



## Importance of community libraries in India

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### Abstract

Community libraries are a very modern concept which can be very beneficial to the sustainable community growth. India is a land of villages & people of various caste & creed. Indian government spends a sizeable amount of its GDP on providing community empowerment schemes but most of these welfare schemes fail to reach the beneficiaries due to lack of information. Community library on the other hand can act as a bridge between policy makers & recipients. Community library has worked well in other countries with good results. Indian experiments with Community library can become a boon to community stakeholders if they are strengthened from its roots. This paper focuses on importance of community libraries & the challenges faced by Community library in bringing about empowerment.

**Keywords:** Community library, benefits, challenges, creation of sustainability

### Introduction:

Community libraries can become a beneficial mode of transforming rural Life. Rural society can be transformed through Community libraries. Community libraries give awareness on different aspects of life which the villagers need. Community libraries add significantly to the overall quality of life in a rural community.

Information needs of the rural community are changing now, as governmental projects welfare schemes, employment guarantee schemes health schemes etc orientated towards rural masses can be accessed with the support of information gathered by them through newspaper reading in a library. ( Sunila kumar -A Journey Of rural library movement in India- Retrospect



& prospects , Journal of information management Vol. 43. No 3. 2003).

### **Advantages:**

1. **Promotion of personal rights awareness** - Rural people will become aware of their rights through Community libraries. Villagers come to know information about governmental legislations about child labor employment , compulsory education , girl child education , nutrition , health promotion, elder's care issues , women empowerment, etc through a community library . A community library will act as a medium between welfare schemes & rural people. ( Asha Bajpai -Child Rights in India: Law, Policy, and Practice –Oxford press 2003).

2. **Promotion of farm awareness-** Community libraries provides up dated information of farm products , farm prices , farm markets , farm sector etc. The villagers come to know progressive developments through governmental & non governmental agencies. The

information about agricultural implements , agricultural equipments , agro seeds , agro feeds , agro sales . agro marketing , pesticides , etc

3. **Promotion of Community libraries** rural youth get information on employment vocational skills through Community libraries . Community libraries promotes reading habits & literacy

4. **Promotion of Community as a whole** becomes aware of government projects current affairs & national news happenings through Community libraries

5. **Promotion of Nationality -** Community libraries gives a sense of awareness & accountability to nation's progress. Suffer from poor state of management they lack adequate resources financial & human resources are inadequate. Rural people are more worried about employment, education, health , & such other developmental schemes. Rural libraries should be made as dynamic information centers taking the support of the IT to



cater to information needs of rural people. rural societies are undergoing transition

6. **Promotion of women empowerment** -women can make government welfare projects schemes become fructified by Community libraries create an identity for women through involvement in knowing current affairs. Community libraries the women can understand & identify the needs of community school. Rural mother can create accountability towards school by educating her children & her involvement in school activities becomes dynamic.

7. **Promotion of greater parental participation** - Community libraries greater parental participation parent school relationship increases. Community led accountability will lead to development in school management ( Asha Bajpai -Child Rights in India: Law, Policy, and Practice –Oxford press 2003).

8. **Promotion of community welfare schemes**- Policy makers will get valuable support from community stake holders in

formulating welfare schemes. This will finally lead to making community friendly policies.

9. **Promotion of adult literacy**- Literacy & adult literacy programs are thus supported

10. Community libraries can play a significant role in community economic development for several reasons.

11. **Benefits to rural youth on employment opportunities**

Agriculture these days is becoming highly mechanized and therefore requires less manual labor. This is causing economic pressure on land in villages, leading to an exodus of young people migrating to urban areas in search of livelihood. This can be deviated by creating employment opportunities in villages through small scale entrepreneurship building. Libraries can help rural youth towards gaining employment. Rural youth by becoming members of library can access employment oriented news, advertisements, walk ins, job-recruitment drives, Army recruitments etc.



## 12. **Community libraries & women empowerment**

A large number of women are involved with homestead gardening, and produce vegetables to meet their daily family needs of vegetable and nutrition; they also earn money by selling vegetables at home or nearest market. As maximum numbers of women have at least primary education, they are conscious and need information on health, food and nutrition, family planning, as well as their child education. Some initiatives for the empowerment of women, such as increasing participation in parliament, gender equality in education, women employment, increasing social and legal protection, etc. (Sunila kumar -A Journey Of rural library movement in India- Retrospect & prospects , Journal of information management Vol. 43. No 3. 2003).

### **Challenges to community library**

1. Community library often faces the challenge of providing access to a well-stocked

Community library. Either due to shortage of funds or due to lack of interest of the community , the Community library often finds negligence , hence Community library fail to attract community.

2. The librarians should be the most educated and well-trained community information specialists. the failure on the part of the librarian of a Community library to attract Community members with good promotion of library service.

3. The libraries frequently have up-to-date their computer systems, fax machines, Internet access and information retrieval skills that are of growing importance in an information-based economy. If Community library fails to update itself, then the very concept loses its objectives.

4. Local & tiny businesses & start ups recognize the need speedy internet linkage though library services

5. greater participation of local communities in local community activities , participation in gram sabha ,



rights & roles grama sabha members meetings, etc they will become involved in local development work such as roads, sanitation, village library restructuring, allocation, local involvement, becomes beneficial to society. These are several challenges to community library but

#### 6. **Imbalance in budgetary allocation**

- government allocation of budgetary funds towards community development is not consistent. The government of India spends more on defense, economic irrigation projects construction work etc. Community issues receives secondary treatment in allocation. The health education sanitation drinking water hygiene etc is neglected during budgets. The rising deaths of infant due to poorer maternity health care centers, still persisting issues of child health, child rising, child rights & child marriage, food, mal nutrition & health issue such as lack of medical infrastructure, lack of qualified medical functionaries, and non-access to

basic medicines etc. Besides there are problems of increasing maternity deaths, deaths of girl children below 1- 5 year, complete absence of pure drinking water facilities, complete nonexistence of sanitation, absolute absence of hygiene, complete deficiency of medical care units, absence of healthy practices & medical care knowledge etc

**Considerations:** Community libraries are facing following problems provision of light, spacious hall for readers, book stocks for different groups, local unemployment, support to local business, innovation.

1. Government does not have any initiative to meet the information needs of the rural women.
2. As most of the people of live in rural parts, government should collect data for rural and urban area separately, so that the actual scenario of the rural women can be revealed.
3. In order to empower rural women, awareness of information



needs and information sources should be created among them.

4. In addition to establish libraries or information centers in the communities for the development of knowledge base of the women, Information and Communication Technologies should be introduced to them, so that they can use the modern technologies to meet their information needs. ( Report of the National Commission of Child Rights in India 2013).

5. Community libraries can also be established along with schools and colleges which will provide the necessary information for the individual development of the rural women as well as their family.

6. Training on use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be arranged in schools and colleges as well as in public libraries, especially for the women of rural area so that they can get access to quick and accurate information regarding every aspect of their daily lives.

#### **Conclusion:**

Thus Community libraries can be made to provide the necessary information for the individual development of the community. Community libraries suffer from poor state of management they lack adequate resources financial & human resources are inadequate, but still they can be strengthened to meet the information needs of the community. All communities are worried about child care, employment, education, health, & such other developmental schemes. Community libraries should be made as dynamic information centers taking the support of the Information Technology to cater to information needs of community people.

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