

THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF LIBRARIES AND THEIR ROLE IN SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This article analyzes the social function of libraries and their role in the development of society. It explores, from a theoretical perspective, library services for individuals with special needs, the influence of libraries on education and scientific research, and their role in preserving cultural heritage. Libraries are regarded not only as centers of information but also as key institutions that contribute to social progress.

Keywords

library, social function, education, scientific research, cultural heritage, individuals with special needs, digitization.

Libraries have long been an important part of human development. In today's world, where the importance of information in social life is increasing, libraries are not only a source of knowledge but also serve as a means of social integration, education, and cultural development. Especially in providing services for people with special needs, supporting scientific research, and preserving cultural heritage, libraries play an important role. That is, library services for people with special needs are necessary for individuals with disabilities, elderly readers, and those with limited vision or hearing, who often require additional conditions to use libraries. Modern libraries play an important role in building an inclusive society by offering services such as books in Braille and audiobooks for the blind and visually impaired, as well as special technologies like systems that convert books into audio format and electronic reading devices. They also provide library infrastructure for people with disabilities, such as wheelchair-accessible spaces, special computer programs, and interactive services.

These services not only guarantee access to information for people with special needs but also help them integrate into society. At the same time, the impact of

libraries on education and scientific research is significant, as libraries are an inseparable part of these fields. They contribute to the educational process in various ways, including electronic library databases that provide modern scientific articles, books, and archive materials for students and researchers. Through the Open Access system, they offer the opportunity to connect with global science. Information resources for academic research, such as dissertations, monographs, scientific journals, and statistical data, are valuable tools for researchers, students, and professors. Dissertations are research works at the master's and doctoral levels that contain new scientific findings on specific topics. Monographs are books that explore a specific scientific topic in depth, written by authors based on long-term research and highly regarded in academic circles. Scientific journals are used to publish new research results and include analytical articles, experimental studies, and statistical information. Statistical data is used in academic research to draw evidence-based conclusions. Using these resources helps researchers find reliable and relevant information. Through these platforms, it is possible to access scientific materials, statistical information, and the latest research findings. The library is a place of knowledge and enlightenment. Throughout history, libraries have been among the most important spiritual centers of humanity. They are not only places where books are collected but also centers for spreading knowledge, exchanging information, and supporting scientific research. Libraries have preserved scientific and cultural heritage throughout history and passed it on to future generations. In modern society, the functions of libraries have expanded and are now integrated with information and communication technologies. The internet and digital resources have turned libraries into more convenient sources of information. Libraries and social development go hand in hand. Libraries provide educational opportunities for people of all ages. The libraries of schools, colleges, and universities help students deepen their knowledge, and public libraries provide access to learning for all layers of society. Libraries are also important for preserving culture and traditions. They hold folklore, historical documents, literature, art, and scientific works. By organizing cultural events and author meetings, libraries contribute to the cultural development of society.

Social inclusion and equal opportunities are key aspects of library work. Libraries are open to all segments of society and provide great support for people with limited financial means or disabilities to access knowledge. Some libraries offer special services, such as books in Braille or audiobooks, to serve individuals with disabilities. In modern society, where verifying the reliability of information is crucial, libraries play an important role by providing scientific and trustworthy sources, helping people protect themselves from false information. They also play a

key role in developing critical thinking. Modern libraries offer not only printed books but also electronic books, online courses, and information databases. Many libraries provide free internet and computer access, contributing to the improvement of digital literacy among the population.

In this context, if we ask how libraries contribute to social development, we can see that they support various aspects of society. For instance, in terms of economic development, libraries serve as an important source of information for entrepreneurs, businesspeople, and scientists, helping to promote innovation. Regarding the strengthening of democracy, libraries provide open and reliable information, helping citizens stay informed and make well-grounded decisions. For youth development, libraries help children and young people gain knowledge, develop a reading culture, and support their intellectual growth. University and academic libraries provide essential information resources for researchers and contribute to academic progress.

Libraries also play a vital role in preserving cultural heritage. This includes digitizing manuscripts and rare books to pass on examples of Uzbek and world literature to future generations. Historical documents are preserved and cataloged so that rare books and archival materials related to cultural heritage remain available to researchers. In addition, seminars and presentations aimed at enriching readers' cultural knowledge are organized. Today, digital technologies have further expanded the role of libraries in preserving cultural heritage, allowing unique manuscripts to be presented to scholars worldwide.

Cultural events and exhibitions play an important role in preserving cultural heritage, promoting scientific and artistic knowledge, and supporting the spiritual and educational development of the public. These events are an integral part of library activities and help increase their educational, scientific, and social value. The importance of cultural events and exhibitions lies in the following objectives: developing the culture of reading by introducing readers to new literature and encouraging reading habits; promoting local and international traditions by organizing events related to national and global cultural heritage; and supporting creative and scientific activities by arranging meetings with writers, scholars, and artists. Exhibitions held in libraries may include thematic book exhibitions that focus on specific topics, and scientific or historical expositions that provide information about significant historical events or individuals.

Art and cultural exhibitions include displays dedicated to painting, sculpture, photography, and other creative works. These events increase scientific and cultural interest among library users and bring them closer to the library. With the development of digital technologies, virtual exhibitions and online cultural events

are also becoming increasingly popular. Such cultural activities and exhibitions play an important role in the socio-cultural work of libraries and help enhance their significance.

Conclusion. Libraries hold an important place in the intellectual and cultural development of society. The expansion of services for people with special needs, their contribution to education and scientific research, and their role in preserving cultural heritage further increase the importance of libraries. In the future, libraries will continue to evolve through integration with digital technologies and provide even broader services to society. Libraries are an inseparable part of society and play a vital role in science, culture, and the dissemination of information. They support the intellectual and spiritual development of individuals and contribute to social equality and progress. Even as digital technologies advance, the value of libraries is not diminishing—on the contrary, it is being enriched with new functions. Therefore, supporting and developing library services remains an essential task.

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