

Historical Aspects of Public Libraries in Iran

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Abstract

In this research, coming into existence and evolution of public libraries in Iran have been investigated in comparison with those in America and England from historical perspective, along with guidelines of IFLA and UNESCO. The most important finding of present study is that public libraries movement in Iran was formed by people and intellectuals, similar to pioneer countries in this field like America and England. Nevertheless, in contrast to America and England, in Iran the laws increasingly reduced participation of people and librarians in public libraries' affairs and resulted in several problems and insufficiencies. Another finding of this study is that the legal and financial framework of public libraries in Iran is not so consistent with guidelines of IFLA and UNESCO in 2001. Due to paying no attention to local needs, children, and special groups, the public libraries in Iran are far from their functions, nature, and main mission. Therefore, it seems that the laws related to public libraries in Iran need to be rewritten such that people's participation increases through local councils and experts of library and information science. Besides presenting research findings, the present paper can be an introduction for further qualitative and historical researches in this field.

Keywords:

Public libraries; History; Laws and prescriptions; Iran.