

## Public Libraries and Analysis of Their Social Functions as a Communication-Media Foundation

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Received: 6th July, 2010; Accepted: 17th September, 2010

### Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of present research is to analyze theories proposed for social functions of communication media including public libraries. Also, it aims to explain and generalize a theory best coordinated with public libraries. In current analysis, public libraries have been explained regarding their position and functions as communication media.

**Methodology:** Using meta-analysis method, it is intended to explore theories proposed in scope of communication media so as to reach a desired theory and employ it to media institutions such as public libraries. Furthermore, citation method was used in the analysis to provide essential evidence.

**Findings:** According to the obtained findings and due to local/native conditions of public libraries in Iran as well as the existence of modern theories of international information flow, none of the theories including mass society theory, functional theory of media, theory of technological determinism, Marxism and its subsets, and socio-cultural theory can be adapted to public libraries in Iran; only the convergence theory as a unifying-liberating pattern in international information flow can be proposed as a communication-media institution for social function of public libraries. In addition, elements of this theory have been explained in detail in context of public libraries.

**Originality/Value:** As theoretical dimensions of issues in field of libraries especially public libraries have been neglected to a high extent in national and international level, the current paper with its new approach towards public libraries aims to find an appropriate pattern for social function of public libraries through analysis of theories of communication media.

**Keywords:** Public libraries; Mass media; Social functions; Convergence theory; Information dissemination; Meta-analysis.