

Developing Library Culture in Rural Areas by strengthening Community Information Services in Karnataka State: A Study

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ABSTRACT

The public library has performed this role effectively and now it has penetrated into villages in the form of village libraries, rural information centres or grampanchayat libraries. There are 5766 numbers of gram panchayat libraries working in the state. As against 5766 number of grampanchayat, gram panchayat libraries have been established. But not much has happened in the grampanchayatlibraries , the library confined in one room in most of the gram panchayats and reading materials are only local language books , serials only magazine and newspapers, recent initiatives by the public library dept. and rural development and panchayat raj to develop library culture among rural mass is gaining momentum and also a better result for this initiative is coming up. This paper overviews the development happened and gap found and how to overcome with suitable measures.

Key words: Public Library, Rural Mass, Community Information Service, Digital.

Introduction:

India is a land of rural masses and agriculture and allied activities are the backbone of our country. The development of rural mass is challenge for any nation, since they are deprived of facilities mainly lack of literacy, poverty, shelter , clothing. Illiteracy is a chronic problem which is effecting on the social, economic , political, cultural development of the country. The development of rural mass depends on how to provide basic information and literacy for them, and this can be achieved by a institution called library which equally treats all with out any difference. The public library has performed this role effectively and now it has penetrated into villages in the form of village libraries, rural information centres or grampanchayat libraries. At the local level this can act as community information services providers by catering the information needs of that particular area people in day-to-day activities.

Review of Literature:

In their survey on gram panchayat library system Anupama and Tadsad, (2009) found that initiation part of Department of of Public Library and active participation of rural librarians has made active grampanchayat libraries in Hyderabad Karnatak Region of Karnataka.

(Bopape and et. Al , 2017)In their study found that the most basic information that users of these public libraries need include career guidance, educational programmes, health information and crime-prevention information. Therefore, education seems to be the predominant factor that triggers people to use public libraries.

Kumbar and Lamini (2014) suggested that the public libraries should take 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.

Sharma(2013) in his survey found that most of the farmers (45, 58.75%) visit the library to sit and read. Farmers can greatly enhance their agricultural yield by implementing and utilizing information related to agriculture that was available in the village library. But it was found that 220 (67.9%) farmers did not visit library. The major reason for this is lack of awareness about library and its services. Awareness programs about library and its importance can help convert non-users to regular users of the library.

Majumder(2016) Suggested that the librarians must have an active role in providing appropriate guidance and services to the members of the community. They must build more cooperation with communities to find their real needs.

India Public Library scenario:

India attained freedom in 1947 and became a Republic in 1950. To facilitate administrations, it now has a National Capital Region of Delhi, 28 States and 6 Union Territories after Independence. Even before Independence, Kolhapur Princely State, in the Western India passed Public Libraries Act in 1945.

Public Library Legislation:

In Tamil Nadu 1948, Andhra 1960, Karnataka 1965, Maharashtra 1967, West Bengalo 1979, Manipur, Lakshadweep in 1988, Haryana 1989, Kerala 1989, Goa 1993, are states brought out Public Library act before 2000. Among new states puducherry has adopted but still half of the states have not gone for the public library legislation.

Karnataka:

The Mysore State was formed in 1956. On 1st November 1973 the name Mysore was changed to Karnataka. Karnataka was fortunate enough to have Dr S R Ranganathan, the doyen of library and information science, residing in Bengaluru. He initiated the establishment of the Mysore Library Association. This Association organized the Karnataka Library Conference in 1958, and passed a resolution to have library legislation in the State. The Association followed up the action vigorously and got the Bill passed in the Legislative Assembly on 22nd April 1965. Karnataka has many specialties under the Public Library System. There is a separate Public Technical Library in Peenya, which is the first of its kind in the country. It has State Central Library at the apex and 26 City Central Libraries, 27 District Central Libraries and Mobile Libraries, besides large number of other libraries.

Gram Panchayat Libraries in Karnataka:

There are 5766 numbers of gram panchayat libraries working in the state. As against 5766 number of grampanchayat, gram panchayat libraries have been established.

The source of income for grampanchayat libraries is through the govt. fund and administration is looked after by Dept. of Public Libraries. Recently the Karnataka govt has passed order that the grampanchayatlibraries has to be maintained by Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Dept. of the Govt. of Karnataka.

In recent years due to dynamic leadership of director of public libraries in Karnataka the public libraries are becoming more visible to common people. They have upgraded the district central libraries, city central libraries with new infrastructure, setting up of browsing ICT centre, separate children community centres, and also separate competitive examination corner for civil service aspirants.

But not much has happened in the grampanchayatlibraries , the library confined in one room in most of the gram panchayats and reading materials are only local language books , serials only magazine and newspaper . The basic facility provided by the grampanchayat library is that they offer membership for any person over 12 years and can become the member , no lending facility but by depositing Rs. 21/- three books can be borrowed and same to returned within fifteen days, working hours of the library is also shift based and only for six hour duration, it is closed on all Monday and second Tuesday of the month and all Govt. holidays.

Initiative by a PDO in grampanchyat of Hardanahalli village, Mysuru District

The real essence lies in way to serve the society, public servant has more responsibility and opportunity to deliver the service. If an individual has the passion to do some-thing different other than the routine work. It certainly deliver the result. This is the real case happened in a small village in mysore district.

ThePanchayat Development Officer(PDO) took the initiative to make the village hygiene and got the award under swachhbharathabhiyan in 2018 a sum of Rs. 10 lakh by building 800 toilets in six villages of grampanchayat region. Half of the amount he dedicated to set up digital library in the village

The digital library, set up in a 400 square feet room, serves many functions, Equipped with five computers, one projector, all-day internet access and power backup, not only does it allow students of different ages to access over 1,000 e-books on various subjects. They also have staff who teach primary school students how to use computers, and provide guidance for those who want to pursue higher studies. Students here started learning English from the 8th standard. He brings the experienced professionals from Mysuru and Bengaluru to guide the students about competitive exams via video calls.

The library also provides digital assistance to the villagers for getting birth certificates, death certificates, caste certificates and aadhar linking. Futher D-space app allows villagers to access this data on their phones once they register.

Earlier students were not confident what to do in future, now by exposing to the digital culture they say that they want to become civil servant, military, doctor, engineer, lawyer. The schools which were empty now is full with students enjoying the digital library set up in their compound and also villagers are happy with the information what they are getting.

The digital library is provided with membership options and also so far 250 are registered and provides e-books, references, govt related information, competitive exams related materials in digital form. Now the students from the nearby villages are also started visiting the library to see the audio/visual materials and they are excited and learnt the concepts clearly.

Due to its tremendous success, the PDO wants to expand the library. Two more rooms are being constructed to install a dozen more computers to accommodate more students. A plan is being formulated to install another projector screen in the common hall of the

Panchayat office to screen awareness videos on hygiene, sanitation, and education. “This helps bringing the villagers together to discuss these issues, encourage a sense a community,”

The same model can be developed in grampanchayats of the other regions of the state.

Public Library already supported in building up of grampanchayat library by providing personnel, library basic infrastructure and functionality.

Due to change in the policy of the govt. the rural libraries has been handed over to the panchayat raj dept.

All PDO may not be having the same initiative as in the case of hardanahalli digital library set up.

The Librarians in the grampanchayat libraries are provided with meagre salary majority are semi-professionals.

The public library has already set up digital library in city central library, the same has been extended to the district library.

Due to central govt. vision of developing smart cities in India, many B and C category city have got the opportunity to develop ICT hub mainly digital library.

The Tumkur smart city project already collaborated with public library do set up digital library, already the software installation and digitization work started, Haveri District Central Library and Kolar District Central Library are also moving in this direction.

The E- resources provided in the public library can be extended to the smaller libraries, today due to underground cabling internet connectivity is becoming easier, the basic net connectivity is enough to provide the e-resources related services in gram panchayat.

The gram panchayat library should brand themselves as rural community information centres and provided generalized information service and specific information service.

General Information Service:

Agriculture, Water, Sanitation, Weather forecasts, Govt Schemes, Social Welfare Schemes,

Irrigation, Employment, Housing, Finance opportunities, Legal related, Information Literacy, Marketing, Family planning, Hygiene, basic health issues, food , shelter related.

Specific Information Service:

The Karnataka state has diversified geographical and culture. The specific information related to region wise can be developed. Geographically the state has been divided into plain land region, malnad region, costal region etc.

The information needs of the local has to be identified, this requires the co-operation other agencies, also public library and RDPR should co-operate and have information strategy by contacting near by educational insitutions like colleges, university and having an understanding with librarians and library science schools can do a survey of information need and also identify the gaps and try to develop localized specific information service.

For ex: Tumkur region is famous for cultivation of coconut the community information services should concentrate on this crop and how to develop scientifically and commercial related research in this area and how to disseminate in the local language is essential.

The centre should develop a handbook related to services provided and also can develop a basic displaying portal to provide link to the information.

Specific on animal husbandary, fisheries, small-scale industries, cottage industries, local directory related to yellow pages, and local important personalities, institutions, local history culture, information related to non-governmental organisations, funding agencies information, educational opportunities information, tribal medicine information. This services can be developed by interacting personally, developing web, referral, counselling, co-operating with information generating agencies and also developing basic acquisition program.

Conclusion:

The community information service has a lot of potential to develop better citizens of the country and developing the society and overcoming have and have-not of information and also meeting specific disadvantage groups information needs. But an active , consistent , updated information strategy to be continuously evolved at the organisation, policy making and also at the personnel level to make the information service an indispensable in the life of the rural mass.

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