

## WELCOME TO THE LIBRARY – A SOURCE AND HOME OF KNOWLEDGE AND CULTURE!

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### Abstract

This article explores the pivotal role of libraries as essential institutions for the dissemination of knowledge and the preservation of cultural heritage. It examines the historical evolution of libraries and their transformation into modern centers of learning and community engagement. The study highlights the various functions of contemporary libraries, including their support for education, access to information, and promotion of cultural diversity.

**Keywords:** Information dissemination, Community engagement, Lifelong learning, Cultural heritage, Digital libraries, Technological advancements, Educational support, Access to information, Digital divide, Library programs, Modern libraries, Library services.

The word "library" originates from the Arabic "kutub," meaning "books," and the Persian "xona," meaning "house," which together translate to "house of books." In modern terms, it signifies a "place where information is gathered." Historically, the efforts to develop libraries and create convenience for users have been the fruits of the labor of our ancestors, whose achievements have reached us across the centuries. As we delve into the history of libraries, we learn that great kings and statesmen with plans to conquer other lands first sought to study libraries and the information within them. Our renowned ancestors, such as Abu Rayhan Biruni, Abu Ali Ibn Sina, al-Khwarizmi, Imam al-Bukhari, Nasafi, and countless other scholars, could not be imagined without books and libraries.

Today, I would like to briefly introduce you, dear readers, to the activities of the Sayido Nasafiy Regional Information and Library Center and the Information and Library Collections Preservation Service located at the very center of our region.

Looking back at the history of the establishment of the Sayido Nasafiy Regional Information and Library Center, the library was founded in 1943. It has been operating for over half a century. Y. Ch. Khoroshilova was its first head. In 1964, the Kashkadarya region separated from the Surkhandarya region, and in 1980, the library moved to its current building. Initially, the library was named after Maxim Gorky. After Uzbekistan gained independence, the efforts and tireless work of the experienced library director Shomurod Mahmatkulov led to the renaming of the library after the poet Sayido Nasafiy. Since its establishment, the library has had eight directors.

The Sayido Nasafiy Regional Information and Library Center was reconstructed in 2020-2021 on the initiative of the governor of the Kashkadarya region. Today, the library operates with seven services and seven sectors. Annually, the library acquires over 2,000 new publications and more than 55 periodicals, continually enriching its collection.

The Sayido Nasafiy Regional Information and Library Center is a cultural, educational, and scientific institution that ensures public access to printed and electronic works. It regularly collects, preserves, promotes, and delivers these works to readers, conducts information and bibliography work, actively enhances public cultural literacy, and provides scientific and methodological assistance throughout the region.

Dear Readers, now I will talk about the activities of the Information and Library Collections Preservation Service, which carefully preserves the main collections of the regional information and library center. This service is located in the basement of the regional information and library center building, and its primary activity is preservation. The service employs seven librarian specialists. The preservation collection currently holds 222,000 copies of books, 7,022 sets of newspapers, 5,624 copies of journals, and over 300 disks and records. These materials are made available to users based on their requests through the relevant service sectors of the regional information and library center.

The collection includes rare books from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as newspapers and journals published in Uzbek, Russian, and Tajik from the 1950s during the Soviet era, which are organized and preserved alphabetically and by year on shelves. This facilitates the work of independent researchers, professors, scholars, and readers interested in history who serve our people with their articles and scientific works. In 2023 and the first half of 2024, under the initiative of the current director, G. Tursunova, more than 700 issues of 38 different newspapers published in the Kashkadarya region were bound. These bound newspapers were organized alphabetically and by year in the collection, greatly improving usability for press users.

The preservation collection includes literature in Uzbek, Russian, world languages, and other languages. The materials are organized on shelves by subject area and form, with subject and alphabetical indicators, which help the service specialists fulfill user requests more quickly. The preservation service also allocates retro collections (books, journals, newspapers) to the ICT and digitization service for digitization, enabling users to access information online. In collaboration with librarians from the Republic and regions, electronic services have been established to provide users with literature and information not available in the regional information and library center.

Our primary goal as librarian specialists is to fully meet your information and literature needs as much as possible and to assist you in selecting the necessary literature.

Dear readers and patrons, do not hesitate to visit the Sayido Nasafiy Regional Information and Library Center, where dedicated and devoted professionals await you. Welcome!