

Delhi Public Library

The Treasury of Sorrows

Kriti Kapur

History of establishment

The Delhi Public Library (DPL) was established in 1951 as a pilot project by the then Ministry of Education, Government of India in collaboration with UNESCO. Accordingly Government of India constituted Delhi Library Board under a special resolution on 7 February 1951 as an autonomous organisation. The first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru formally opened the library to public on 27 October 1951. Presently, Delhi Public Library is functioning under the administrative control of Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Department of Culture, Government of India.



According to the annual report of Delhi Public Library of 2001-2002 the objectives of this library are as under:

- To introduce the concept of free public library and information services to the people of Delhi.
- To open to all classes of persons without distinction and provide services free of charge.

- Books are placed on open shelves.
- Besides books, gramophone records/ audio/ videocassettes are lent free of charge for home listening.
- Cultural activities e.g. drama, musical concert, lectures, group discussions, debates, film shows etc. and book exhibitions are being organised for adults and children as a supplement to conventional library services.
- Library services are provided to special groups like, the visually handicapped, the prisoners and sports persons.
- Technical advice and guidance on public library matters are also rendered to Institutions and persons on request.

According to the Annual report of 2001-2002, DPL has not confined itself to its traditional library activities such as issue and return of books to readers. It claims of being continuously engaged in diversifying its activities for overall personality development of its clientele. It organises social and cultural meets, with the emphasis on eradication of illiteracy and spreading of knowledge.

The report also says that in the course of time the institution has grown into a premier public library system of modern India in the National Capital Territory of Delhi. It has become the busiest public library system in the South Asia.



Library system

The library system consists of the following Branches and Units of services:

- Central Library (1)
- Zonal Library (1)
- Branch Libraries (3)
- Sub Branches (23)
- Community Libraries (6)
- Resettlement Colony Libraries (23)
- Deposits Stations (123)
- Braille Library (1)

Governing body

Delhi Library Board (DLB) administrates the affairs of Delhi Public Library. The Union Minister of Tourism and Culture nominates the Chairman of the Board. The Board consists of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, representatives of the Department of Culture, Delhi Administration, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, New Delhi Municipal Committee, UNESCO, four co-opted members and Director of DPL. The executive head of Delhi Public Library is the Director.

During the year under report, T N Chaturvedi, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) has been nominated as Chairman of Delhi Library Board with effect from 1 March 2002 for a period of three years. In addition, there are various Sub Committees constituted by the Board to organise various activities of the DPL namely Finance and Establishment Committee, Books Selection, Discarding Committee, Departmental Promotion and Selection Committee.

Finance

The Delhi Public Library receives both Non-Plan and Plan Grant from the Department of Culture, Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Government of India.

Financial and Expenditure Resources (2001-2002) at a glance

	<u>Grant in aid (In Rs)</u>	<u>Expenditure (in Rs)</u>
Plan	56,00,000.00	53,02,931.58
Non-Plan	5,00,00,000.00	5,18,56,530.38
Total	5,56,00,000.00	5,71,59,461.96

Books

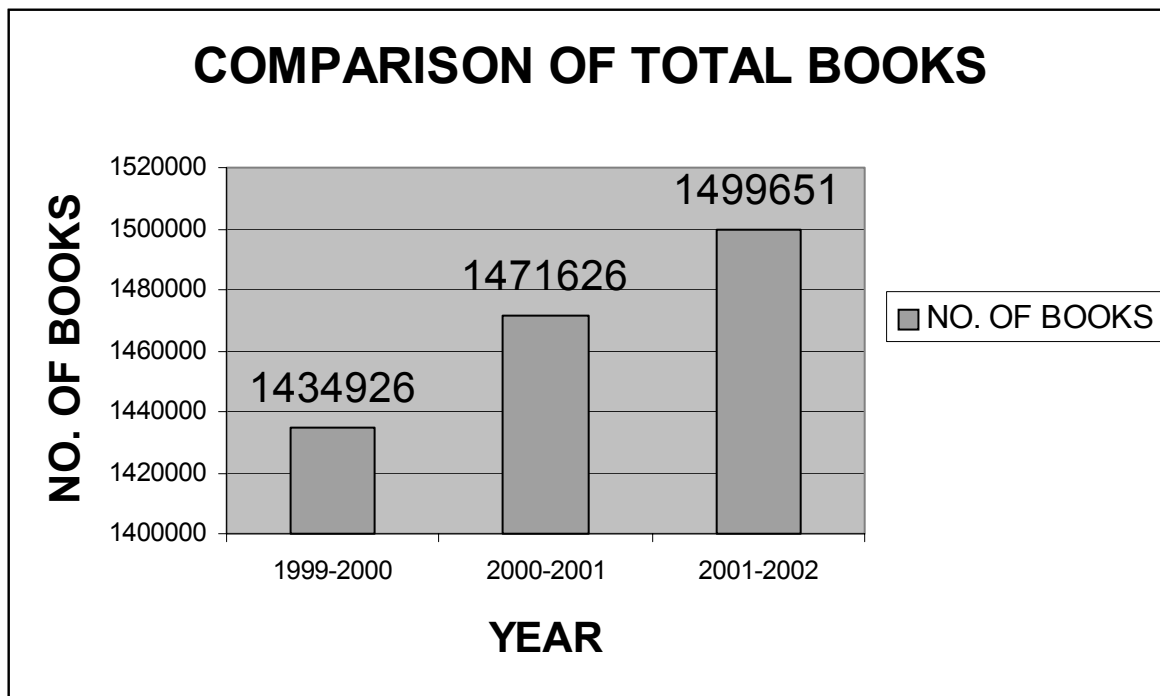
Delhi Public Library has 'centralised purchase policy for books' for the entire Library System. The books are being purchased by inviting quotations for each financial year. The quotations are then processed and the Tabulation Chart is placed before the Delhi Library Board. The Board approves the rate of discount for Indian and Foreign publications. The approved suppliers submit one copy of their books from time to time on approval. These books are inspected by Deputy Directors (Technical) and they recommend the purchase on the basis of the general trend prevailing in the particular unit of DPL. These are further reviewed by the Director and then placed before the Book Selection Committee consisting of language experts of the particular language.

Books Purchase and Processing Division is responsible for acquisition and processing the books for the entire system on the basis of selection done by Book Advisory Committee. The members of Delhi Public Library can request for any book available in any other unit of DPL through Book Suggestion form. Its mandatory for each Delhi Public Library unit to have copies of Book Suggestion form.

Books (2001-2002) at a glance

Books Purchased	24,904
Expenditure on purchased books	Rs 36,26,803
Books discarded	20,036
Gifted books	2,812
Books not recovered & written off	1,160
Net books stock	14,99,651

The total expenditure incurred by DPL during 2001-2002 was Rs 5,71,59,461.96 while expenditure incurred on the purchase of books was Rs 36,26,803. Thus out of the total expenditure of Delhi Public Library, only 6.35% was spent on the purchase of new books.

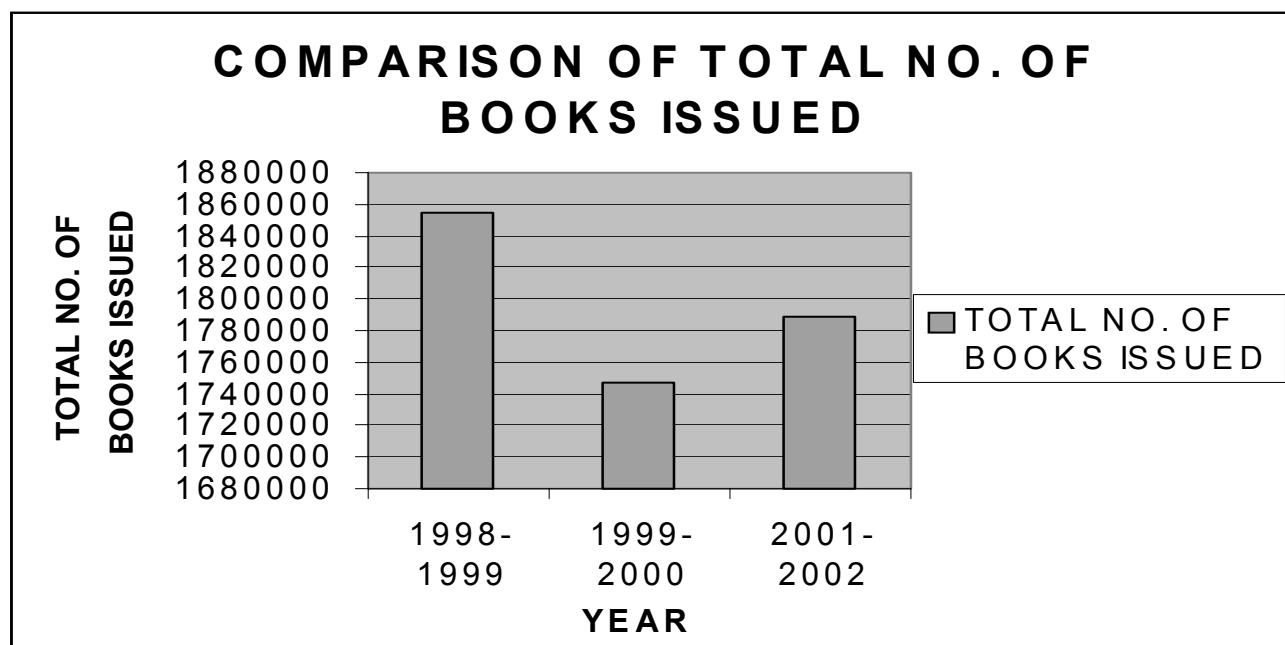


READER'S SERVICE

One of the basis on which the Library was conceived was that membership should be free without any subscription, and that a refundable security deposit should only be charged when a suitable guarantee could not be found. I have observed that Delhi Public Library has been over the years fulfilling this objective very efficiently. Anyone can enroll as a member of this library after filling in a prescribed membership card priced Rs 2 only. Enrolment is valid for two years, which can be renewed again. Membership card is to be verified by any Gazetted Officer/ elected public representative/ MBBS Doctor/ Lawyer/ Bank Manager/ Chartered Accountant (OR) otherwise by paying Rs 50 as refundable Security Deposit. Members are given one to three Borrowers' Tickets depending upon the size of the library service unit, against which books are issued for 14 days, which can be renewed further.

Overall Membership (2001-2002)

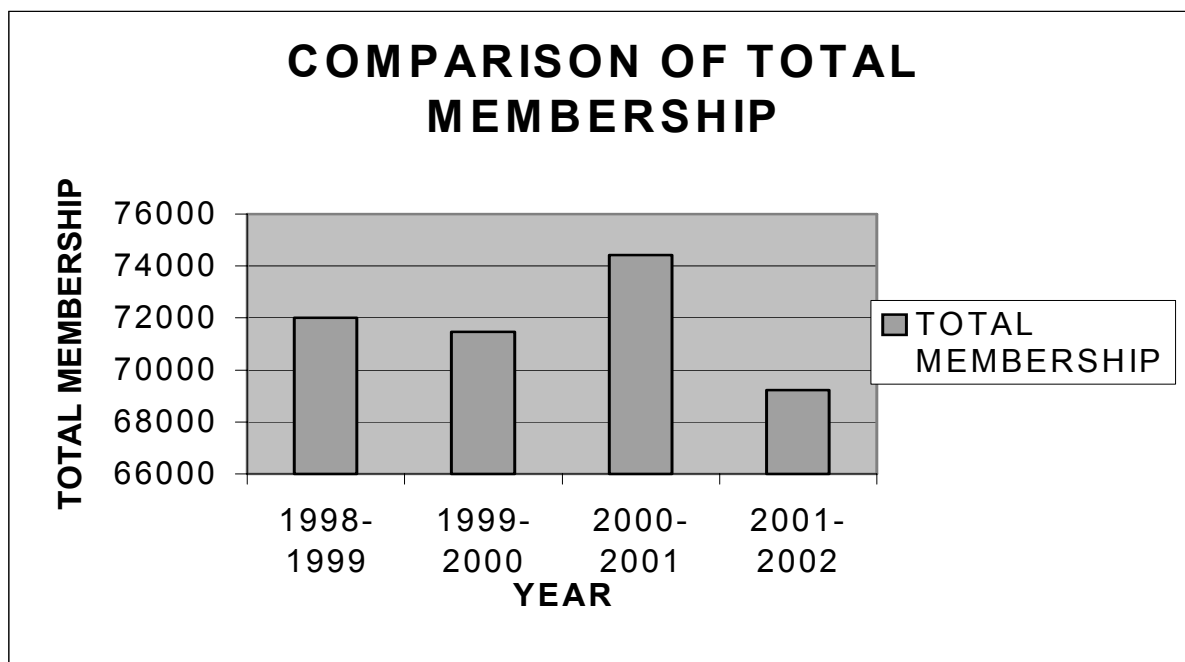
Total Membership (Adult-50,406 & Children-18,849)	69,225
Number of Books issued during 2001-2002	17,89,034
Average Number of Books issued per day	6,367
Number of Books consulted in the Reference Section	1,84,146
Attendance of readers in Reading Rooms (Newspapers and Periodicals)	4,59,600



Breakup of Memberships and Books issued (2001-2002)

Type of Library	No. of library units (1)	Members (2)	Books issued (3)	Average no. of books issued by each Library unit (3)/(1)
Central Library	1	10,333	1,55,529	1,55,529
Zonal Library	1	9,393	1,65,340	1,65,340
Branch Libraries	3	11,432	3,17,266	1,05,755
Sub-Branch Libraries	23	17,579	6,06,413	26,366
Community Libraries	6	2,258	71,690	11,948
Libraries at Resettlement Colonies	23	10,084	3,43,337	14,928

According to the table on the previous page, Sub-Branch Libraries issued the maximum number of total books. But the Sub-Branch Libraries have been neglected badly by the Delhi Public Library over the years.



EXTENSION SERVICES

(a) Deposit Stations:

This Department has a scheme called Deposit Station of running a library by Societies/ Associations in their respective colonies. It lends books and imparts initial training, to run a library service under the supervision of Delhi Public Library. DPL lends books free of charge if these associations have space and staff to manage the library. At present DPL is operating 123 Deposit Stations in different places in the NCT of Delhi. During the year these Deposit Stations had the membership of 7,799 and issued 1,01,780 books to their registered members.

(b) Social Education Services:

According to the annual report (2001-2002) of Delhi Public Library, this Department organises group activities among the adult members in the Central Library for development of an individual's inner talent. The report claims that at present following groups are functioning: Drama, Music, Social Study, Literature study, music coaching, Naturopathy and homeopathic studies. It is also supposed to arrange book exhibitions, film shows, television programmes and lectures for reader's benefits. During the year according to the report, 168 such programmes were organised in the Library Auditorium at the Central Library. Total attendance for these programmes was 18,321.

These activities are only performed in the Central Library and not in any other Delhi Public Library. Secondly members of Delhi Public Library other than of Central Library are not being even informed that such activities are being performed by DPL.

(c) Gramophone and Music Cassettes Library:

The report says that DPL operates gramophone records/ audio/ videocassettes lending service for its registered members free of charge. Facilities for listening songs through linguaphones are also provided

by this department. According to the report 2,41,555 records and cassettes were issued to its 501 registered members.

(d) Braille Department:

The report says that this department caters to the reading needs of the visually handicapped. This Department is also supposed to transcribe books in Braille. Besides this Braille books are also purchased and received as gift from different blind institutions. The total collection of the Braille Department is 14,989 books at the end of the year. Braille books are according to them sent to readers by registered post free of charge to all parts of the country on request. The members like wise also return books by post free of charge. During the year, the Braille Department issued 13,508 books to 377 blind members.

(e) Service to Prisoners:

The Library provides its services to the prisoners in the Central Tihar Jail of the National Capital Territory of Delhi. During the year according to the report, 8,898 books were issued to 346 registered members.

DEPOSITORY LIBRARY

Delivery of Books Act Division: Delhi Public Library was declared by the Government of India as the fourth Recipient Library under the Delivery of Books and Newspapers Act 1954 (as amended in 1956) on 16 December 1981. As per the provision of the Act, the Delhi Public Library is entitled to receive one copy of each publication from publishers in India at free of cost in all Indian languages. The Delivery of Books Act Division monitors the collection of the books and publications received under Delivery of Books Act.

Books under Delivery of Books Act as on 31 March 2002

Books received	13,383
Total Books Stock	1,99,223
Periodicals and Newspapers	1,000

The valuable collection received under the Act has been kept separately as a distinct collection for the use of readers as reference material in the Zonal Library Sarojini Nagar. But as observed by me, the members other than that of Zonal Library are not being provided even the list of books under this Act in their respective libraries.

The annual report also says that this Division also compiles monthly list of new arrivals alongwith bibliographic citations as a part of current awareness service of the books received. These monthly lists have been used as useful bibliographic tools for book selection.

According to the Book Purchase Policy of Delhi Public Library, about 25,000-30,000 books are published in the county every year, but their receipt was only 13,383 between 2001-2002. It also suggests that the Book Purchase Policy should be linked with the receipt under the Act. It would be an effective policy if implemented. All publishers in the country would be informed that their publications may be purchased in multiple copies only when one copy of the book has been supplied by them free of cost under the provisions of the Act.

GENERAL REVIEW

Due to suspension of five Mobile Library Services, three Sports Libraries, Jahangirpuri and Simapuri Library, there is considerable decline in the enrollment of membership and issue of books.

The important thing to question is that why is Delhi Public Library following centralised purchasing policy when there is no way through which they can judge which books are required in the particular unit. There is no regular system of inspections in the libraries. Also the system of book suggestion form is not practically applied in the libraries.



CASE STUDIES¹

(a) Yojana Vihar: Sub Branch Delhi Public Library

Its one room library with sitting arrangement not been sufficient. The Library opens for only six hours from 12:45 pm till 6:45 pm. Two librarians run the library. The Library has not appointed any staff for cleanliness. In practice no fine is collected even if the book is returned after ten days from the due date. Whenever a book is returned the librarian does not ensure that if book is being in proper condition or not. Also the book is kept back on the shelves by the member himself and there is no check as to whether he is keeping the book back on the right shelf.

The library faces shortage of shelves for keeping the books. Books are being piled up everywhere. Even the no use or lapse books (books not been used since many years) are being kept tied over the shelves since several years. I also noticed that books meant to go for binding were piled up. The librarian keeps the complaint register locked in an almirah and members have no access to it. The library is neither computerized nor any catalogue system is maintained. The library has just categorised its entire range of books under nine major subheads. To find a book is a hit and trial method over there. Although membership is hassle free. The members of this Library have no access to the roster of the books available in other units of Delhi Public Library. In summers the Library is like a hot oven. There is only a single cooler provided to this Library. No maintenance has been carried out in this library since its opening. The members have no information about the cultural activities being performed in the Central Library. The members are unaware of the Book Suggestion form. I personally being the member of this

¹ Based on interviews with the Librarian and questionnaires filled by members of the concerned libraries.

Library since past five years and did not know that I can demand any book I want through this form. To my wonder, the Librarian was not having this form.

(b) Lodi Colony: Community Delhi Public Library

The library timings are from 12:30 pm till 7:00 pm. The library maintains no catalogue for books. Two librarians run the library. The library has no regular staff for cleaning but hired when needed after a couple of days. The librarians in this library do collect the fines for late return books. But there is no check for the condition of books returned. The librarian maintains no complaint register. According to the librarian no use books are being piled up in the library since past six to seven years. The librarian had sent several applications to the Zonal Library for the same, but no action had been taken. Similarly books for binding were also piled up. The members have no information regarding the cultural activities being organised in the Central Library. The librarians neither know anything about the Book suggestion form nor they had a copy of it.

(c) Jagriti Enclave: Sub Branch Delhi Public Library

This Library also functions from 12:30 pm till 6:30 pm. When I visited this library, the librarian was on leave. A Junior Librarian Assistant was running this library. Officially, this library has been sanctioned one full time librarian along with a junior library assistant for first three days of the week. The library was functioning in a very small room. The library has no catalogue system. Lapse books were being piled up since four years. The reason given by the librarian was that there are not enough vehicles with DPL for inspection or the collection of no use books. He also committed shortage of staff with DPL. He also said that earlier staff from Shahdara library used to come and visit the library in a jeep. But now since past five months no one has come for inspection. The library does not pay for the electricity they use. The society on behalf of library pays the electricity bill. Similarly water is also provided by the society. There has been no maintenance of the library since it has opened. The windows were broken and this helps the newspaper vendor to throw papers inside early in the morning. This is how the system functions!

There was no complaint register in that library. I could make out from the attendance register that not more than six people visit the library. The librarian was not having a copy of book suggestion form. One of the members of that library was complaining for shortage of books. He told me that since many years he is requesting for Urdu books, but he has not received one. He also told me that he needed Encyclopedia of plants and animals for his little granddaughter, but the library did not had one.

(d) Vigyan Vihar: Sub branch Delhi public Library

I had a very sorry picture for this library. There has been no electricity connection in this library since December 2002. Earlier the library had unauthorised electricity connection. But now when the electricity is being privatized in the area the government is not willing to pay for the meter. The librarian had tried all the tactics he could to get the electricity back. He had sent applications to the Shahdara library. He had requested the Vigyan Vihar society to make some arrangement for the society. But the common response of the society is that they want the library to be shut down since it is not serving any benefit to them. The librarian had once been asked to give the estimate of funds required for getting the electricity. He gave an estimate of just 600 rupees per month to the branch librarian. But nothing has happened after that.

The library is in a very bad condition. Almost all the window panes of the library are broken. The library has same timings. Lapse books were being piled since 2 or 3 years. Same is the situation with books for binding.

The library is being assigned with one full time librarian and one librarian assistant to work for last three days of the week. The library has no water facility. Not more than 5 to 6 people visit the library each day.

(e) New Rotak Road : Sub Branch Delhi Public Library

It's one room library, with timings 11am to 5:40 p.m. It has just two employees- a Librarian and an assistant, who is on daily wages. The library is in a sad state, with only two tube lights working and most of the windowpanes broken. There is no sitting arrangement in the library. The books that need to be discarded have been lying there for past several years and occupying almost one-fourth of the space in the library, but nothing has been done about it, even after repeated complaints to the branch library. The books to be bound are also piling up, for over an year. If the book is already issued, then you have to wait for a long time sometimes over a year to issue that book. There is no regular staff for cleaning, but hired when needed after a couple of months. There is no inspection for months, even the maintenance hasn't taken place for a long time. There is no complaint register, complains are written on a piece of paper, but no action is taken. The same is with the Readers Proposal, they are taken on a piece of paper and then ignored. The main problem faced by the members is that there are inadequate numbers of books in the library.

(f) Old Secretariat:Sub Branch Delhi Public Library

The library timings are 11am to 5:40 pm. The special feature of this library is that it does not get any newspapers or magazines. The Book Suggestion form is not available to the members of this library and if they request for a book, that is not present in the library, they are told it is unavailable. No cooler has been provided to the library, so the librarian has got a personal cooler from home to beat the heat. They is no provision for drinking water either, that too has to be got from home. There is no toilet, so they have to use the toilets of the nearby office. There is no cleaning staff provided by the department, a boy is hired on monthly wage of Rs 120. There is no complain register, the members complain verbally to the librarian and she does whatever she can on her own.

(g) Majnu Ka Tila:Resettlement Colony Delhi Public Library,Aruna Nagar

The library timings are 10:00 am to 4:40pm. There is no cleaning staff. Water, electricity and toilet problem is there. There is no electricity most of the time and there is no backup. So the library is like a hot oven in summers. There is no Readers Proposal form available.

(h) Patel Nagar: Branch Delhi Public Library

The timings are 12:30pm to 6:45pm._The maintenance should take place once in 2-3 years, but it doesn't happen._The problem faced by members is that the editorials are old, and there are inadequate number of books._Since it is a branch library it has water, toilet facilities, and it is kept clean, with adequate number of staff.

Dayal Singh Library

This library is run by Dyal Singh Library Trust Society. It receives no financial assistance from the government. The governing as well as funding body is the trust itself. Before independence the library was in Lahore and then shifted to Delhi. This library provides both reference and lending membership. Any one can become a member of this library after depositing refundable security of rupees 300. The membership is life long without any renewal procedure. The library is currently having 9000 members.

The purchase policy of the library is basedon two things: Suggestion Register and statistics of old books issued. The library is having a total annual budget of rupees 60 lacs. Out of the total budget,

around 6 to 7 lacs are spent on the purchase of books each year. The old books are discarded and are given to other institutions as and when wanted.

The books are properly binded and arranged on shelves. Each book of the library is properly indexed. The library purchases around 23 newspapers and 100 magazines. The library is having books in English, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu and Bengali language.

The staff of the library consists of 3 professional librarians and 4 attendants. The library is having daily cleaning facility. The attendant himself keeps the returned books back on shelves.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Each Library unit should maintain catalogue system for its books.
2. The library must be opened in the morning also.
3. The centralised purchasing policy should be removed and library units should plan on their own for the books they want to buy.
4. Each library should have copies of Readers Proposal form and the members should be informed about that.
5. Members should also be informed about the cultural activities happening in the Central Library.
6. Members in each Library should have access to roster of books received by DPL under D.B.Act and also the books available in other units of DPL.
7. DPL should pay attention over the infrastructural problems in sub branch and community libraries.
8. All publishers in the country should be informed that the provision of the Delivery of Books Act is applicable to the Delhi Public Library.

References

Librarians of Lodi Colony community Delhi Public Library- Madan Lal and Pyare Lal

Librarian of Yojna Vihar sub branch Delhi Public Library- Shyam Sunder

Librarian of Vigyan Vihar sub branch Delhi Public Library-Baldev

Junior Library Assistant of Jagriti Enclave sub branch Delhi Public Library-Mahesh

Library Information Officer (Accounts) of Sarojini Nagar zonal Delhi Public Library-Sudha Mukherjee

Assistant Library Information Officer of Zonal Library-S Rajgopalan

Consultant in Agricultural Economics and Free lance journalist-Vidya Sagar

Readers of different Delhi public libraries

Published Annual report of Delhi Public Library 1996-1997

Computerized Annual reports of Delhi Public Libraries for the years 1999-2000, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002

Librarian of Dayal Singh Library