

Importance of Rural Public Library in Their Service to Rural Population: A Study of Maharashtra State

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ABSTRACT

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The paper focuses on the role of rural library as community information Centre in the development of rural masses in various areas such as educational, cultural, socio-economic and political, and to know the present status of the public libraries in Maharashtra state. Paper also highlights the services should be provided by the rural library as community information Centre.

Keywords : Rural library, Community Information Centre, Rural Development, Public Library, Community Information Service

I. INTRODUCTION

In perception of Indian context, majority of Indian reside in rural areas and engaged in agriculture and small scale industry. Illiteracy is curse for a social, cultural, economic development of the country and it leads poverty. Therefore, development of the country total depends on the improvements of the rural masses; hence development of the rural masses can be achieved by resolving the problems of the rural masses. Information is considered as an inevitable tool for the development of the any society. It is a fundamental resource for all intellectual activities, cultural, socio, economic and political development of the society. In the development of rural areas rural libraries has a pivotal role by offering information dissemination services based upon knowledge for various public groups, on social, political, economic, cultural and other matters. Rural libraries play very dominant role in the welfare of the rural masses.

Rural library can act as community information Centre to improve living condition and quality of life by fulfilling each and every information need, those which are assist individual for their day to day problem solving. The UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1994) declares that constructive participation and the development of democracy depends on satisfactory education as well as on free and unlimited access to knowledge, thought, culture and information. Ensuring access to citizens to all sorts of Community information services and facilitating the development of information and computer literacy skills have been included in the missions of the manifesto.

II. NEED FOR RURAL LIBRARIES

Like other basic need of the people, information is another basic requirement. But the people those who are living in rural areas they are far away from attain

of basic information needs. To improve quality of life and potential of the rural people to participate in knowledge based society there is a need of rural library. Rural library plays a vital role for the spread of knowledge and information to the rural community. For the benefit of rural people and to support the rural activities, there is a need of rural libraries with all the required facilities. Rural libraries help to the rural community keeping fresh their knowledge by providing needed information of the rural community. Thus there is a need of rural library which are useful for uplift for rural community.

III. COMMUNITY INFORMATION CENTRE

Community Information is that which assist individual and groups with daily problem-solving and with participation in the democratic process. The services focus on the needs of people those who do not have ready access to other sources of assistance and on the most important problems that people have to look, problems to do with their day to day activity, home, job opportunities and their rights. Hence community information service may be referred as a optimistic decision to concentrate on enabling people in overall development of the community, particularly those in inferior socio-economic group to act either individually or collectively on their problems in several respects such as housing, employment, family and personnel matter, agricultural, consumer affairs, house hold, transportation, civil rights etc.

DEFINING COMMUNITY INFORMATION CENTREA

Community Information Centre is a place where members of a community can

- Locate Information about subjects of interest to them,
- Take Part in learning activities, Discussion and share knowledge, information and concerns with extension and other community workers,

- Planners and administrators. Find Materials to help them retain their literacy and numeracy skills,
- Meet to organize and work together on community projects,
- Use equipment to produce their own information materials, Enjoy culture and leisure activities.

Importance of Rural Public Library in their Service to Rural Population:

Provide information and activities which will help community members acquire the skill, knowledge and confidence to participate more fully in community affairs,

- Provide information and activities about health and agricultural techniques, business etc, to assist community to improve their economic situation,
- Provide a forum through which governments and other agency workers can be informed about concerns, problems and reactions of community members to their plans and programs,
- Provide support to extension programmers and help extension workers to co-ordinate their work in the community,
- Strengthen a community's involvement in and appreciation of local and national culture, Serve as a focal point for communities activities and enhance a sense of belonging among community members.

Present Scenario of Rural Libraries in Maharashtra:

With a view to universalize the right of reading Maharashtra Public Libraries Act has come into force in 1965 and enacted the same thereby laying a sound foundation for the growth of public libraries in this state. The then Maharashtra Library Association worked hard in the direction of bringing the Maharashtra Public Library Act into force with the accelerated motivation of the popular opinion. The efforts made by the then education minister Sri S.R.Kanthi and Dr. S.R. Ranganathan proved

successful in implementing the Library Act in this state. Today, as far as the development of public libraries is concerned it has achieved remarkable progress in the state. The Maharashtra State is one of those few states in the forefront in view of the public library system in the country as a whole. The department of public library in Maharashtra has rendered 48 years of salutary service by installing a network of libraries throughout the state. The Department is, by way of offering library facilities striding fast from the capital towards the villages in the direction of evoking an intellectual revolution among the people by instilling in the common man an active interest for reading. As far as the acts of Public Libraries and establishment of Libraries is concerned, Maharashtra is the 3rd state in the country to establish libraries. The Act facilitates establishment and maintenance of libraries in rural areas. Important feature of act fact is provides provision for collection of libraris through property tax.

The present situation of the public libraries in Maharashtra are - 1 State Central Library, 1 Indira Priyadarshini Children's Library, 1 Public Technical Library, 27 District Central Library, 19 City Central Library, 14 Mobile Libraries, 490 Branch Libraries, 107 Service Stations, 31 Reading Rooms, 5766 Gram Panchayat Libraries, 21 Aided Libraries, 200 Slum Libraries and 600 Reading Rooms in Slum Areas.

There are 5766 numbers of gram panchayat libraries working in the state. As against 5766 number of gram panchayat, gram panchayat libraries have been established in 5766 gram panchayats. Besides the manpower to manage the gram panchayat library, it is the responsibility of the department to provide infrastructure facilities like buildings, furniture, water, light and such others.

Rural Library as a Community Information Centre:-

Rural library itself is a community information centre and it has the obligation to provide community information those which assist individual for their day to day problems. Public library has always been viewed as an important entity in a local community

development and empowerment process, particularly in a rural and disadvantaged community. It has been established as a crucial element in the life of community members, as it provides information that is essential for the community progress.

Services of rural libraries as community information Centre:

To provide basic needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, health, drinking water etc.

- To fulfill economic, educational, social and cultural information needs of the local people;
- To eradicate illiteracy by providing audiovisual and illustrated reading materials;
- To provide government information, such as government schemes, welfare schemes for below poverty lines, voter lists etc.
- To provide agricultural information such as crops, fertilizers, pesticides, seeds, weather forecasts, credit societies agricultural equipment's, soil testing, water supply and irrigation.
- To provide information about animal husbandry, dairying and fisheries.
- To provide information about funding agencies for housing, commerce, agriculture and industries,
- To provide information to the gram panchayat members about schemes available from each and every sectors,
- To provide information on career opportunities for the students

Guiding, counseling, directing on all matters relating to public such as hygiene, family planning, legal matters, etc;

- Local professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, engineers, educationists, artisans, ect.
- Census information, which includes population, literacy percentage, male, female ratio etc,

IV. CONCLUSION

- To provide needed information to the rural women. There should be a system in the rural areas where women can access, acquire needed information without any hesitation.
- To provide information to the labors, such as wage rates, welfare organizations, welfare funds, education for their children, housing schemes, social security, insurance, medical facilities, the prevention of diseases, labour laws etc.
- To analyze the village community and its basic component groups with their characteristic features and behavior;
- Addresses of important persons, institutions and organizations
- Local places of tourists attraction and facilities
- To provide information to the senior citizen, such as social security, legal actions for protection against harassments by adult children, national policies on older people, old age homes etc.
- General information on state and the country
- Addresses of important persons, institutions and organizations,
- To identify the discrepancy between the services provided and the real needs of the users, etc;
- Court case information.
- Immunization programmes Astrology
- Meetings fair and festivals
- Yellow pages
- Vocational education programmes
- Arranging exhibitions, book displays, etc
- Births, deaths and marriages
- Welfare rights
- Legal aids
- Adult literacy classes
- Children's immunization programmes
- Festival celebrations and other events
- Cooperate with NGOs
- Rights of disadvantaged
- Folk stories
- Reports from the panchayat leaders about their functioning policy decisions, etc

The status of public library system as the community information centre in rural community is the new role and it is good chance for public librarians to work in such a challenge context. Public librarians should have more keen interest and cooperation with communities to find the discrepancy between services provided and real needs of the community people. In Maharashtra rural society the personal relationship is still important and people are still friendly and optimist. Public librarians must get this good point to be a chance to encourage library services to grassroots level.

act as a torch bearer to the progress of the entire society. Hence is the need for public libraries to reconsider their objectives and role as community information centre and come forward to act as centres for the hub of community development activities. This calls public libraries to make maximum use of the advantages of information and communication technologies to develop digital resources, to facilitate access to world wide information to reach the unreached in addition to strengthening their existing resources and services. This further establishes greater need for inter library co-operation and resources sharing through networking.

Community information centre is one that is established, maintained and fostered for the overall development of the entire community. It is meant not only to facilitate information needs of the community, but act as a torch bearer to the progress of the entire society. Hence is the need for public libraries to reconsider their objectives and role as community information centre and come forward to act as centres for the hub of community development activities. This calls public libraries to make maximum use of the advantages of information and communication technologies to develop digital resources, to facilitate access to world wide information to reach the unreached in addition to strengthening their existing resources and services.

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