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Sh. M L Kachroo: A Legend of School of Library Science, DLA

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Delhi Library Association is one of the oldest Library Associations in India. This article is a tribute to the doyen of Indian Librarianship, Sh. M L Kachroo, whose career in librarianship spanned over seven decades (1953-2023). The concept of death and life is always a topic of discussion in religion. According to many intellects life and death are two sides of the same coin. Many people consider death to be the end of life. Our personal opinion is that the body of any human being is destroyed but his/her work is always alive in this universe. The work done by a person in his/her life in this vast universe is always recorded, in other words, those works remain alive in this universe, and knowledge has a significant place in human life.

In earlier times, the Guru used to impart knowledge to his disciples in the most efficient manner. Intellectuals have, thus, stored and passed on valuable knowledge from one generation to the another. The successful preservation and execution of this has been made possible with the essential contribution made by the libraries.

Certain names will always be remembered in the society for their invaluable contribution to the society. Society always need knowledgeable, skilled, experienced, trained and efficient people to manage education, traditions and libraries which can guide others with their competence, leadership and humanity. Today, we discuss the life of one of these in the line of multifaceted, humble and talented teachers of Library & Information Science - Sh. Makhan Lal Kachroo or Sh. M L Kachroo whose mortal body left this world on 28th September 2023, but the work done by him is still there today and will remain for times to come.

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Sh. Kachroo was one of the greatest and most eminent men of Indian Librarianship & a legend of the School of Library Science, Delhi Library Association. He was a down-to-earth person, a good teacher, administrator and leader of Library Science in India. We began with the use of the phrase 'Legend' for Sh. Makhan Lal Kachroo. As per the Cambridge Dictionary, a legend is 'someone very famous and admired, usually because of their ability in a particular area.'¹

We believe that Sh. Kachroo was a very successful teacher, a good administrator, a humble leader of the library movement in India and the founder of an institution, the School of Library Science, Delhi Library Association. He can be seen as similar to many other famous Directors of the School of Library Science, Delhi Library Association such as Late Prof. S. Das Gupta, the first University Librarian Delhi University & Prof. & Head of Department of Library Science, Delhi University who was also the first Director of School of Library Science 1955-1961, Late Sh. N.M. Ketkar, Librarian, Central Secretariat Library (CSL), New Delhi, Late T.S. Rajagopalan, Ex. Scientist In-Charge, INSDOC, New Delhi, Prof. Krishan Kumar, Dean, Arts Faculty, University of Delhi & Head Department of Library and Information Science Delhi University, Late Sh. H.C. Jain, DULS Delhi, Sh. Shahbuddin Ansari, Professor and Head, Department of Library & Information Science & University Librarian Dr. Zakir Hussain Library, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, Dr. Usha Mujoo Munshi, Chief Librarian Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi. Sh. Kachroo was Director from 2016-2022.

BIRTH AND EDUCATION

Sh. Kachroo was born on 27th February 1930 (though his official record states his birth date as 12th March 1930) in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir as the eldest son of Sh. Nand Lal Kachroo and Smt. Radha Kachroo. His initial schooling was from National High School at Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir. He graduated in Science from Amar Singh College Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir in 1950. He did Diploma in Library Science from Delhi University Institute of Library Science now Department of Library & Information Science and M.A. (History) from Meerut University in 1969. He was the student of known gurus - Padmashree Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, Father of the Indian Library Profession, Prof S. Dasgupta, the first University Librarian & Head of Department, Institute of Library Science of the University of Delhi and a legend of Library Science and of Padmashree Prof. P. N. Kaula.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER

Sh. Kachroo started his professional career as a Junior Technical Assistant in the Delhi University Library System and worked there from May 1952 to

September 1952. He was appointed as Librarian, Publication Division, M/o Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India. He joined INSDOC in June 1960 as a Senior Documentation Assistant and superannuated as a Documentation Officer (E2) in 1990. During his career, he worked as a Junior Technical Assistant in the Delhi University Library System in 1952 under Prof S. Dasgupta, in INSDOC under Padmashree Sh. B. S. Kesavan, Prof. S. Parthasarathy and Sh. T. S. Rajagopalan. During these 30 years in INSDOC, he was actively associated with the teaching and training programmes, and in various bibliographical projects, policy-making committees of the Centre, national and international liaison cell, marketing of information products, and also the coordinator of its Regional Centres.

TEACHING CAREER



First Batch (1955-56) of Certificate Course of Library Science. Sitting (L to R), M L Kachroo (Second), S Das Gupta (Fourth), P N Kaula (Fifth)

As per Annual Report of DLA a sub-committee was appointed on 31st January 1954 to draw up a plan for the certificate course. The sub-committee made its recommendations to the Executive Committee on 25th April 1954. On 8th March 1955, the first Certificate Course of Library Science, School of Library Science, Delhi Library Association was started by Prof. S Das Gupta (Director of the Course) and Prof. P N Kaula (Registrar of the School) inaugurated by Honourable AAA Fyzee, Member of Union Public Service Commission and Dr S R Ranganathan presided over the function at Hardinge Public Library nowadays Hardayal Municipal Library. M L Kachroo served as a faculty of the School from 1955-2012 in the School of Library Science, Delhi Library Association since its inception and proved to be a teacher par excellence in the subject of cataloging theory and practice.

Under his able guidance many of his students of his later famous LIS professional chose a career in Library Science viz., Sardar Joginder Singh,

Director of American Centre Library, Mr. Tara Chand Jain, Ex. University Librarian, Jawaharlal Nehru Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, Jabalpur, Dr. R K Sharma, Ex. Director General of Delhi Public Library, Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India, Delhi, Dr. Narender Kumar, Ex. University Librarian of Delhi University and IIT Delhi, Dr. S K Bajpai present Principal, School of Library Science, Delhi Library Association, Dr. Nirmal Kumar Khatri, Ex. Associate Scientist, Indian Statistical Institute and many others.

MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL BODIES

Sh. Kachroo was a Life Member of the Indian Library Association, Delhi Library Association, etc.

ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONAL BODIES

Sh. Kachroo was associated with the compilation of the Union Catalogue of Learned Periodical Publications in South Asia (a joint ILA/ UNESCO Project) under the stewardship of Dr. S R Ranganathan.

ROLE IN NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL BODIES

Sh. Kachroo was elected General Secretary of the Indian Library Association (1990-1992). He was actively involved as a functionary in the IFLA Conference held in New Delhi in 1992 to celebrate Ranganathan's Birth Centenary. He was a member of the Auxiliary Staff assigned by the Government of India Liaison Officer for the FID Conference on the Application of Science & Technology to the Development of Asia held in New Delhi in 1968.

CONFERENCES, SEMINARS, AND WORKSHOPS

Sh. Kachroo regularly participated in various local, national, and international conferences and seminars organized by various professional Associations and organizations viz. DLA, ILA, IASLIC, DRTC, INSDOC, SIS, etc. At the international level, he represented India in Mass Communication Conference held in Bangkok in 1975. In 1983 he attended 7th FID/CAO Conference at Jogjakarta (Indonesia) and presented a paper on the Document Delivery System at the National level-Indian Experiences.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

In recognition of his admirable service to the School of Library Science on the occasion of its Golden Jubilee Celebrations year on 10 March 2004, Sh. Kachroo was awarded the DLA BEST TEACHER AWARD in 2015 at the School of Library Science, DLA on the occasion of its Diamond Jubilee Celebration.



Left to Right: Prof. K P Singh, Dr. R K Sharma & Sh. Kachroo

Delhi Library Association honored him with the DLA Life Time Award 2016 on 10th March 2017 at DLA in its Annual Day Function.

DELHI LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Delhi Library Association was founded on 10th March 1939 and registered under the Societies Act xxi of 1860, with Registration Number 161/1940-41. After adopting a constitution and providing rules and regulations for conducting its affairs, it was registered in May 1940. Its founder President Sir John Philip Sargent, (born Dec. 27, 1888—died Feb. 13, 1972), British statesman and educator served as an educational commissioner with the Government of India (1938–42), educational adviser to the Government of India (1943–48), and Secretary of the Education Department of India (1945–48), Government of India. Its Senior Vice President was Rai Bahadur Dr. Ram Kishore, the then Vice-Chancellor of Delhi University. Mr. Fasiuddin Ahmed, Publisher and Proprietor of Urdu newspaper and Secretary, Hardinge Public Library, Queen's Garden, Delhi -110006 was the first Secretary (1939-53) of the Delhi Library Association. Renowned freedom fighter, Mrs Aruna Asaf Ali and Lala Sri Ram, the founder of SRCC and LSR College were its founder members.²

As a result of the partition of the country in 1947 and other political developments, the Association went into hibernation. It was revived again in 1953 by the first chief minister of Delhi, Chaudhary Brahm Prakash (1918–1993) who became the second President. The first Librarian of Delhi University Prof S Dasgupta became the Vice President, Prof. P N Kaula the General Secretary, and others who all played an important role. The Association has the following sixfold objectives:

1. To promote the library movement in Delhi.
2. To provide training facilities in library science.
3. To strengthen cooperation among libraries in Delhi and work for the

improvement of library service.

4. To improve the status and the working conditions of persons employed in the libraries
5. To take up publication work in library science
6. To co-operate with other organizations having similar objectives.³



**Left to Right Prof. Vashishth, Mr. M. L. Kachroo and Dr. Sahib Singh Verma
(Ex. CM Delhi)**

ROLE IN DLA

As per various reports and Accounts 1960-2021 of Delhi Library Association, it is found that Mr. Kachroo's DLA life membership was LM/87. He was an Executive Committee Member of Delhi Library Association (from 1966 to 28.09.2023 i.e. till his death), President of Delhi Library Association (2005-2007), Secretary of Delhi Library Association (1967-1968), Treasurer of Delhi Library Association (from 2001 to 2005 & 2007-2011).



Fourth from left to right sitting in first row Sh. Kachroo with students & faculty of School of Library Sc. in 1970s

ROLE IN SCHOOL OF LIBRARY SCIENCE

Education and Training in Library Science have been one of the top objectives of the Association. As a result of the Mudaliar Commission

Recommendation, all secondary schools were required to appoint Librarians. Hence, there was an urgency to start a course in Library Science. Foreseeing the heavy demand for library-trained personnel, the Executive Committee of the Association resolved to start a Certificate Course in Library Science of one year's duration in late 1954.⁴ Mr. Kachroo started honorary teaching at the School of Library Science in March 1955 till 2012. He also became Honorary Registrar, of the School of Library Science from 1966⁵ to 2016 and from 01.04.2022 to 28.10.2023 till his death, and Director of the School of Library Science from 01.04.2016 to 31.03.2022.

As Honorary Registrar, of the School of Library Science he started a Six Months Diploma in Library & Information Technology (DLIT) course at Delhi Library Association in April 2003. All the examinations along with their results were always on time.

Delhi Library Association got land from DDA mainly due to the efforts of Kumari Shanta Vashisht, the then President of DLA and Member of Parliament (1960-1972)⁶, Sri C S Krishnamurti, Sri N K Goil, etc. The building was constructed due to the efforts of the trio of Delhi Library Association, Prof C P Vashisth, Treasurer, Sh. H C Jain, General Secretary & Mr. M L Kachroo Honorary Registrar, School of Library Science. For several years, Delhi Library Association conducted its affairs from the premises of the Harding Public Library, Queen's Garden, Delhi-6 now at present Hardayal Municipal Public Library, Gandhi Ground, Delhi-110006. During the 1980s it constructed its building on a plot of land measuring 0.44 acres in the Naraina Vihar area in South-West Delhi. The Association moved to its building, Ranganathan Bhawan in 1989, and its first floor was constructed under Mr. M L Kachroo as the Treasurer of the Association (2004).⁷

As Treasurer of Delhi Library Association (2001-2005) he knew that the financial stability was largely due to the training programmes and other projects being conducted by the Association. Under the guidance of Prof. C P Vashisth, they repeated their own experience of Indian Library Association as General Secretary. He handed over a good amount to his successor at DLA as he had done at Indian Library Association. His contributions as President, Treasurer of DLA, and General Secretary of ILA & DLA make him unforgettable to the Library Science Profession.

Sh. M. L. Kachroo left for his heavenly abode on 28th September 2023 at the age of 93. A Prayer meeting in the memory of Sh. Kachroo was conducted on 7th October 2023 in Samavar, Pamposh Enclave, GK-1, New Delhi. Senior professionals of Library Science, NISCAIR and other institutions paid their tribute to him.

The human body is mortal. Everybody who is born has to leave this universe but some people leave their permanent imprints on our mind and soul. Sh. Kachroo will be missed by all his ex-students, colleagues, and well-

wishers forever. It is very difficult to fill the vacuum created by the departure of such a down-to-earth person, a good teacher, administrator and leader of Library Science. It is our pleasure that under his leadership, we worked together as the Faculty of School of Library Science, EC member, Secretary & General Secretary. Sh. M L Kachroo's name will be remembered as a **Legend of the School of Library Science** as an outstanding and popular teacher in the library world for guiding the successive generations of young librarians.

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