal capacity. This plan was the first of its kind after the birth of Pakistan. He recommended that local bodies, provincial government and central government should provide 60%, 25% and 15% funding respectively. He also proposed a library tax at the rate of 8 annas [Rs.0.50] per capita. Riazuddin (1968), another individual, recommended that the financial structure of public libraries in Pakistan should rest on finances from local, provincial, and central governments in the ratio of 50, 30 and 20 percent respectively. In the annual conference of the Pakistan Library Association held at Karachi in 1971, Hossain (1972) recommended that each District Council should set aside at least 2% of its income towards library services.

The first step in this regard at the government level was taken in 1972 when the Punjab Government issued a circular letter, advising that the local bodies may spend 1% of their budget for the development of public libraries (Anwar 1996). Due to other priorities local governments in most of the cities and towns did not act upon this standard.

The Government of Pakistan invited Donovan, an American consultant, to suggest a public library system for the country. In 1984, he submitted a comprehensive report to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. He recommended that, "two and half percent of the annual budget is desirable for maintaining library services at a viable operating level. A minimum of 2% of total annual expenditures for library services should be an immediate goal" (Donovan 1984, 12). He also suggested that development grants should be provided by the local, provincial and federal governments in the ratio of 20%, 30% and 50% respectively. This report was not taken into consideration by the government and no legislation was made in this regard.

Drafts of a public library act proposed from time to time to the government contained specific clauses for financial support. Draft legislation for libraries in Karachi, prepared by the Society for the Promotion and Improvement of Libraries (an NGO) in 1961, proposed that a reasonable percentage of property or house tax be allocated for libraries. The report recommended that the provincial government should also allocate an amount not less than that allocated by the Karachi Municipal Committee. A draft public libraries act proposed by Khurshid in 1973 suggested that local authority should levy library tax at the rate of 10 paises [Rs.0.10] for every rupee in the property or house tax. He further proposed that the provincial government, and if necessary, the federal government should provide matching grants which should not be less than double the amount allocated by the local authority. Another draft prepared by Akhtar in 1975 proposed a library tax at the same rate but the matching grant was to be equal to the amount of tax collected. A draft proposed by the Technical Working Group of the Federal Ministry of Education in 1984 recommended allocating 2% of the total budget of local bodies for library service. Matching grants from the provincial and federal governments were also suggested. In making its recommendations, the Group also consulted the manifesto and standards for public libraries set by the IFLA. This recommendation was repeated in a draft submitted to the Punjab Government by the Director General Public Libraries in 1994 (Anwar 1996).

None of the above-mentioned recommendations succeeded in convincing the authorities as far as

the implementation of the plans was concerned. It must be questioned why the Government failed to fulfil its commitment. Anwar (1996), Haider (1995) and Khurshid (2000) mentioned possible reasons for this failure. Below is a summary of such reasons.

1. The library planners, both foreign experts as well as local librarians, had been primarily idealistic in their recommendations. The foreigners based their recommendations on the library situations of their own countries. More or less, a similar pattern or strict textbook approach was adopted in formulation of indigenous plans.
2. Most of the plans were prepared single-handedly.
3. In most of the cases, these plans seem to have been prepared in complete isolation, i.e., without giving at least some consideration to the earlier plans.
4. Some plans were victims of the political changes that took place in the country.
5. Pakistani politicians of feudal origins have been the main hurdles in implementing these plans. Their feudal background made no provision for real democracy. Political awareness, which is created by education actively supported by libraries, is anathema to the political system dominated by feudal lords, therefore, only receives lip service in that set-up.
6. The attitude of the bureaucracy has also not been sympathetic to the development of libraries in the country.
7. The library profession has lacked clout due to its lack of a strong and continuous leadership. As a consequence, a lot of reasonable chances for library development have been lost.

What has been the practice of public library funding in Pakistan? Some surveys provide information about past practice. Anwar (1983) conducted a survey of urban public libraries in Pakistan. Sixty libraries provided details about sources of their financial support. Fifty-nine libraries received municipal funds. Only six libraries had more than one source of income. Other sources included grants from provincial governments, district councils, trust funds and membership subscription. Percentage of library budget as compared to the total municipal budget ranged from 0.03 (Bhakkar) to 4.79 (Mingora-Saidu Sharif). A large majority of municipalities was spending less than one-half percent of their incomes on libraries.

The Technical Working Group of the Ministry of Education conducted the most comprehensive

survey of public library facilities in Pakistan in 1985. Regarding finance, it was found that:

The average amount of expenditure on libraries by local bodies comes to 0.28% [of their total budget] in the country as a whole; 0.50% in Balochistan; 0.29% in the Punjab; 0.28% in Sind; and, 0.26% in N.W.F.P. ... There are a large number of local bodies at district council, municipal and town committee level, some 348 in number, which do not maintain any public library and hence do not incur any expenditure on this account. ... Per capita library expenditure comes to Rs.0.11 in the country, and in the context of literate population, it increases to Rs.0.51 per capita (Pakistan 1985, 150–152).

A survey of 82 public libraries of the Punjab province, conducted by Taj (1990, 22), showed that, in the fiscal year 1989–90, Lahore Municipal Corporation spent 0.35%, Faisalabad 0.12%, Sargodha 0.15%, Rawalpindi 0.10% and Multan 0.19% of their total budget on library services.

Academic libraries

There are 55 universities and degree awarding institutions in the public sector, and 1,313 general and professional colleges throughout the country. The federal government funds universities while provincial governments run most of the colleges. Haider describes the funding procedure adopted by university libraries in Pakistan:

The universities in Pakistan draw their entire budget from the government through the University Grants Commission. The government grant is supplemented by other sources of income such as students' fees, occasional private donations and extremely rare bequests. No specific norms are followed in allocating funds to universities. ... The financial system, controlled by the University Grants Commission requires each teaching department, as well as the library, to prepare estimates of expenditure, which are then submitted to the university's finance committee for review and approval. (In case of the library, estimates are first discussed and approved by the library committee.) Later, the budget is presented to the university syndicate and the university senate for approval and then submitted to the University Grants Commission for consideration before finally, being submitted to the Federal Finance Ministry. The amount agreed by the government is then disbursed to individual institutions in proportion decided by the Commission in the form of operational funds and capital grants (Haider 1993, 168–169).

Various formulas for allocating funds to academic libraries have been recommended in Pakistan. Donovan made a proposal for the establishment of

the country's information transfer system. After having comprehensive discussions with Pakistani authorities and library professionals, he suggested a minimum of 5% of the total university budget for library (Donovan 1974, 38). A seminar on the problems of college libraries, Lahore, in 1976 recommended a formula for college library funding. According to this, "Book budget be estimated on the basis of Rs.40 per student on rolls and Rs.100 per teacher. ... A minimum grant of Rs.10,000 should be provided to every college whose student population was less than 500" (Anwar 1978, 13).

In 1978, a study group on problems of degree-colleges appointed by the University Grants Commission (a government department dealing with the affairs of higher education in Pakistan) reported that library grants to colleges ranged between Rs.2,000 to Rs.10,000 per annum (Khan 1981). The group recommended that degree colleges should be provided an initial development grant of Rs.50,000 for the purchase of library books and annual recurring library grant should be computed on the size of the college. They also recommended that the grant should be calculated at the rate of Rs.20 per student per year. It was further proposed that annual library grants for post-graduate departments in degree colleges should be calculated at the rate of Rs.100 per student for arts subjects and Rs.150 per student for science subjects.

The sub-committee on the acquisition of foreign books and serial publications of the National Workshop for University Libraries organized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) from 5–7 July 1980 at Islamabad recommended an allocation of at least five percent of the total university budget to the libraries, which was readily accepted by the UGC (Khurshid 1987). Qureshi, in his doctoral dissertation, proposed standards for Pakistani university libraries. He recommended six percent of the total university's budget (1982, 129). Sabzwari (1985) recommended that it should be at least 5% of the total budget. Khan and Kazim (1987) were also in favour of a 5% library budget. Khan (1991), in his doctoral dissertation, recommended that the university library budget should be 10% of the total expenditures.

We can find various surveys of academic libraries in Pakistan which also include information about their funding situation. Table 1 shows results of three surveys of public sector universities

Table 1. Library Budget as a Percent of the Total Budget of Public Sector Universities

Year:	1978–79	1984–85	1989–90
Source:	Qureshi (1982)	Khurshid (1987)	Khan (1991)
AIOU		3.0	3.6
BZU Multan		3.9	1.6
Islamia Bahawalpur	2.4	1.7	1.6
Quaid-e-Azam	9.1	8.2	6.6
Agriculture Faisalabad	2.7	1.3	2.1
UET Lahore	1.6	1.5	2.1
Punjab	2.7	1.8	3.6
Karachi	5.0	4.4	1.1
Peshawar	2.4	1.8	1.1
Sind	2.8	1.8	4.4
Mehran UET	3.7	1.2	
Gomal		1.3	0.3
Balochistan	4.3	1.4	
Agriculture Sind	1.9	0.9	0.6
NED UET	2.0	2.9	3.1

conducted for different years. The percentage of library budget in the university's total budget ranges between 0.3 (Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan) and 9.1 (Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad). The results clearly show that universities in Pakistan did not follow any national or international recommendations for library funding.

The Pakistan Library Association recommended standards for college libraries. It suggested that the library budget should be a minimum of five percent of the total educational and general budget of college (Malik 1983). Discussing the financial situation of college libraries in Pakistan, Haider (1996) states that there is no practice of definite budgetary provision for library purposes in the regular budget of the college.

Special libraries

A special library, like an academic library, is also set up in a special organization to fulfil the organization's objectives. There is not an ample literature on the funding pattern of special libraries. However, as some available readings show, funding of special libraries varies according to the size and nature of their parent organizations. In a survey of 51 agricultural libraries of Pakistan, it was found that the percentage of the library budget varied from 0.03% to nearly 13.00% of the total institutional budget. In about 30% of the institutions there

was no separate budgetary allocation for libraries (Iqbal & Meer 1990). Another survey of 19 federal secretariat libraries reveals that the budget amount ranges from one million rupees (National Assembly Library) to Rs.12,500 (The Election Commission Library) (Ahmad 1990).

Surveys of library funding presented above reveal that libraries in Pakistan have been provided funds without using any formula. Experts suggested various formulas but the professional literature fails to show any implementation of such formulas. There was a need to survey the current funding situation and future needs of Pakistani libraries so that practical measures to provide necessary funds could be recommended to the library decision makers in the country.

Objectives of the study

To what extent are our libraries provided with adequate funding? This question must be answered with empirical evidence. The objective of this research was to answer the following specific questions.

- What are the funding sources of public, academic and special libraries in Pakistan?
- What is the satisfaction level of libraries with their present funding?
- What are the funding needs of libraries?
- Why do libraries need more funding?

Methodology

A questionnaire survey was designed to collect data for this study. University, college, public and special libraries, set up in the government sector, with reasonably sized collections were selected as the population for this survey. There was no comprehensive list of libraries in Pakistan. However, a list of 128 such libraries with at least a collection of 25,000 volumes was prepared with the help of available directories. A sample of 100 libraries was randomly drawn for survey. The sample included 19 university, 46 college, 15 public and 20 special libraries. The sample fairly represented various geographical locations of the country.

On the basis of the literature review, a semi-structured questionnaire was designed to obtain required data. Scales of measurement used for

Table 2. Libraries Participating in the Survey

Library Type	Sample	Response	Percent Response
University	19	10	53
College	46	31	67
Public	15	8	53
Special	20	11	55
Total	100	60	60

Table 3. Library Funding Sources

Rank	Funding Source	Frequency	Percent
1	Provincial government	31	52
2	Parent institution	27	45
3	Self-generated	9	15
4	Federal government	5	8
5	Other	4	7

various variables include the Inventory and Thurstone's Comparative Judgment Scale. Data on most of the variables were collected through a simple inventory. The 4-point Thurstone's Comparative Judgment Scale was used to measure the importance of more funding for various services in libraries.

The questionnaires were sent through mail to the libraries. At first the response was very poor. Two follow-up letters, numerous telephone calls and personal visits by the researchers to local libraries did generate a reasonable return rate of 60 percent. The 60 libraries, which responded, include 10 university, 31 college, 8 public and 11 special libraries (see Table 2). The data were statistically analysed using *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)* computer software.

Data analysis and discussion

Sources of library funding

Libraries were asked to mention various sources of their funding. The respondents mentioned that the major source of their finances was the provincial government as 52 percent libraries received their funding from this source. Forty-five percent libraries received funding from their parent institutions. Fifteen percent of the libraries generated their own funds, while eight percent libraries received funds directly from the federal government. Seven percent of respondents also mentioned other sources of library funding including

Table 4. Cross Tabulation of Satisfaction with Present Funding by Type of Library

Satisfaction level	University	Percent of column total			
		College	Public	Special	Total
Up to 20%	60	43	14	18	38
21% to 40%	10	17	14	18	16
41% to 60%	30	23	43	28	28
61% to 80%		17	29	18	16
Above 80%				18	2

lapsed security funds and special grants from the government (see Table 3).

Giving further data about self-generated funding, two libraries mentioned that they had endowment funds. The seed money they had for these funds were Rs.100,000 and Rs.161,000 respectively. One library provided information about the amount earned from its endowment fund. This amount was Rs.20,000 per year. The other library mentioned that it had kept the endowed money in a fixed deposit and interest was pending. Twelve libraries mentioned that they had invested library security money and earned bank profit (interest) on this investment.

Satisfaction with present funding

The respondents were provided a five-point scale to show their satisfaction with their present funding. Data presented in Table 4 show that 38 percent libraries were satisfied with their present funding only up to 20%. Sixteen percent of the libraries were satisfied between 21% to 40%. The satisfaction level of 28 percent respondents was between 41% to 60%. Sixteen percent of libraries were satisfied between 61% to 80% and only two percent of libraries were satisfied above 80%. This analysis shows that the satisfaction level of more than 80% of the respondents was less than 60%. There is a high level of dissatisfaction of libraries with their present state of funding.

Cross tabulation of the satisfaction level of various types of libraries presents that most of the college and university libraries were dissatisfied with their funding. Public libraries were moderately satisfied while special libraries were more satisfied than the other types of libraries. The only two percent of respondents was satisfied above 80% was the special libraries.

Table 5. Ranked Order Mean Score of the Importance of Activities That Need More Funding

Rank	Statement	Mean
1	Latest material should be purchased	3.90
2	Use of modern technology should be encouraged	3.86
3	Status of professional library staff should be improved	3.76
4	Material should be organized properly	3.74
5	Standard of service should be improved	3.63
6	Should be no gaps in or cancellation of periodical subscriptions	3.49
7	Well-trained and competent staff should be retained	3.46
8	User services should be increased	3.42
9	Proper space for collections, readers and staff should be provided	3.39
10	Building, equipment and furniture should be repaired	3.32
11	Non-book collection should be developed	3.20
12	Adequate number of staff should be hired	2.84
13	Library hours should be increased	2.27
14	Branch libraries should be opened	2.02

Scale: 1=Not important, 2=Less important, 3=Moderately important, 4=Most important

How much money libraries need

The respondents were also asked to indicate the percent increase in their annual budget that can fulfil their needs. All libraries demanded increases in their existing budgets. The rate of this increase varies library to library. Increases demanded ranged from 34% to 1920% of the existing budget with a mean of 361%, median of 180% and mode of 100%. The analysis shows that 37 percent of libraries demanded up to a 100% increase in their present budgets. Thirty-nine percent of libraries need an increase between 101% and 500% and 24 percent of the libraries demanded an increase above 500%.

Why libraries need more funding

The respondents were asked to express their opinion about 14 activities that the libraries need more money to perform. Space for other activities was also given. Respondents were provided with a 4-point scale to indicate the importance level for each statement. Ranked order mean scores of their opinion are presented in Table 5. The analysis shows that five of 14 statements were the most important to the respondents (with mean ≥ 3.50).

This group includes purchase of the latest material, use of modern technology, improvement in professional status, organization of materials and improvement in the standard of library services. Seven statements were moderately important (with means between 2.50 and 3.50). This group includes periodical subscriptions, hiring and retaining of competent staff, increase in user services, provision of space, repair of buildings/equipment and development of non-book collections. Only two statements were less important to the respondents (with mean < 2.50). These services include extension in opening hours and opening new branches. Other activities mentioned by five libraries as important included construction of new buildings, provision of better physical facilities to users, setting up of a library security system, initiation of library awareness programs and training of staff.

Conclusion

The literature reviewed and data collected for this study reveal that libraries in Pakistan have been provided funds without any formula. Over the years, individuals, library organizations or committees appointed by the Government, have suggested various formulas. None of the recommendations succeeded in convincing the authorities as far as the implementation of the plans was concerned. It must be questioned why the government failed to fulfil its commitment. The country's bureaucratic administrative set-up may have been a stumbling block because of a lack of understanding of the role of libraries in nation-building programs. The ambitious approach adopted by the authors of these plans may also be an underlying factor, which was primarily based on adopting foreign models in one way or the other. In fact, the planners failed to identify the realities of Pakistan. An unorganised library profession in Pakistan could not succeed in developing and implementing any standards for libraries.

This study was limited to a survey of comparatively large public, college, university and special libraries in government sector. Unavailability of a comprehensive directory of libraries in the country was also a limitation of this study. However, the results of this study can be used in having an understanding of the situation and developing standards for future.

This survey shows that provincial governments are the major source of library funding in the country. However, libraries also receive funds from the federal government and their parent institutions. Some libraries also generate their own funds through endowments and bank profit (interest) on library security money. Most of the libraries are dissatisfied with their present funding. Among them college and university libraries are more dissatisfied.

Libraries demand a large increase in their budgets to fund a variety of services. The most important activities needing more finance include purchase of latest materials, use of modern technology, improvement in professional status, organization of materials and improvement in the standard of library services.

This study clearly shows that libraries in Pakistan are poorly funded. Their present funding does not adequately fulfil their needs. As a result the libraries present a dismal picture. The library decision makers in Pakistan should draw their attention to this serious problem and plan to provide sufficient funds to libraries. The government should formulate and then act upon standards for library funding. If the government is not able to provide ample funds to libraries then libraries should explore alternative methods of funding. These methods may include starting fee-based services and seeking donations from national and international philanthropists. With adequate funds libraries can more effectively perform their vital role in economic and social development of the country.

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