

CHALLENGES AHEAD OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN KARNATAKA STATE

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ABSTRACT

In this paper made an attempt to find out the challenges and problems countenance in Karnataka state public libraries. This paper talks about the effect of information technology on libraries and its changing role in recent years. Also suggests feasible remedies and new developments of technology those are already denoting the prospective to transformation of public libraries in rural Karnataka state for the improved. The study is taken up to give some important suggestions for the extent it can provide effective library services for the development of the society.

Keywords: Public Libraries, Information Technology, Library Networks, Library Services, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Community Center, Karnataka, India

INTRODUCTION

Indian public libraries are facade of many problems due to the convergence of technologies and the rapid advancement of the information and communication technology (ICT), which have been developed gradually over the last decade. By means of taking advantage of technologies and innovations, information professionals have rendered many efforts in computerization, digitization, and electronic access to information, data archiving, online analytical processing, etc., there has been a significant degree of performance of automation and networking in special libraries and academic libraries (Pal, Jiban K, 2011). But public libraries are almost completely dependent on economic support from central or state government or local bodies for their collection development, infrastructure and human resources, and as a result planning for modern tools and IT facilities in public libraries has not taken place. Excellent infrastructure, collection, information communication technology use, human resources etc., in public libraries of India is very poor, in bridging the digital divide public libraries has to play a major role. To overcome from all these barriers public libraries also should change gradually by adopting these information communication technologies.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Venkata Ramana and Vinod Kumar (1997) emphasized in their paper two things about public library 1) It requires the financial support from funding agencies, talent, education, creativity, determination, management and above all vision on the part of the library professional and other support staff and, 2) The professionals should get them trained and take the lead in operating the systems. Karisiddappa (1999) has discussed the growth of technology from Stone Age to information age, possible areas of technology application in public libraries. The need for providing Internet facility in public libraries and also the trained staff who have necessary skills in this facility are emphasized Eve and Brophy (2000) in their study on ICT based services offered by public libraries in U.K. indicated that libraries are gradually becoming imperative positions for gain access ICT to support a variety of actions, to developing and upholding social network using the Internet. Maitrayee Ghosh (2004) Paper Indicates that the existing condition of public libraries in India has been observed as the system of public library in India is doomed to endure peripheral to the actual information needs for the mobs; Ram Kumar Matoria, P.K. Upadhyay and Madaswamy Moni (2006) this paper sketches the contests and the probable of a complete distribution of softwares at a countrywide. E. Perumalsamy and Dr. A. Lawrence Mary (2011) Work Identified that the impact information technology on information professionals has become deeply rooted that demands continuous improvement if professional skills of the information professionals. Dr. Thanuskodi .S. (2011) Article reveals that Information and Communication Technology has revolutionized the concept of libraries. IT has almost converted the world into a global village. Libraries are also changing to meet the demand put on them. Rupinder Singh (2012) In paper made an attempt to recognize the current eminence and experiments that the public libraries facing by Punjab state.

THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES: A VIEW OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Public libraries play a distinctive and critical role in the nation as providers of free and unbiased access to the information that is essential to the functioning of a democratic and market-oriented society. In carrying out this role, the library community has advocated strongly against censorship and other means of restricting access to information and has fought efforts to invade the privacy of library users. At the same time, it has advocated for free and open access to government information and for intellectual property law that balances the interests of producers and consumers of information. It has established a culture that places a high value on neutrality, credibility, and accessibility. And it has strived to make as many age-appropriate sources of information, art, and entertainment as possible available to its patrons, free of charge. The distinctive and critical role of libraries and the library community's values are likely to remain constant in the future, undergirding libraries' responses to the societal, economic, and technological changes they will face. In carrying out their role in society, libraries serve a number of key functions:

- **Collect** Select, acquire, organize, curate, retain, and maintain collections of physical media, including text, audio, video, and multimedia, and virtual collections of online media.
- **Circulate** Provide media from its physical collections to library patrons and to other libraries, or provide access to selected online resources to which the library subscribes.

- **Borrow** Obtain media from other libraries for local patrons.
- **Catalog** Create a catalog or catalogs of the library's physical collections or create portals to online collections of materials especially relevant to the library's patrons.
- **Provide access to catalogs** Enable patrons to access catalogs of other libraries' collections or other libraries' topical portals.
- **Provide reference service** Help patrons find information both in locally maintained collections of materials and in the many resources available online.
- **Offer reader advice** Recommend reading or viewing appropriate to a patron's interests, age, and capabilities (including service to those who are blind or print disabled.)
- **Provide access to computers, the Internet, and advanced media technologies**, Offer patrons access to computers and the Internet with basic technical support, as well as to other current technologies (for example, for recording, displaying, editing, and printing media), which are inaccessible to many because of cost or lack of knowledge. Serve as "media spaces" so patrons can freely engage with a wide range of local and Internet-based media—games, eBooks, audio, video, and multimedia.
- **Serve children**, Develop and offer special services, such as story times, for children.
- **Serve teenagers and young adults**, Develop and offer special services, such as selected media collections, social groups, readings, presentations, and performances, for teenagers and young adults.
- **Serve adults**, Develop and offer special services, such as lectures, literacy programs, and training, for adults.
- **Provide exhibit space and offer programs and exhibits**, Organize special programs and exhibits, in house and online, attuned to the interests of the local community. Some of these may be age neutral; others may target specific age groups or others.
- **Provide reading rooms**; Offer a quiet, safe place to browse for and use media from the local collections and to work individually on homework or other projects.
- **Provide meeting rooms and convene meetings**, Offer spaces for meetings of patrons, and convene meetings on subjects of interest to the community.
- **Serve as a community center and symbol**, provides a facility for community gatherings, and symbolizes the community's commitment to accessibility of informational and cultural materials for all.

The common challenges appearance in Karnataka state public libraries

LIBRARY LEGISLATION:

An act is formulating the plan of commandment, guideline and regulation etc. In the libraries setting, the library act means to give legitimate facility for launching a library system, its conservation, facilities, roles, right and administration underneath any state or a national government. Library legislation is accomplished various adaptable organs of public library. Library Act is an tool for the improvement of public libraries in a strategic way to ensure setting up, growth and preservation of libraries in a identical outline. Library legislation can support in encouraging a sense of self-consciousness among the folks who would feel it requisite on their part to use services accessible by the library. Karnataka is the third state in India that enacted the public library legislation in 1965. Since that the government has not reviewed the legislation time to time by keeping in mind the recent developments and trends in the area of libraries. Therefore state government need to establish an advisory committee to State Library Authority (SLA). It has to consist of public library exports from different library schools in the state.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

It is critical for a strong public library to receive sufficient fund. Finance plays a vital role in all developmental activities of any organization. Public libraries being non-profit organizations do not earn income for its services provide. Therefore, public libraries need stable monetary support both from the government and non-government agencies to provide its services efficiently and successfully. A perennial source of finance also strengthens the system to perform in an efficient manner. Libraries and librarians need to be make efforts to retain satisfactory functional incomes.

NETWORKING AND PUBLIC LIBRARY:

UNISIST II working document defines **Information Network** as a set of inter-related information systems associated with communication facilities, which are cooperating through more or less formal agreements in order to implement information handling operations to offer better services to the users. Telecommunications networks and access to international databases are available for searching for information on various subjects. With the advent of networks, remote transmission of texts and graphics, video clips and animated clips are also possible. The move towards networking in public libraries is creating new management challenges, new demands have arisen as well as new opportunities. In a short span of time public libraries are expected to change from self-contained internally networked local services to countrywide networked information and learning centers. Consolidation and expansion of the public libraries is possible only with networking like INFLIBNET, the government and public library body like

RRRLF should take initiative to bring all the public libraries under one roof through establishing a consortium in every state and there should be a nodal center for every district.

USE OF ICT APPLICATIONS IN PUBLIC LIBRARY:

H.K. Kaul, Director of the Developing Library Network (DELNET), New Delhi, has opined that “Our public library system in the country failed totally in bringing knowledge to the door steps of every individual. It is advisable for us to look at the problem afresh, especially when the computer and communication technologies have now become available to us at a minimal cost” (Kaul, 2002).

Technology is a challenge that is both exciting and frustrating. Libraries struggle to keep up with in-house needs and user demands. Insufficient bandwidth issues are increasing as users place more demands on library service. Although public libraries are best placed to serve as universal access points to global information in their communities, because of barriers such as the shortage of computers, a lack of funds and an absence of ICT skills, not many library services in state have not been able to take advantage of ICT facilities to play this role and benefit their communities, a large number of public libraries on the state still do not have access to computers.

AUTOMATION:

Public libraries in India are established throughout the country and are located in state capitals, district headquarters, talukas as well as village level. In public libraries there has been no computerization despite the continuous work of the Raja Rammohan Roy Library

Foundation (RRRLF), which was established by the government of India for the overall development of public libraries (Bhattacharjee (2002).

Karnataka state central library is using software developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC) and In the year 2000 AD, the library was awarded the Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation Award for the best state central library in India in recognition of its outstanding contribution to meritorious services rendered in the spread of knowledge and gearing up of library movement in the city of Bangalore in particular and in the state of Karnataka in general. But it is not reached enough every public library in the state. In addition to the automation of basic library functions such as acquisitions, cataloguing, circulation, and access to OPAC some library services are also need to use computers for related activities.

E-LEARNING

In a state like Karnataka e-learning now has great relevance, especially for extending higher education into new, previously neglected areas of its people. A large percentage of the target population is beyond the reach of formal education channels due to a variety of inherent weaknesses in the teaching system, including the lack of traditional educational infrastructure in many areas. E-learning initiatives may benefit rural folk who leave formal education channels either due to lack of locally available facilities or due to other economic commitments.

HEALTHCARE INFORMATION TO PUBLIC:

Katy Lancaster has written that “the public library also has an important role to play in the provision of health information. People see libraries as familiar and accessible and as a reliable source of information” (Lancaster, 2003). Such health-information initiatives are particularly vital; the Karnataka distress by many diseases like AIDS, H1N1 and Swine Flu etc., especially in the rural part of state there is an urgent need to create awareness to the rural folk on the topic of sanitation and hygiene.

PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL CENTERS:

Public libraries are acting as a demonstration of democracy; so that Carlyle rightly remarked that “Public Libraries are Peoples University”. These are preservation center of culture, heritage of that country. The UNESCO public library manifesto (1949 and 1972) mentioned that, public libraries to be one of the principal centers of cultural life and promote a keener participation, enjoyment and appreciation of all the arts; to be promoted and encourage the use of public libraries as a cultural information center.

USE OF INTERNET:

La Rue, F. (2011) said that “Given that the Internet has become an indispensable tool for realizing a range of human rights, combating inequality, and accelerating development and human progress, ensuring universal access to the Internet should be a priority for all states.” A 2011 Special Reporters for Freedom of Expression report to the UN Human Rights Council declared internet access a fundamental enabler of human rights. Public libraries need to establish Internet connection services to providing the internet access to library users and the community. Public libraries have to set up cyber cafés as a way of providing access to ICT facilities to their communities, and also as means of raising funds to sustain the Internet connectivity, that drive an significant starring role in connecting the digital gap. Other major reason for implementing Internet connectivity is to complement the library collections with

the information resources available on the World Wide Web. Internet facilities available include electronic mail and Web access.

LIBRARY BUILDING:

Public libraries are the key player of our society; in terms of financial need public libraries are tremendously significant. Over and over again, our public libraries do not have fund to keep up their buildings appropriately. Government and non-government authorities' should facilitate well structured building, especially to the rural community. The library should be situating in heart of the city or village or else it should situate where people can access easily the services.

LIBRARY PERSONNEL:

Training is essential in maiden up online facilities for publics via public libraries. Working staff in public libraries must be stimulated to grace with the presence of continuing education programs and skills enrichment to use ICT technology to the fullest range in carrying public library service area. Also authorities should show their interest to appoint well qualified and trained staff to the public libraries.

Suggestion for Improvements of Services in Public Libraries in Karnataka State

- 1 The Karnataka **Public Libraries Act 1965** should be modified while keeping in mind the latest developments in the field of information and communication technology (ICT). Then only it is possible to provide even minimum networked service for the urban and rural elite.
- 2 **Finance** is the only hurdle of the development of public libraries in the state; therefore it is suggested that the state government and local governments should ensure proper financial support for the public library system.
- 3 The Authorities of Public Library should give a more emphasis for the Acquisition of Non-Book Materials like video, audio, tapes and films etc. to help illiterates and neoliterates in the rural areas
- 4 It is necessary for the department to have own buildings for running the library at gram panchayat level. Therefore, the department, through the concerned authorities shall try to acquire the land and construct the building through Raja Ram Mohan Roy foundation scheme. The gram panchayats can also identify available vacant community land in the village, raise funds from voluntary organizations/voluntary contributions to facilitate to have own building for library and keep separate account.
- 5 Library Personnel are going to play a pivotal role in helping the present and potential user. Therefore during appointment of library personnel the state government in general and authorities of the department in particular must take keen interest in appointing well qualified and trained personnel especially at the Grama Panchayats level.
- 6 The department of public library should provide the Mobile Library Service to the district for the effective implementation of the library service in the rural areas.
- 7 The department of public libraries should purchase and acquire good reading materials and books containing knowledge and information according to the needs and requirements of the rural folk.
- 8 In Case of Panchayat Libraries, it is necessary that gram panchayat Presidents/Vice Presidents and other members be motivated for mobilizing funds through voluntary contribution from various means for improving the libraries. For this purpose, the

Department of Public Libraries may consider the possibilities of organizing a sort of workshop or awareness building camps to the elected gram panchayat members regarding the role of gram panchayat in growth and development of the gram panchayat libraries.

- 9 More publicity about the Taluka as well as gram panchayat libraries is essential. Book exhibitions, Leaflets/Handouts, Notice Boards/Walls of gram panchayat, Raita Samparka Kendra, Schools, Hospitals and Post Office could be used to popularize the library activities.
- 10 The department should make provision for basic facilities like drinking water, furniture, supply of magazines of interest, newspapers, so that, people from all sections can use the institution. Similarly, the quality of resources will reflect the quality of library.
- 11 Computerization of Libraries will attract more users.
- 12 More generous financial support should be made available to provide the basic ICT infrastructural facilities,
- 13 As could be seen from the budget allocation to the department the funds available is too less. The department has to manage its activity within the funds provided. The department also does not have other means of resources except collection of 6% library cess through land revenue. Collection of cess is not done regularly. Therefore, in the interest of rural folk, it is impressed upon the Government, to give directions to the concerned authorities to collect the 6% library cess in the form of property tax or release appropriate portion of funds from out of the consolidated funds of the State Government.

CONCLUSION:

The important aspect of public library is that it should have goals and programs to achieve the adequate supply information to the public. The current approach to public libraries is changing from the 19th century. The role of the public libraries, which was traditional to gather information, organizes them and provides access to them. It was primarily focused on the documents in the library. If it is continued in this world, the role of public libraries goes into dumps and be relegated to a second rate service. It is the high time for the library professionals to assert themselves by identifying the information needs of the society, promote a balanced collection of documents, organizes them to provide retrieval facilities to the stored information and keep all these operational to receive changes and new structure.

For the successful implementation of the proposed plan the authorities should made all the provisions that are delineated in the plans to organize and administer the public library services fruitfully and gainfully to the citizens of the district. Finally, the need of the hour is the authorities of the public library and respective authorities they must bring pressure on the government for the proper amendments to existing KPL Act, 1965 on priority basis. Probably this is the only solution for the public library system in the state or at the district level to render efficient and effective services to the rural folk.

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