**Introduction :-**

The public library a local gateway to knowledge provides a basic condition for life long learning independent decision making and culture development of the individual and social groups.

The public library is a practical demonstration of democracy’s faith in Universal education as a combining and lifelong process in the appreciation of the achievement of humanity in knowledge and culture. The public library is the principle means whereby and the record of man’s thoughts and ideas and the expression of his creative imagination are made freely available to all. A public library serves as to assemble, preserve and administer books and related educational materials in organized collection, in order to promote through guidance and stimulation an enlightened citizenship and enriched lives.

According to the Maharashtra Public Libraries Act 1967. The ‘A’ grade library or Native libraries should have their own building is which more than 15000 books should be available and subscribe 50 periodicals every year at least 15 News papers should come in the library government gives a special grant for adequate collection to its users. Trained library staff and organize cultural programmes, for their users.

The first step in the library movement in Maharashtra was taken in 1804 with the foundation of the Literary Society. On 26\(^{th}\) November 1804 Europeans of Bombay met at the Governor’s House, Parel and formed themselves into the ‘Literary Society of Bombay’ for the purpose of promoting useful knowledge, particularly connected with India.

In 31\(^{st}\) December 1804, the Governor in council at Bombay Mr. Jonathan Duncan presented the society two copies as a contribution towards the formation of a library of the Literary society of Bombay and thus the idea of establishment of library of the society Bombay got accelerated. For this purpose the society purchased the Medical and Literary Library of Dr. Scott which was in bad condition. The society appointed a committee for reporting the condition of Medical and Literary Bombay.

Very few books were purchased since the purchase of Medical and Literary library. The president, Sir James Mackintosh (Literary Society of Bombay) therefore on 28\(^{th}\) May 1810 proposed to spend some amount from the balance of Rs. 15’000/- with the society, for
purchasing books. This proposal was accepted and 175 titles in 500 volumes including encyclopedias, dictionaries, sets of some magazines and review in Philosophy, Medicine, Literature and popular publications

Including newspapers both in English and French and also Indian newspapers were acquired for the society’s reading room in 1812.

The rules for the regulation of the library were approved on 27 October 1812. The rules were related to library’s membership issuing of books and periodicals and stock taking.

The library started working in full swing from 1813. Additions of new publication were added each year to library collection from England. The library received gifts of books from the government of Bombay from time to time.

At the beginning the library had 17 members. In 1820 it had 83 members, 30 subscribers and 39 non-resident members. All the members were Europeans.

In 1827 sir John Malcom, the President, suggested that Literary Society of Bombay should join hands for the pursuit of knowledge with the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland which had been started in London in 1823. This suggestion was taken up and name of society was changed into ‘Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society of great Britain and Ireland.’

A library is a growing organism and for working it requires increasing accommodation. Sir James Mackintosh anticipated these requirements and therefore he pleaded the government for allotting

Apartments in the Town Hall to the Literary Society for its library and for holding their meetings. For this purpose society gave Rs. 10,000/- as a contribution. In 1830 the rooms in the town Hall were allotted to the Literary Society of Bombay and the society’s office and the library moved to the new building on 26th November 1830. The station Libraries :-

During 1805 – 1830 libraries were established outside Bombay also. The British Government established civil and military stations in Bombay presidency after defeating the Maratha rulers in 1818. Libraries established at the civil and military stations such as Surat,
Poona, Baroda, Bhuj, Ratagiri, Disa, Sholapur, Ahmednagar, Rajkot, Ahmedabad may be considered as a second landmark in the development of library movement in the Bombay presidency.

These libraries were established by British officers and servants residing at the civil and military stations. These libraries were established from the inspiration of the Literary Society of Bombay and its library. All the members of these libraries were Europeans, mostly servants of the British Government. No Indian was a member of these libraries up to 1830.