



Ministry of Culture
Government of India

Libraries for All

Exploring the Role of Public Libraries and Information Centres for Sustainable Development



Department of Library and Information Science
Rabindra Bharati University
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Contents

Sl No.	Title of Paper	Autor (s)	Page No.
1	Ergonomics in Public Libraries: With Special Reference to Barrackpore Subdivision	Satarupa Saha Dr. Sudip Ranjan Hatua	15
2	Public Libraries and Sustainable Development: India's Current Outlook	Madhushree Dutta Ziaur Rahamn	22
3	An Evolutionary Journey in the Method of Preservation of Information and Libraries	Snigdha Naskar	30
4	Providing Ways for Efficient Library Services to the Disabled	Arpita Roy Chowdhury	40
5	The Role of Library and Information center in the Field of Performing Arts: A study	Iliya Das Mukherjee Sugata Das	48
6	ICT and Library Services	Sri Abhijit Pramanik	53
7	Users Satisfaction Of Bidyutchakra Sadaran Pathagar, Dumdum, West Bengal	Abhishek Mondal	58
8	Public Library As A Centre Of Human Unity	Achintya Ghosh	64
9	Libraries of information institutions: role in research	Aditi Das Swapna Banerjee	70
10	Public library as a powerful agent for social Integrity: A case Study of Kalyani Public Library	Dr. Md Ajimuddin SK Dr. Sibsankar Jana Dr. Md. Azizur Rahman	78
11	ICT enable Public Library services with special reference to West Bengal Public Library Network	Amit Nath Arghya Thakur	87
12	Uttarpara Joykrishna Public Library as a Community Information Centre: a Case Study	Anindita Nandy	94
13	Marketing and pra Case Studyomotion of Library and Information Science (LIS) resources and services through the sphere of social media with reference to academic libraries	Ankit Das	100
14	Research Information Management System : International and Indian Scenario	Arghya Thakur	107
15	Present Scenario of Public Libraries from the Perspective of Staff Strength: A Study in the District of South 24 Parganas	Arindam Sarkar Soumita Mitra	114
16	Intellectual Property Rights and Plagiarism: conceptual awareness for research scholar	Arup Kumar Das	120
17	Wikimedia as Open Educational Resources	Ayan Panja Snigdha Naskar	128

18	Present status of Public libraries in Bangladesh : Problems and Future Plan	Dr. Md. Azizur Rahman Dr. Sibsankar Jana Dr. Md Ajimuddin SK	138
19	Paradigmshift Of Public Libraries To Community Information Centers	Barnali Kundu Sourav Bagchi	146
20	Collection Development Scenario in Different Public Libraries	Basobendu Halder	151
21	Role of Public Library in Enhancement of Social Inclusion – A Theoretical Framework	Basudeb Adhikary Sanjay Karak Sarmistha Adhikary	158
22	Government Initiatives in the field of Agriculture to provide Information to the Agricultural Community in West Bengal: an overview	Bela Mondal	166
23	Role of the banglanatak dot com for Community Development in West Bengal: a study	Debalina Mukherjee	175
24	Agricultural information needs and sources of the farmers in India	Mr. Dipankar Debnath	185
25	The Role Of School Library For Building Knowledge Society	Dipankar Naskar	195
26	A Study on Career Guidance Resources Users in the State Central Library, Kolkata	Dipshikha Mukherjee	201
27	Problem and Challenges of Public Libraries of Nadia District in West Bengal: An Analytical Study	Haimanti Pal	206
28	Information services provided by a public library: a case study of State Central Library	Hirak Samadder Souvik Adhikari	212
29	Assessment of institutional open access digital repositories in India dealing with theses and dissertations : A study	Jhantu Mazumder	217
30	A Critical study on digital reference service through social media: in respect of sustainable development of public libraries	Kuntal Mondal	227
31	Assessment the presence of Social Media in Indian Medical Institutional Library	Laltu Aich	231
32	Use of Digital and Virtual Libraries by students of renounced B Ed college in South Kolkata: A case study	Lopita Mukherjee	239
33	Mobile phone vs library	Mala Saha	245
34	Green Libraries for Sustainable Development	Md Sohayel Tathagata Dhar	249
35	Impact of Digital Library in present day Indian Higher Education: a Special Case study of National Digital Library India	Moumita Dhali	257
36	Awareness on E- Resources: A case study in RabindraBharati University	Padma Kundu Sruati Biswas	261

37	Google Dataset Search: a one-stop destination for datasets searchers	Papia Paul	267
38	Open Educational Resources and Public Library: Indian Scenario	Parijat Mitra	274
39	The Role of Public Libraries in Children's Literacy Skills Development in Kolkata, West Bengal	Partha Sarathi Mondal Amit Singh	281
40	Role of Public Library in Lifelong Learning	Payel Mondal	288
41	iLumina : A digital library educational resource	Pompa Bhadra Srimanta Pal	294
42	Copyright Infringement in Educational Sector in India: a Case Study	Pratima Saha Priyanka Roy	298
43	Use of Electronic Resources by Researchers: Case Study of National Library of India	Priya Mallick	303
44	Green Library Transformation for Sustainable Development	Priyanka Bhattacharjee	312
45	The Future of Public Library in India: a proposal	Proneeta De	320
46	Future libraries through Artificial Intelligence	Rakhi Chakraborty	324
47	Collection Development in Central Library of Calcutta University, Jadavpur University and Rabindra Bharati University: A survey	Ranjita Sengupta	329
48	Role Of Information Literacy For The Development Of Libraries	Rashmi Singh	336
49	Community Development through Libraries of Rural Areas in India	Rumpa Pal	342
50	Refurbish and Rejuvenate Libraries and Information Services through Knowledge Management	Sabahat Nausheen Arun Samanta	346
51	The Inclusive Education For Inclusive Society And Dissemination Of Knowledge: Role Of Public Library	Sabita Kundu	352
52	Understanding Plagiarism and its Consequences with Research Ethics	Sanat Kumar Biswas	358
53	Role of Librarians in Promoting Information Literacy in the present Era	Sankha Subhra Das Dr. P. Balasubramanian	367
54	Green Library: A Messenger of Environmental Sustainability	Sharat Biswas Anjan Kesh	373
55	Application of ICT in Public Libraries: a Study of Public Libraries of Ashokenagar Kalyangarh Municipality, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal: a Study	Manas Saha Shibananda Mridha	382
56	Resource description and organization of museum and cultural resources: an overview	Sinjini Mukherjee Dr. Rajesh Das	393
57	Use of Virtual Reference Services in selected Universities in West Bengal: a study	Sk Sofik Rupa Gorai	401

58	Open Source Plagiarism software: issues and challenges	Dr. Sonali Dapsi	407
59	How Social Media Tools in 21 st Century Influence Library Services: a proposal	Sonali Dutta	416
60	Empowerment of the undergraduate Engineering students in the college and Library usage: a practical approach	Sm. Subhra Banerjee Dr. B.B.Das	425
61	Local History Collections in Public Libraries of South 24 Parganas: Understanding from Users' and Library professionals' perception	Sudeshna Moitra	441
62	Developing Library Consortia: why and how	Mr. Sukanta Halder	450
63	Public Libraries as academic agent in the light of UN2030 sustainable development goals	Dr. Sukanta Kumar Patra Arindom Roy	456
64	A framework for the comparative analysis of building assessment systems to implement the green concept in the library towards the sustainable development	Sukanya Mandal Sananda Gupta Falguni Ghosh	464
65	The Role of Kolkata Town Libraries in the Context of How to Grow the Student Interest: a Survey	Sutapa Paul Subrata Chakraborty	476
66	Green Library: An outline of new emerging initiatives in India and the World	Ms. Swarnali Debnath	488
67	Community Health Education through Public Libraries	Dr. Swati Ghosh	495
68	Social Networking Tools as a Professional and Scholarly Communication Tools for LIS Professional: A study on some selected Universities and Colleges in West Bengal.	Tulima Dey	500
69	Rejuvenation of Public Libraries in Indpur Community Development Block, Bankura through "Library of Things": a prospective approach	Ujjwal Patra Dr. Tapan Barui	509
70	Role of Librarian of Public Library as an Entrepreneur in Marketing Rural Products and Services	Dr. Ashis Biswas	517

Community Development through Libraries of Rural Areas in India

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Abstract

In the today's information environment, the basic information needs of people are not different from urban to rural. The infrastructures, availability of information, etc. are differ from urban to rural. So rural areas are need to be developed and rural libraries should play an important role to community development in rural areas. Rural development by using library material – the way, problems and suggestions with the respect of Indian condition are discussed briefly in this paper.

Keywords : *Rural Community, Rural Development, Rural Libraries, Rural areas, Rural People, Library materials, India.*

Introduction

In developing countries like India, most of the people are residing at rural areas and faced difficulties from illiteracy. These make differences of rural communities from urbans. More efforts are to be needed from Government and non- government organisations to develop rural communities. With enhancing the using of libraries in rural areas, the rural people literate more and thus the rural community get employments, etc. The rural development will be succeeded only after development of rural people. And libraries of rural areas should play a vital role to do so.

Rural Areas and Rural Communities

In contrast to urban regions, rural areas are highly distinctive from one another. A rural area is not simply a physical place but a social place also.

Rural Development

Rural development aims at finding the ways to improve the rural lives with participation of the rural people so as to meet the required need of the rural area. The outsider may not understand the setting, culture, language and other things prevalent in the local area. Rural development is a program of activities increasing the efficiency of rural people for enhancement of quality of life. Main targets of rural development are removal of poverty, food production, infrastructural development, fulfilment of basic needs, etc. Rural development also includes employment generation, strengthening the rural institute, libraries, etc.

Rural Libraries

Rural libraries facilitate community development in any country of the world. Basic information needs of rural communities like health, education, infrastructure, etc. should be available within rural areas. A rural library can become a bridge between information available and information needs of rural people.

A rural library is an organisation situated within rural areas where the common people can use collection of books, newspapers in their own languages, audio-visual materials and other educational and learning materials with fun and free for meet up their basic needs.

Rural libraries need not well decorated but well equipped with books and materials regarding education, simple domestic matters, agriculture, fishery, small industries, self-employment, job vacancies related magazines, etc.

Public libraries specially rural libraries take social responsibilities by various programs towards rural communities. Libraries can provide information technology for public access. Only library can bring all people of various communities in one place for personal interaction.

Rural Development through Rural Library

Education comes from knowledge and knowledge can be gained through practical life experience and books. Library plays very important role in once life. They are important and beneficial for us because availability of different books of different subjects at one place. Rural Development generally refers to the process of improving the quality of life and economic wellbeing of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas. Rural Development actions are mainly involves for the social and economic development of the rural areas. The revolution in information technology has changed the scenario of libraries and made the system of study very easy and comfortable. The present status of rural libraries can be improved through latest IT techniques, mobile libraries, and mass media to effectively cater to the information needs of the rural people. The people of rural areas started to raise their standard of living.

Resources of Rural Libraries to Rural Development

The resources of rural libraries are:

Text books, yearbooks, handbooks, etc.,

Newspapers, Magazines, etc.,

Online information,

Information at Notice Board and

Audio-visual materials, etc.

These resources are available in rural libraries. But it is the duty of a librarian to encourage for utilising these resources by the local people. The local people also have a duty to use library materials according to their needs. By using the library materials, knowledge will be increased. By using these knowledge, development of local areas can be done by local people themselves. And thus rural library can help to rural development of rural areas.

Rural Development through Rural Libraries in India

With the concept of public libraries in India, libraries in rural areas were established for the progress and development of the rural communities. Importance of the rural libraries in India is basically for the upliftment of the villagers and to be equally treated with that of urban community. With the establishment of the rural libraries there is increase in knowledge which has increased the employment possibilities through vacancies in different jobs. It had helped in raising income and the socioeconomic relations. With the setup of libraries in rural areas the living standard and the education level had being also raised. This will maintain equality in the rural and urban communities. Rural libraries in rural areas in India are for the social and economic development of the rural areas.

Librarians of rural libraries should be involved with planning and implementation of community development in local area. Librarians can organise training programs according to information needs of local people. Librarians can train the rural people to know the sources of vital information needed. It will eliminate rural poverty, unemployment, etc.

Before some years in India, information were available only in printed form. After introducing the information technology, information and communication system become electronic in nature. But nature of rural areas are varies from other in India. The progress of urban areas is much better than rural. The local people can feel their need to develop their rural areas. No implementation can be done satisfactorily from outside. Local people should involve themselves to develop their areas. And only a rural library can become a link between community needs and developments by providing information to local people. In modern era rural library should provide the electronic nature information by using computers, networks, internets, etc. With the changes of technologies, online access, online searches, etc. become more suitable for information gathering in our society. So rural libraries in our India should prepare with new weaponries to satisfy the rural users.

In India tremendous numbers of digital devices are used today. But consciousness about information can be seen only some urban sector. Due to illiteracy and lack of development of rural areas, rural community people are still far away. For bring the equality between urban and rural areas libraries have miles to go.

Now people can reach to the available information easily by mouse click in case of computers or touch by finger on mobile screen. These make result the decrease the personal interaction with library. But numbers of information can be seen though online search. Only librarian can guide to catch which will be more appropriate for one individual user.

Problems

The Government of India and State Governments in India have enough initiatives for community development of rural areas by establishing rural libraries. Government of India have set up lots of bodies, centres, etc. to educate the rural people.

In India rural libraries are suffer from lack of children books collection, lack of staff, lack of electronic equipment and less interested about mobile service, etc.

The main problem is funding. Libraries in rural areas need to huge collection of books and non-book materials, existing infrastructure development and appointment of more efficient staff, etc. In India central, state government should arrange proper funding. NGOs, private sectors also should give financial support for establishment of rural library. And thus development of rural areas can be achieved.

Conclusion and Suggestions

It can be analysed that the libraries are the best resource to educate the villagers which help in rural development. It is suggested that the books which are old and used by the students of urban areas should be donated to the rural areas. It is the duty of the citizens of the urban areas that they should step forward for the development of the libraries in rural areas. Financial supports from Central and State Government both should be increased for development of rural libraries for development of rural communities.

By using IT, mobile library, etc. the rural libraries in India can improve the present status in library services. The rural libraries should be computerised and automated in all rural areas in India. Through library automation Indian rural areas can be developed. Now library is not only the store house of collection of books, it should become information centre.

In India most of rural people need information regarding agriculture, marketing, banking services, etc. New generation has information need for job opportunity also. Librarians of rural libraries can train the local people by organising workshops, training, etc. Rural libraries should more use of extension services like mobile library service to remote place of local areas. Librarian can start awareness program about resources available in the library which can be used for development of local areas at present as well as in future.

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