

University library building movement in Iran with special reference to architectural aspects

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Abstract

University library building movement, both before and after the Islamic revolution has been studied here in depth, in both medical and non-medical universities. Architectural aspects of the library buildings, containing Islamic, Western, and Iranian architecture have been studied. Various areas and spaces as well as different sections of the library buildings have also been investigated in this article. The data collected reveals that a striking number of the library buildings have been built after the Islamic revolution in Iran. A literature review on the history of the library buildings has been offered at the beginning of the study. The study has been completed in 2001, as a part of a PhD thesis first, but revised for the present paper.

Keywords

Library buildings, University library buildings, Academic library buildings, library architecture, Iran library buildings, IRAN

Introduction

For understanding and tracing the university library building movement in Iran, one should refer to the old recorded history of educational institutions. Education in ancient Iran,

used to be performed in two types of institutions, namely "Madresseh" and "Nezamiah". Therefore, the library building of these educational institutions should be traced in the present study. Although the modern concept

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of library and information services is new in Iran, yet there have been many old libraries in ancient Iran. According to Rokn-Al-Din-Homayoun Farrokh (1965), 459 various types of libraries existed in ancient Iran. Some of these libraries were located in educational institutions (3). But Iran has faced many ups and downs. In various wars, earthquakes, fires etc., old libraries had been destroyed completely. Despite these, according to many documents the history of some of the existing library buildings goes beyond the history of America, (1: 15)

For better understanding of the history of library buildings in Iran, a social and historical background of the country is explained briefly. Before the revolution of 1906, in which the constitutional monarchy established, there was an absolute monarchy in Iran. The rate of illiteracy was very high, estimated over 95%. Education was limited to some noble families. Majority of the people were farmers. Women were kept in ignorance. Religion was dominant in education and there exist on type of printing. Despite these facts, some people were very eager to learn: some famous poets and philosophers were living in ancient Iran: some monarchs were

also found of books and established some educational institutions and libraries as well.

Although most of the famous ancient libraries are untraceable at present, yet Iranian as well as Arab writers and historians have introduced majority of those. Ibn-Nadim, a famous the bibliographer, in his book "Al-Fihrist" enumerates many of these libraries. Khosrow I, in Gondishapur, established a library for his university in Sassanid dynasty. According to Hooshang Ebrami (1: 24) Nizamiyah School was founded in 1064. There were famous Nizamiyahs in Nishapur, Isfahan, and Shiraz. There were famous libraries in these colleges too. Many other libraries were founded by Rashid-al-Din Fazlullah, the Minister of Ghazan Khan, early in 14th century. Likewise, Sheikh Safi library was founded in the Safavid period (1501-1736). Julfa library, which still exists, is one of the oldest libraries. Hussain Sepahsallar the Prime Minister in 1878, founded the college of Technology with a rich library, which is active at present time, too. Besides the above mentioned libraries, some more royal, private, and special libraries were famous in ancient Iran, which are not being explained in this

study.

The architecture of the ancient library buildings was a synthesis of the Islamic and Iranian arts. High ceilings and wall shelves with high arch windows are some of the characteristics of the old library buildings. The books on each particular subject were housed in separate rooms. Therefore, there were many separate rooms for various subjects in every library building. Ibn Nadim, Yakut Hamawi, and many others have enumerated and explained the characteristics of the old library buildings in their books.

With constitutional revolution in 1906, numerous changes happened in Iran. Primary education became compulsory for everybody. Economic growth brought a better standard of living for the people. Many villagers moved to the cities. The rigid structure of the society changed to new social classes. Numerous schools were established in the cities as well as the villages. Women were permitted to take part in social activities. The close relation with western countries provided educational opportunities for the growth of the country.

The first modern university, in the style of western countries, was established in Tehran in 1934. Shortly

thereafter, many more universities and colleges came into being in other big cities. For every newly established educational institution, at least one library building was constructed after some period of time. In due course of time, the number of students of the universities increased dramatically. The mushrooming growth of the higher education institutions changed the society very fast. Likewise, the university authorities as well as the librarians felt the need for well-planned and modern library buildings, seriously.

The earliest central university libraries came into being in Tehran, Isfahan and Tabriz. The central library of Tehran University was founded officially in 1959. The large and well-planned building of this library was also constructed in 1958. It is housed on 9 floors and the total carpet area of the library, at present, is 20,000 Sq. Meters. The establishment of this library is the first step in centralization of academic libraries in Iran. The detailed characteristics of university library buildings in Iran has been explained in two categories viz 1) before the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and 2) after the Islamic Revolution.

Generally speaking, central libraries are not very active in all the

universities in Iran. Thus, some of the universities have not owned well-planned central library buildings. However, in most of the universities in Iran, there are very well-planned and large college libraries as well. Sometimes, each educational department has also provided a very rich library. Therefore, library activities are not centralized in central libraries in some of the universities. Moreover, some central libraries are only in-charge of cataloguing, technical processing of books and other official works. Therefore, such universities do not have active central libraries for users. Moreover, medical universities detached from the universities under supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education after the Islamic Revolution. Thus, only some of the medical universities could find enough time and funds to construct new library buildings.

With this introductory background on the library building in Iran, general information of the university library buildings has been discussed in the following paragraphs. The detailed architectural characteristics of some of the library buildings have also been explained. The architectural aspects as well as various spaces of these library

buildings have also been highlighted, using floor plans of the buildings and the necessary photographs. All these library buildings have been visited personally by the investigator of the present study.

1. Before the Islamic Revolution (1979):

Construction of library buildings in the shape of western countries started from 1950 onwards. Tehran University library building as the first attempt came into being in 1958. This seven storey library building was planned and constructed by a foreign construction company. The large space of this library building is useful for various library activities. Central Library building of Shahid Beheshti University was established in 1961. This library building is one of the well-planned university library buildings in Iran. The foundation stone of the library building of Shiraz University was laid down before 1979, although the building was completed after the Islamic Revolution. Similarly, major parts of the library building of Shahid Chamran University were constructed before the Islamic Revolution, but due to some problems it was completed in

1999. Present central library building of Payam Noor University was completed in 1974. It was constructed as the central library building of Damavand University at that time. According to Iranian Documentation Centre some other relatively small library buildings such as those of Tabriz, Urmia, Az-Zahra, Amirkabir, Kerman and Hamadan Universities were also constructed before the Islamic Revolution in Iran (4: 4).

The total covered area of these original library buildings is about 35000 sq. meters. Although the number and the total carpet area of the original university library buildings, constructed during this period of time (1958-1979), is not too big, but all of these library buildings are still in full use and are considered of well-planned, functional and standard university library buildings in Iran.

2. After the Islamic Revolution:

From 1979 onward, an attempt for constructing new teaching, administrative, as well as university library buildings started in the country. But, since construction of a large and well-planned library building takes too much time and money, majority of the library buildings of this era came into being in recent years.

2.1. Non-Medical University Library Buildings

Library building of Shiraz University was opened in 1986. It was completed by Iranian architects with the help of librarians. Construction of the library building of Sistan and Baluchistan University was completed in 1991. It is entirely planned and constructed by Iranian architects and librarians. Construction of the central library building of Shahrud University was completed in 1974. It is also well-planned and constructed by Iranian architects and librarians. Sharif University of Technology completed its 5 storey well-planned central library building in 1995. It is constructed within the university campus despite the shortage of space. Three years later, in 1998, Mazandaran University opened its newly constructed central library building. This library building is also well-planned and unique in the area. The two very large, well-planned and functional university library buildings, famous from the aesthetic point of view, are those of Shahid Chamran and Isfahan University. Although the foundation stone of the library building of Shahid Chamran University was laid down before 1979, but construction of the

building was completed in 1999. Since the university is located in Ahwaz, which is on the south-east of the country near to Iraq borders, and because of the 8 years war between Iran and Iraq, construction of this library building was completed after a long period of time. Isfahan University library building is the latest library which was opened in 2000. Almost every standard and required spaces for a modern and up-to-date university library building has been provided in this beautiful and huge building.

Except the above mentioned library buildings, construction of some other university library buildings in Iran is going to be completed in the near future. Isfahan University of Technology has started the construction of a large 2-storey library building. Shahid Beheshti University is also constructing a 4-storey library building quite close to its present central library building. Although the previous library building of this university is original and well-planned yet due to rapid increase in the students' population and lack of required spaces, the new building has been attached to the previous library building. University of Urmia has also intimated that, con-

struction of its new central library building is going to be completed in the near future. It is centrally located in the university campus and sufficient space has been earmarked for the library material as well as the users and the staff within this library building. According to the data collected, various required floor plans of the new central library building of Ferdowsi University have been drawn and confirmed by the university authorities many years ago. The location of the library building is also ensured within the large university campus. Yet, due to various problems, especially paucity of funds, despite the necessity for the new library building is felt seriously, construction of this building has not been started so far. University of Qom has also intimated that its new central library building is being constructed which is expected to be completed in coming years. Central library building of Zanjan University is also being constructed these days and is expected to be completed in near future. It is expected to solve the space problems of the existing library building of the university.

So far the data collected reveals, with the library buildings which are being constructed at present, the total

number of the newly constructed library buildings is more than 22. Thus, it reveals a very striking increase in construction of university library buildings in Iran. The total carpet area of the newly constructed and active library buildings (i.e. after the Islamic Revolution of Iran), is more than 76,000 Sq. meters. The number of library buildings, which have been opened during the last 20 years are more than those constructed before the Islamic Revolution. The total covered area of these library buildings is also much more than those constructed before 1979. If the total carpet area of the library buildings, which are going to be completed in the near future, is added to the total covered area of the newly constructed library buildings, a quite striking increase can be observed through the figures.

2.2. Medical University Library Buildings

The story of medical university library buildings is quite different from those of non-medical university library buildings. After the Islamic Revolution in Iran, medical universities were separated from the Ministry of Higher Education. Although some of the administrative and teaching

buildings remained with the medical universities, none of the central library buildings were retained for medical universities. Therefore, medical universities had to provide the required space for their library material or construct new library buildings. As many as 6 medical university library buildings were constructed during a relatively short period of time. The total covered area of the newly constructed buildings is quite smaller in comparison to those of non-medical university library buildings. Yet, since the number of library materials of medical universities is not too much, the relatively smaller space provided seems to be sufficient for various library activities. In some cases, the old medical college library buildings are also used as central library buildings.

After 1979, as stated already, as many as 6 medical university library buildings have been constructed in Iran (Table 1). The two central library buildings of Hamadan and Kermanshah Universities of Medical Sciences and Health Services came into being in 1986. Library building of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences and Health Services was also officially opened in 1988. Likewise library building of Birjand University

of Medial Sciences and Health Services was opened in 1989. Arak and Kashan also completed the construction of their new central library buildings in 1993 and 1995, respectively. The total carpet area of these 6 newly constructed library buildings is about 6000 Sq. Meters. This relatively small carpet area is almost sufficient for the present required space of the said libraries.

Except the above mentioned library buildings, some other large library buildings have been provided for some other medical universities, too. Since these buildings have not been constructed originally as library buildings, these have not been explained in the present study. Moreover, some other medical universities have also started constructing new library buildings, the detailed information of which is not available to be presented in this study.

In nut shell, out of the total 80 universities in Iran, the data has been collected from 64 university libraries. Only 21 of these library buildings were originally constructed as library. Likewise, so far as the investigator knows majority of libraries that have not responded to the questionnaires do not own original library buildings.

Hence, almost one fourth of the library buildings in Iran are original, this reveals the need for construction more original library buildings.

3. Architectural Aspects of University Library Buildings in Iran

While planning library buildings, the librarians are generally in search of a functional place, in which suitable space for various library activities could be provided. Likewise, since university library collections grow with a high speed, librarians intend to provide a flexible place so that various types of library materials could be housed conveniently. They are also cautious to plan related sections next to each other, so that it is possible to reduce wastage of time for the users as well as the staff. Likewise, librarians know that every small or large library building will face space problems in future. Thus, they insist on the expansion possibility of the university library buildings. Providing suitable space for housing library equipments and facilities is also the concern of the librarians. They know that ill-library equipments can affect library services and damage library materials seriously. Centrality in the location of the university library buildings is also taken

TABLE 1 Architectural Aspects of Original University Library Buildings in Iran

Sr. No	Name of the Library	Year of Establishment of the Present LIB	Modular Structure		Islamic Arch.	Iranian Arch.	Eastern Arch.	Western Arch.	Rectangular	Square	Circle	Popular Arch.	Non-Popular Arch.
			Fixed Structure										
I. Non-Medical Univ.													
1	Ferdowsi	1972	-	√	-	√	-	-	√	-	-	-	√
2	Gilan	1976	-	√	-	√	-	-	√	-	-	-	√
3	Lorestan	1979	-	√	-	-	-	√	√	-	-	√	-
4	Mazandaran	1998	√	-	-	√	-	-	√	-	-	√	-
5	Urmia	1969	-	√	-	√	-	-	√	-	-	-	√
6	Payam Noor	1986	√	-	-	-	-	√	-	-	√	√	-
7	Shahrud	1994	√	-	-	-	-	√	-	-	√	-	√
8	Sharif Un.of Tec.	1995	√	-	-	√	-	-	√	-	-	-	√
9	Shahid Beheshti	1961	√	-	-	√	-	-	√	-	-	-	√
10	Sistan & Baluchestan	1991	√	-	-	-	-	√	√	-	-	-	√
11	Tehran	1958	√	-	√	√	-	-	√	-	-	√	-
12	Shiraz	1987	√	-	-	-	-	√	-	-	√	√	-
13	Az-Zahra	1965	-	√	-	√	-	-	√	-	-	-	√
14	Shahid Chamran	1999	√	-	-	-	-	√	-	-	√	√	-
15	Isfahan	2000	√	-	√	√	-	-	√	-	-	√	-
II. Medical Univ.													
16	Arak	1993	-	√	-	√	-	-	√	-	-	-	√
17	Birjand	1989	-	√	-	√	-	-	√	-	-	-	√
18	Isfahan	1988	-	-	-	√	-	-	√	-	-	-	√
19	Hamadan	1986	-	-	-	√	-	-	√	-	-	√	-
20	Kashan	1995	-	√	-	√	-	-	√	-	-	√	-
21	Kermanshah	1986	-	√	-	√	-	-	√	-	-	√	-
	Total		10	9	2	16	-	6	17	-	4	10	11
	Percentage		(47.6)	(42.8)	(9.5)	(76.2)	-	(28.5)	(76.1)	-	(19)	(47.6)	(52.3)

into consideration by librarians, while planning new library buildings. But librarians normally pay less attention to the exterior architectural aspect of library buildings. Generally speaking, librarians are not so familiar with the architectural aspects of the library buildings.

Tehran University library building

Generally it is true that an ordinary building can be changed to a complete and outstanding piece of work if basic cultural as well as artistic factors are considered important in the exterior architecture thereof. Likewise, a building which entails ideals, historic background, cultural aspects, religious thoughts, and the fine arts of a society and also meets the needs, functions and the actual necessities of a building is considered ideal for libraries too.

According to Mohammad Yousof Kiani various factors determine the architecture of every building. These factors are:

- (i) Geographical and regional factors,
- (ii) Functions and special needs,
- (iii) Customs and cultural values, and
- (iv) Creativity and genuine of the architect (5: 492).

The function and the effect of each of the above factors are not identical. In

fact the circumstances in which an architectural unit is provided, determines the function of every of the above factors. In view of the above, the architectural aspects of the original university library buildings in Iran have been discussed in the following paragraphs.

So far as the data collected from the university library buildings in Iran reveals (Table 1), as many as 21 libraries have owned original buildings. 15 of these libraries belong to non-medical universities and the remaining 6 libraries are central libraries of the universities of Medical Sciences and Health Services. Although only a few of the non-original libraries have also owned large well-designed buildings, yet these have not been discussed in the present study.

General architectural aspects of the original university library buildings in Iran are as follows:

3.1. Type of Internal Structure of Library Buildings

Although planning modular buildings for libraries is very beneficial in providing a functional space for ever changing condition of libraries, yet 42.8% of the present library buildings

in Iran have been constructed totally or partially on fixed functioning concepts. The remaining 47.6% libraries have also been planned on modular functioning concepts (Table 1).

3.2. Shape of Internal Structure of Library Buildings

Majority of various types of buildings in Iran are planned in rectangular or square shapes. University library buildings also (in conformity with their neighboring buildings) are planned in rectangular shapes. The data presented in Table 1 shows that, 76.1% of the library buildings in Iran are rectangular. It has been proved that the wastage of space is comparatively less in rectangular and square shaped buildings as compared to other shapes. Therefore, a very few of the other shapes of library buildings have also been planned in Iran.

Likewise, 4 of the present university library buildings (i.e. 19%) are circular or semi-circular. These library buildings are mostly planned by foreign construction companies. Therefore, although various shapes of library buildings are quite common in other countries, yet all the existing library buildings in Iran are rectangular or circular in shape.

4.3. Type of Architecture of University Library Buildings

In a country in which majority of its population are Muslim, it is expected that the Islamic architecture to be used in the exterior part of its library buildings. But the data presented in Table 1 reveals that, only 9.5% of the university library buildings have been planned on Islamic architecture. An over-whelming (i.e. 71.4%) of the library buildings have been planned on Iranian architecture. 28.5% of the libraries have also been planned on various shapes of western architecture. Some of the library buildings have also been planned on a mixture of Islamic and Iranian architecture. But simple common Iranian architecture is dominant on the majority of the university library buildings in Iran.

4.4. Popularity of the University Library Buildings from the Aesthetic Points of View

It is believed that the university library buildings should convey the noble thoughts of the books and the learned people using these. Thus, it is expected that university library buildings to be more popular and more artistic than the buildings close to them. But as shown in Table 1, less

than half of the university library buildings in Iran are famous from the aesthetic points of view. Likewise, 52.3% of the library buildings have been planned on a simple architecture, almost the same as their neighboring teaching and administrative buildings. After becoming familiar with the general architectural aspects of the university library buildings in Iran, the history and the floor plans of some of the well-planned library buildings have been discussed in the following paragraphs.

5. Originally University Library buildings of Iran

5.1. Library of Isfahan University of Technology

Library of this university was established in 1977, in one of the administrative buildings, within the university campus. The building is not originally constructed as a library, yet its modular construction has provided the possibility to be used as a well-organized library building. The building is rectangular in shape and covers a carpet area of 3000 Sq. Meters. On each floor, there is a big hall which is attached to various sections of the library. Book stacks, reference and periodical sections as well as two sep-

arate reading halls cover the largest space of the library building. The library building is close to various teaching departments as well as the students' hostels.

Due to lack of space within the present building and for the provision of the future increase of library materials, a new and well-planned library building was constructed within the university campus. The building, which is square in shape, except the ground floor has got two more floors also. Various standard spaces have been planned for this library building by Iranian architects with the help of the librarians. The central location of the library is very beneficial because of the walking distance between the library and the teaching department and the students' hostels. The building can be extended horizontally as well as vertically without affecting the ventilation system, lights and external appearance of the present building. The building has been planned according to functional needs of a university library. The orientation of the building is east-west, allowing adequate sunlight to various sections of the library.

The main entrance of the library building opens to a lobby and then to a big hall. Circulation desk has been

predicted on the left hand side of the hall and control counter in the middle of the hall close to entrance. Various small rooms for different library activities have been provided on each floor. All these rooms open to their main corridor of each floor. Room for studying private books with two entrance doors is located on the left hand side of the building on the ground floor. It is quite big and has the capacity to accommodate a large number of users. The other entrance door of the room is from the outside of the library building. Periodical section is also located on the left side of the building. It is large with the possibility to accommodate users as well as the required shelves, tables and chairs. Numerous other library sections, such as binding section, photocopy room, public catalogue area; administrative sections and rooms for installing various heating and cooling equipments are located on this floor. There is also a large space within the library building, which provides suitable natural light for various library sections as well as the corridors.

The first floor of the building can be reached, through four different staircases located on four sides of the building. Reference section, as well as

reading hall for periodicals, group study rooms, various technical, cataloguing sections and some rooms of the administrative offices, are located on this floor.

The second floor of the building has been planned as study area. General reading halls, research carrels, group study rooms, special hall for the university teachers and also the office of the librarian are located on this floor. There is also a large terrace, which provides natural light for reading halls and can be used when needed. This floor, which has been planned mostly to provide a calm and quiet place for users, is very beneficial for them.

The main drawbacks of the newly constructed library building are as follows:

(i) Mutual location and relation of the stacks, catalogues, reference and periodical sections as well as reading hall is not very conducive. All the interests of the users are lost in climbing up and coming down to find a book or a place to study.

(ii) Although providing large space for different library activities is preferable, majority of the space of this building has been divided into small rooms.



Library of Isfahan University of Technology

5.2. Isfahan University Library

The library of this university came into being in 1958. With the numerous development programmes and expansions of teaching facilities, the library began to grow steadily and the need for a separate spacious building was seriously felt. The blossoming of the library into its new home came in 2000. The modern square shaped library building has been planned on both Islamic and Iranian sculpture. The building is a synthesis of Islamic art and functional needs of a university library. It is a great masterpiece in the university campus as well as among the university library buildings in Iran. The building has been planned and constructed by Iranian architects. It is planned on modular concept and various large spaces have been provided within it for different library activities. The orientation of the building is east-west diagonally, allowing ade-

quate sunlight in the reading area as well as other sections of the library. The building is so constructed that its various big halls can be altered conveniently, as per needs, without affecting the basic layout. The library building is based on 7 floors. There is independent access to various wings of the library on the ground floor. There are suitable large windows for providing natural light and ventilation. The building is also fully air-conditioned. The interior as well as the exterior walls of the library has been erected with colourful mosaics, revealing Islamic and Iranian sculpture. The building is not centrally located in the large university campus, yet there is transportation facility from all teaching departments and also from the main gate of the university campus to the library. Due to the large space provided for the library and because of the lack of enough library materials



Isfahan University Library Building

and equipments some spaces of the library building have fallen short of the immediate needs. Since the library has not been shifted to the new building completely (till the time of visit by the investigator of the present study), the explanation of the space, meant for various sections of the library is not possible at this stage.

5.3. Shahid Chamran University Library

Shahid Chamran University is located in Ahvaz, the capital of Khuzestan province, on the south-east

of Iran. The library of this university was established in 1968. The foundation stone of the present library building was laid in 1973, yet due to financial scarcity and also due to the war between Iran and Iraq; the construction of the building was finished in 2000. The building is quite modern and beautiful in shape. It is "Layer Cake" shaped, which is planned on modular concept. The building is planned on 5 floors and the total carpet area of the library is 15,000 Sq. Meters. It is located centrally, relatively near to various educational depart-

ments of the university. Since the university campus is too large, accessibility to the library has been provided through free round the clock university buses.

Although the whole building is on modular basis, yet the interior space of the building has been divided to various relatively small sections. Immediately on entry from the main gate on the ground floor, a large hall appears. The control counters as well as property counter is located close to the entrance. Some administrative offices and departments/sections of the library are located on the ground floor. The high ceiling hall provides the possibility to be able to see all the

upper floors from the entrance. The main staircase, which is beautifully decorated, is on the right hand side of the entrance. It is the only way to reach the upper floors. Librarian's office is located on the 4th floor, which is reached by a flight of stairs. Reference section, periodical section and book stacks are located separately in different parts of the building. Because of the close-stack system of the library, circulation desk is located in front of the book stack. Public catalogue cabinets are also located close to circulation desk. Acquisition, technical and cataloguing sections are also located near each other.

Large windows, facing east, west



Shahid Chamran University Library Building

and south on each floor of the building provide suitable natural light for various sections of the library. The large black glass window also keep off the direct sun rays, especially during the summer, which is very hot in Ahwaz. The total library building is also fully air-conditioned. There is a provision for green lawns and colorful flower beds around the library building too. The noticeable drawbacks of the library building are as follow :

- (i) The interior planning has not been done properly, keeping in view the library needs. Thus, a lot of space is being wasted and can not be utilized for various library functions.
- (ii) Carrying of books within the library is difficult as book trolleys can not be used conveniently because of the staircases.
- (iii) Various library sections have not been arranged logically and in accordance with the users' needs.
- (iv) The multi-storey building is without book conveyors and lifts, which generates physical strain for the staff as well as the users.

5.4. Library of Sharif University of Technology

Although library of Sharif University of Technology came into

being in 1965, yet the present library building was opened in 1995. The 5-storied library building covers the total carpet area of 10,000 Sq. Meters. The building is planned on the modular concept with no load bearing walls. Although the building is located on the extreme north side of the university campus, yet it is close to most of the educational departments. Moreover, because the university campus is not too large, the building is at a walking distance for all of the library users. The rectangular shaped library building faces south and north. Thus, the orientation of the building is in conformity with the other buildings within the campus. It also provides suitable light and ventilation for various sections within the library building. Besides the four floors of the library, there is also the basement, which is planned for stacks, binding section, and some other small rooms for different library activities.

The main entrance of the library, which is on the ground floor opens to a big hall. Property counter is located within this hall near to entrance. Book stacks are also located on the left hand side of the hall. Most of the space of this floor is occupied by book stacks. Some rooms meant for administrative

work as well as the information desk of the library are located on the ground floor. Public catalogue is also located on the left hand side corner of the hall. A relatively large computer room has also been provided on the left hand side of the hall.

The first floor of the library is accessible by a staircase as well as a lift. Leading from the ground floor to the first floor. Reading room for male users is on the left hand side of the hall, while that for female users is on the right hand side. Some small group study rooms are also attached to the reading halls. Suitable natural light has been provided through large windows in all parts of the library building. A small room for library staff has also been provided next to reading halls.

The second floor of the library is planned for the reading hall for male users. Some group study rooms are also planned in a corner within the reading hall. There is a good arrangement of furniture, lighting and ventilation in this space. It is relatively calm and quiet for serious studies. A room for library staff has also been provided on this floor.

The third floor of the library building is planned for reference and peri-

odicals sections. The large space planned for these two sections accommodate the library users, library material as well as the furniture. As many as 1500 students can be accommodated, at a time, in various reading space of the library building. Some other library departments, such as audio visual section, photocopying room and some book stacks are also located on this floor.

The fourth floor of the library building is planned for technical and administrative works. Quite a large space of this floor is occupied by cataloguing section. Acquisition sections is also located on this floor. Librarian's office along with the other administrative sections is located in a corner of this floor too. The administrative section is separated from the other parts of this floor with a glass door.

A part of the fifth floor of the library building is earmarked for the book stacks, a room for installing heating, cooling and ventilation equipments and also provision of a lift. The remaining space of this floor has not been provided with roof for the time being. It is meant for the future expansion of the library. An emergency staircase has also been installed on the right hand side of the building, with

the possibility for all floors to be able to use it.

Although the library building is planned by Iranian architects with the assistance of librarians, keeping in view the functional needs of a university library building, yet some drawbacks of the building are as follows:

(i) Location of the book stacks, catalogue and reading halls is not very conducive. It appears odd to think of a reader to get the book and then going up to the reading room. It is disturbing for serious studies.

(ii) Location of other library sections is also not so convenient for the users. Reference and periodical sections that should be close to the users and relatively near the entrance of the library are located on the third floor of the library building.

(iii) The location of the group study rooms is such that these have little natural light and these also create sound pollution for the reading hall.

(iv) No provision has been made for vertical and horizontal expansion of the library building.

5.5. Shiraz University Library

Central library of Shiraz University known as Mirzae Shirazi central library was established and housed in

its original library building in 1986. The building is originally constructed as a library by a foreign construction company with the assistance of Iranian architects. The total covered area of the building is 11,000 Sq. Meters. It is located on the hilly grounds of the university campus. The library is planned on the modular concept and resistant to intensive earthquakes. The possibility to see the landscape of the total city from the library is of unique characteristics of the location of the library. The distinct features of the exterior part of the building are also unique. It is like a honey cave. The building is also considered as a masterpiece among the library buildings in Iran. It is quite close to boys' hostels as well as some educational departments. But it is relatively far from the entrance gate of the university campus. The entire building is fully air-conditioned and natural light enters through numerous large size windows on the outside walls of the library. The total library building consists of 4 floors, yet some part of the building is occupied by certain educational as well as administrative departments. Almost all required space for a standard library has been provided while planning this building. Almost

2000 users have the possibility to use the library building at a time. The quietude of the library building has provided a calm and quiet place for the users to study for a long time.

Some space of the library building has been planned on the basement. This relatively, large space has been earmarked for seminar rooms, binding section, administrative sections and rooms for installing heating, cooling and ventilation equipments.

The entrance of the first floor of the library building opens to a corridor, which is led to the librarian's office, acquisition section and cataloguing section. Circulation section and reading rooms are located on the second floor of the building. Book stacks, periodical section and reference sections are located on the third floor. All of these are located very close to each other. Public catalogue cabinets are also located quite close to the circulation desk. The appropriate placement of various sections within the library has paved way for convenient library services to the users as well as the staff. Thus, the accessibility to all parts of the library is very satisfactory. The noticeable drawbacks of this library building are as follows:

(i) No provision for vertical as well as

horizontal expansion has been made for the library.

(ii) The fourth floor of the building has been occupied by other administrative departments.

(iii) Carrying of books within the library is inconvenient because of too many staircases.

5.6. Payam Noor University Library

Payam Noor University is the only university in Iran which is in-charge of correspondence courses. Unlike most of other countries, Payam Noor University, along with its almost 270 branches all over Iran, offers this method of education. Every branch of this university has its own educational departments and library. The central library of the university has the main function of acquiring reading materials, to process the same and to feed the branch libraries, scattered all over the country. Thus, the needs and objectives of the branch libraries are quite different from those of the central library. While users in branch libraries are in need of suitable reading halls and other study centers, suitable working area and adequate space for the staff are the needs of the central library. Similarly, because the central library is located in Tehran, the capital

of Iran, only a few users have the chance to use it.

The central library came into being in 1974. But it shifted to the present building in 1986. The building was constructed by a foreign construction company before the Islamic Revolution. The library building is round (i.e. circular) in shape and planned on the modular concept with no load bearing or supporting walls. The mushroom shaped building, surrounded by green lawns and colorful flower beds, has an impressive appearance. The building has been constructed on relatively high lands, so that it can be seen from all the other parts of the university campus. The building is situated at a central place for all the other departments of the university. The exterior design of the building is very magnificent and the entire building is like a mushroom. The whole building is based on outside pillars and the very large space provided within the library can be utilized for various library activities. The exterior walls of the library have totally been put on with glass, providing too much natural light for various sections of the library. Although the entire building is based on one floor, yet there are two semi floors within the

library as well. Colorful wall-to-wall carpet flooring gives a pleasing appearance to the building.

As one steps through the large glass door into the library building, almost all the study sections can be seen at a single glance. Immediately on entry from the main gate, reading hall appears. The main reading hall has the capacity to accommodate almost 200 users at a time. A large space, furnished with beautiful round wooden single-study tables and some short wooden shelves for reference books is on the left-hand side of the entrance. The shelves have also been used as partitions. Thus, the quietude of the library remains disturbed during rush hours. Property counter and control section are on the right hand side of the entrance. Circulation desk is also located on the right hand side of the building. It is so located that the staff of this section has the possibility to supervise over the users conveniently. Moreover, it is near the reference collection, public catalogue, reading hall and book stacks. Some other library space such as; periodicals section, audio-visual section, computer readable materials, and manuscripts section, have been located together adjacent to reference section. Two large

book stacks have also been provided on the extreme right hand side of the entrance, one for Persian books and the other for non-Persian books. At present the book stack for non-Persian books is occupied by the general stack of the library. Cataloguing section, technical section and administrative section have also been located between the two book stacks. Librarian's office is also located at the end of a narrow corridor in this area. In nut shell, the building is so constructed that the big hall can easily altered as per requirement, without affecting the basic layout.

Next to the main entrance, a large staircase leads to the other semi-floors. The first floor has been planned with some single research carrels, some rooms for administrative work and a large space for periodical section. At present, this floor is completely occupied by other administrative departments. This floor, which has the capacity of almost half of the space of the ground floor, is quiet and can be used for various library activities. The third floor has also been planned with various large rooms covering space equivalent to one third of the total area of the library building. Presently this floor has also been occupied by vari-

ous administrative departments.

A very large space, which is beautifully designed for the conference room, is located on the basement of the library building. The entrance of the conference room is from outside the library building. Thus, it does not disturb the library users during the working hours of the library. This part is totally based on artificial light. Suitable and modern equipments for providing light, ventilation, heating, cooling and sound proof facilities have been installed in the conference room. There is also another relatively large space under the conference room which is used as a store.

The significant drawbacks of this library building are as follows:

- (i) Horizontal and vertical expansion is not possible.
- (ii) The reading hall which, remains exposed to east and south has to bear excessive heat in summer.
- (iii) Since too much glass has been used in the exterior part of the library, it is very hot during summer season and very cold during winter.
- (iv) Too much space of the library building has been occupied by the administrative departments, which is not appropriate.
- (v) Although the building is sound

proof, yet during rush hours there is too much sound pollution within the library.

(vi) The librarian's room is so located that he can not supervise the working of various sections of the library conveniently. Moreover, he is not easily accessible to the library users.

5.7. Shahid Beheshti University Library

Although the central library of this university came into being in 1961, yet according to Azar Nik Anjam (6: 75) the blossoming of the library into its new home came in 1970. This library building is centrally located in the university campus. It is located in a walking distance from all teaching departments, as well as the students' hostels. The two storey rectangular shaped library building covers a carpet area of 4,000 Sq. Meters. It can be expanded horizontally without affecting the external appearance of the existing building. The modular library building is so constructed that the large space within the building can be changed conveniently as per needs, without affecting the basic layout. The orientation of the building is east-west, allowing adequate sunlight in various sections of the library. The building is surrounded by tall trees

and green lawns, providing a beautiful environment for the library.

The main entrance of the library is much higher than the main street near it. The main entrance opens to a large hall fitted with study chairs and tables in the middle. Just in front of the entrance, circulation desk is located. Public catalogue is also located near the circulation desk. A small lift for the books is also installed within the book stack tower, which carries the books from the basement of the library building. The reference section is located on the right hand side of the hall. It is beautifully decorated with wooden furniture, providing a calm, quiet and attractive space for the users.

On the left hand side of the entrance, cataloguing section and next to it audio visual section are located. The only staircase to the second floor is located on the right hand side of the hall. Next to the stair case are located the acquisition section, technical section and some other administrative rooms. Photocopy room and toilets are also located near the staircase.

The main staircase leads to a large hall on the second floor. Periodical section which covers almost most of the second floor is on the right hand side. It is divided to the space for cur-

rent periodicals and back issues of periodicals, reports, manuscripts, theses and also space for the library users. There is also proper arrangement of lighting and ventilation in this section. Reading room for female users is on the right hand side of the hall. On the left hand side of the staircase, librarian's room and rooms for administrative works are also located. Reading hall for the male users and computer room are located on the opposite side of the staircase.

The basement of the building is earmarked for book stacks, general stack and room for heating and cooling equipments. Books are transferred to circulation counter through a small lift, which is installed in the book stack tower. The basement is also accessible from the outside of the library building.

About 30 years ago, when the present building was constructed no one could think of a sudden and unprecedented spurt in the population of students, teachers and research scholars during later times. But at present such a well-designed library building lacks the required space. Therefore, some parts of the library building have been changed for other library activities. Moreover, due to space problems a

very large multi floor building close to the present building has been constructed too.

Some of the major drawbacks of the present library building are as under:

(i) Mutual location of the book stacks and reading halls has forced the librarian to use closed-stack system, which is not much beneficial for library services as well as the users.

(ii) The reading halls meant for male and female readers are located on the first floor while the public catalogues and circulation counter are located on the ground floor. This arrangement is not very convenient for the library users.

(iii) Some space of the library, especially the large entrance hall and the one on the first floor have not been allocated for any library activity.

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