

Role of Libraries in Rural Development

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Abstract- To be a civilized human and create a civilized society it is important to have knowledge through which we became educated in different fields. This knowledge may be practical i.e. experienced gained through day to day incidents. Another is knowledge received through books. Books provide a wide variety of knowledge in every field. We can know the history through the literature given in the books. Libraries should build organization that support learning. With the modernization everything is changing for advancement and development. Now in rural areas also, people like farmers, school children, women and youth are taking active part in development through library. Rural Development generally refers to the process of improving the quality of life and economic well being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas.

Rural Development is also characterized by its emphasis on locally produced economic development strategies. Rural Development actions are mainly and mostly to development aim for the social and economic development of the rural areas. The revolution in information technology had changed the scenario of libraries and made the system of study very easy and comfortable. About seventy percent (70%) of population lives in rural areas. In addition to other sources, a major source of information is library. Earlier studies stated that the libraries in rural areas are traditional in nature and not well equipped according to the need of the rural people. It had adversely affected the development of a library system. The major reason for the present status of rural libraries is lack of adequate resources, financial and human. 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.

Keywords- *Development, rural library, mobile library, IT techniques, social and economic development.*

1. Introduction

To be a civilized human and create a civilized society it is important to have knowledge through which we became educated in different fields. This knowledge may be practical i.e. experienced gained through day to day incidents. Another is knowledge received through books. Books provide a wide variety of knowledge in every field. We can know the history through the literature given in the

books. Libraries should build organization that support learning. With the modernization everything is changing for advancement and development. Now in rural areas also, people like farmers, school children, women and youth are taking active part in development through library. Rural Development generally refers to the process of improving the quality of life and economic well being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas.

Rural Development is also characterized by its emphasis on locally produced economic development strategies. Rural Development actions are mainly and mostly to development aim for the social and economic development of the rural areas. Education comes from knowledge and knowledge can be gained through practical life experience and books. Through books we can study and read each and every aspect about the subject. Books are the best friends of us. The book reading habit is the very good. 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. In ancient period books were written by hand but with the advanced technology drastic change happened in this area and now one can write book by doing typing on computer. Earlier we have buy books, and then with the establishment of library there was availability of reading books in the library.

The people of rural areas started to raise their standard of living due to this advancement. Different programs are runned by State and Central Government for the upliftment of people living in rural areas. Therefore rural libraries had been set up just to improve knowledge level and reading habits in the people living in villages. As we know that “India lies in its villages”, so it is necessary to uplift and develop the villagers equally to the urban communities. Development of villages leads to the advancement of the society and increases socio-economic conditions of the country.

2. History and Importance

Rapid urbanization is causing problems for the rural poor and their children in India, who live without civic amenities like power (electricity) and sometimes water. For their social and agricultural development, the best answer is improved education, through reading materials like books and periodicals including text books. There is evidence of well-developed libraries even in the sixth century A.D. The famous Nalanda University in Bihar had its own magnificent library with a massive collection of manuscripts covering the universe of knowledge. Admission to library was restricted to scholars. Other ancient universities, such as Taxila and Vikramashila, also had valuable libraries. Muslim influence in India during the 13th century A.D. marked the dawn of another era of learning and scholarship. The Mughal period gave a further stimulus to the growth of libraries. Mughal rulers attached considerable importance to libraries and appointed scholars as librarians.

The Mughal emperors were patrons of art and literature. In the period of Emperor Babur, Humayun, and Akbar many new libraries were established and existing ones further developed. Mughal libraries featured magnificent buildings, rare manuscripts, and scholar librarians. The names of Maharaja Sawai Man Singh of Jaipur and Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab will be remembered with appreciation in the history of library services in India. The Maharaja of Tanjaur started the famous Saraswati Mahal Library in 17th century A.D. It remains a unique institution in its nature of collection and services (Sathikumar 1993, p. 18). The Delhi public library was founded in 1951 as the first UNESCO Public Library Pilot Project under the joint auspices of UNESCO and Government of India. The purpose of the library was to adapt "modern techniques to Indian conditions" and to serve as a model public library for Asia (Verma & Agarwal, 1994, p. 8)

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. The adult literacy program and free education to the children up to age of 14 years. With the establishment of the rural libraries there is increase in knowledge which had increased the employment possibilities through vacancies in different jobs. It had helped in raising income and the socio-economic relations. With the set up 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. With knowledge and education they are able to do all types of work in every field. Nobody can make them fool or take advantage of them.

The **National Library of India** (Bengali: ভারতের জাতীয় গ্রন্থাগার) at Belvedere, Kolkata, is the largest library in India by volume and India's library of public record. It is under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. The library is designated to collect, disseminate and preserve the printed material produced in India. The library is situated on the scenic 30 acre (120,000 m²) Belvedere Estate, in Kolkata (formerly Calcutta). The Library is the largest in India, with a collection in excess of 2.2 million books. It is India's only Category 6 library and is one of the four depository libraries in the country where publishers are required, under The Delivery of Books and Newspapers (Public Libraries) Act, 1954, "to supply books published in India, by Indians abroad or any title that might be of interest to Indians". It is also India's sole repository library where all books, publications and official documents in its custody have to be stored in perpetuity. With the concept of public libraries, libraries in rural areas were established for the progress and development of the rural communities.

3. Definition of Rural Development and Libraries.

Rural development generally refers to the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas. Rural development has traditionally centered on the exploitation of land-intensive natural resources such as agriculture and forestry. However, changes in global production networks and increased urbanization have changed the character of rural areas. Increasingly tourism, niche manufacturers, and recreation have replaced resource extraction and agriculture as dominant economic drivers. The need for rural communities to approach development from a wider perspective has created more focus on a broad range of development goals rather than merely creating incentive for agricultural or resource based businesses. Education, entrepreneurship, physical infrastructure, and social infrastructure all play an important role in developing rural regions. Rural development is also characterized by its emphasis on locally produced economic development strategies. In contrast to urban regions, which have many similarities, rural areas are highly distinctive from one another. For this reason there is a large variety of rural development approaches used globally.

Rural development actions are mainly and mostly to development aim for the social and economic development of the rural areas. Rural development programs are usually top-down from the local or regional authorities, regional development agencies, NGOs, national governments or international development organizations. But then, local

populations can also bring about endogenous initiatives for development. The term is not limited to the issues for developing countries. In fact many of the developed countries have very active rural development programs. The main aim of the rural government policy is to develop the undeveloped villages.

Rural development aims at finding the ways to improve the rural lives with participation of the rural people themselves 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. As such, general people themselves have to participate in their sustainable rural development. In developing countries like Nepal, India, integrated development approaches are being followed up. In the context of many approaches and ideas have been developed and followed up, for instance, bottom-up approach, PRA- Participatory Rural Appraisal, RRA- Rapid Rural Appraisal etc.

A **library** is an organized collection of sources of information and similar resources, made accessible to a defined community for reference or borrowing. It provides physical or digital access to material, and may be a physical building or room, or a virtual space, or both.^[1] A library's collection can include books, periodicals, newspapers, manuscripts, films, maps, prints, documents, microform, CDs, cassettes, videotapes, DVDs, Blu-ray Discs, e-books, audiobooks, databases, and other formats. Libraries range in size from a few shelves of books to several million items. In Latin and Greek, the idea of bookcase is represented by *Bibliotheca* and *Bibliothēkē* (Greek: βιβλιοθήκη): derivatives of these mean *library* in many modern languages, e.g. French *bibliothèque*.

The first libraries consisted of archives of the earliest form of writing—the clay tablets in cuneiform script discovered in Sumer, some dating back to 2600 BC. These written archives mark the end of prehistory and the start of history. The earliest discovered private archives were kept at Ugarit. There is also evidence of libraries at Nippur about 1900 BC and at Nineveh about 700 BC showing a library classification system. Private or personal libraries made up of written books (as opposed to the state or institutional records kept in archives) appeared in classical Greece in the 5th century BC. In the 6th century, at the very close of the Classical period, the great libraries of the Mediterranean world remained those of Constantinople and Alexandria. From the 15th century in central and northern Italy, libraries of humanists and their enlightened patrons provided a nucleus around which an "academy" of scholars congregated in each Italian city of consequence. Tianyi Chamber, founded in 1561 by Fan Qin during the Ming Dynasty, is the oldest existing library in China. In its heyday it boasted a collection of 70,000 volumes of

antique books. The first library classification system was set up during the Han Dynasty. In North America, it is believed that personal collections of books were brought over to the continent by French settlers in the 16th century. The oldest non-personal library on the North American continent was founded at the Jesuit College in Quebec City in 1635. The first textbook on library science was written by Martin Schrettinger and published in 1808. A library is organized for use and maintained by a public body, an institution, a corporation, or a private individual. Public and institutional collections and services may be intended for use by people who choose not to—or cannot afford to—purchase an extensive collection themselves, who need material no individual can reasonably be expected to have, or who require professional assistance with their research. In addition to providing materials, libraries also provide the services of librarians who are experts at finding and organizing information and at interpreting information needs. Libraries often provide

quiet areas for studying, and they also often offer common areas to facilitate group study and collaboration. Libraries often provide public facilities for access to their electronic resources and the Internet. Modern libraries are increasingly being redefined as places to get unrestricted access to information in many formats and from many sources. They are extending services beyond the physical walls of a building, by providing material accessible by electronic means, and by providing the assistance of librarians in navigating and analyzing very large amounts of information with a variety of digital tools.

4. Projects Undertaken

- It is not only the establishment of libraries important, but its implementation by Government and Non- Government Organizations. For this lot of projects, schemes are made and undertaken for Information Technology revolution and are running well in different areas.
- Some of the projects which we searched on net for the rural development are as follows:
- The development objective of the **Chhattisgarh District Rural Poverty Project** is to improve opportunities for the poor and vulnerable, especially women and tribal's, to meet their own social and economic development objectives. To achieve this, the project creates infrastructure and income opportunities for the rural poor; empowers active groups of disadvantaged people; and supports village governments in becoming more responsive and effective in assisting them. There are two main project components. Component 1 focuses on six main activities: 1) human resource development for project

stakeholders to build skills and change behavior through orientation, reward, and performance appraisal, and supply-driven and demand-driven training; 2) strengthening of "panchayats" to develop training programs; 3) formation and strengthening of organizations to recruit and build the capacity of nongovernmental organizations and project facilitation teams; 4) communication and information to ensure that the project and its rules are disseminated to all target beneficiaries appropriately; 5) monitoring and learning and special studies to support information gathering; and 6) project administration. Component 2 comprises community investments, including matching grants for community investments, matching grants for "panchayat plans, village funds that are entirely financed by community contributions and that finance operation and maintenance of village infrastructure, and innovation funds.

- The Swarnajayanti Gram Swaraj Yojana by Madhya Pradesh State was launched in April, 1999. This is a holistic programme covering all aspects of self employment such as organization of the poor into self help groups, training, credit, technology, infrastructure and marketing. The objective of SGSY is to provide sustainable income to the rural poor. The programme aims at establishing a large number of micro-enterprises in the rural areas, based upon the potential of the rural poor. It is envisaged that every family assisted under SGSY will be brought above the poverty-line with in a period of three years.
- Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana -the critical importance of rural infrastructure in the development of village economy is well known. A number of steps have been initiated by the Central as well as the State Governments for building the rural infrastructure. The public works programmes have also contributed significantly in this direction.
- Gyan Key Project- One of the foremost social initiatives launched by rural relations is the Gyan-Key project, which establishes libraries in Indian villages, aiming at improving the mental development of children in Indian villages by encouraging and motivating these children to develop reading habits. He explains the rationale behind the name of the initiative, "Gyan" means knowledge. We are giving you the key to knowledge – now it is your job to unlock it."

Gyan-Key has a wonderful system of communicating feedback of the programme. Each book comes with a postcard and the students are encouraged to write to the donors and rural relations and share their experience and thoughts on the book. Emphasizing the importance of feedback, Pradeep ji says, "Across the country there is good work being done but we don't do follow up and receive feedback. Most of the time we fail on that and the entire project collapse. We do very rigorous follow-up and get feedback from the kids, parents and teachers. Through 1000 libraries, we have reached 3 lakh students in 1000 villages. Of that, 49,000 students write back to us with their comments on the books. This is the biggest success story."

- Rapid urbanization is causing problems for the rural poor and their children in India, who live without civic amenities like power (electricity) and sometimes water. For their social and agricultural development, the best answer is improved education, through reading materials like books and periodicals including text books. To support the villages, Joint Assistance Centre is planning to establish libraries in five villages. The locations of the library projects are:

**Village Ahmed Nagar, District Kheri (U.P.)
INDIA**

**Village Sansarpur, District Kheri (U.P.)
INDIA**

**Village Prayagpur, District Behraich (U.P.)
INDIA**

Village Maigra, District Gaya (Bihar) INDIA

- **Village Siodhara, Dist.Barabanki (U.P.)
INDIA**

the National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) conducted a variety of studies and has come up with an action research project aimed at establishing Public Information Centers (PIC's). The objective of these centers will be to provide information on rural development programmes, agricultural extension, and utilities as well as social development information, e.g., health, education, finance, legal. This paper discusses the issues involved as well as the location of PIC's, databases, training, service and the sustenance of PIC's.

- The Kalgidhar Society – Baru Sahib has developed a value-based education system combined with modern scientific English language based curriculum. The schools are set up in remote inaccessible areas, which are

generally missed out by government and private education system, which find them unviable.

- By motivating local donors to donate their lands and encouraging local volunteers to actively help in setting up the schools, the organization manages to create a sense of ownership and accountability within the community. After completion of the school programs, the students are well equipped for higher education and employment.
- The organization lays emphasis on educating the girl-child and believes that by educating a girl child, not only the entire family but 7 other families get educated. barusahib.org/ruralEducationRevolution



Figure 1: Impact On Rural Development

With the establishment and implementation of the public libraries there is a positive effect on the villagers. It had changed their standard of living by raising education and knowledge level. The Information revolution had entered in the rural areas which is a good sign for rural development. The different projects and schemes undertaken by the Government and Non-governmental Organizations for the upliftment of rural communities living in villages are running with a good cause. It has raised better communication, education, knowledge through books, and mobile library all by advancement in the Information Technology. It is the impact of public library services in the villages which had build up the confidence level of the villagers. It had spread and enlightened the seed of knowledge through establishment of libraries. Now the villagers are active in running computer, mobile and to do work in all areas like agriculture, economic, finance, marketing etc which is good for the economic condition of the country. If we review the literature it can be said that there is a vast difference between the pre independence, independence and modern Indian

condition. The rural development is the dream of the Gandhian Thought. Rural reconstruction puts an end to exploitation, diseases, illiteracy, gambling, drinking, corruption or class struggle. It seeks to establish a socialistic system in the country and thereby brings about the social and economic development of the rural areas. The concept of e-learning had made easy for receiving education and knowledge. We can see now that the villagers have become more civilized and educated with the advancement of the libraries in the rural areas. Everything had been communicable among each other and progressed a lot.

Gandhian Quote:

“Ideal Society necessarily highly cultured because every man and women in that society knows what he or she wants and also no one should want anything that others could not have. Such a society will be an “Oceanic Circle” where the centre will be the individual who will always be ready to perish for the village, later ready to perish for the circle of villagers, till at last the whole becomes a life comprised of individuals”.”

5. Suggestion and Conclusion

It is evident that rural libraries had made the life of villagers. Going through the literature, schemes and projects through various organizations, it can be analyzed that the libraries are the best resource to educate the villagers which helps in rural development. Villages are the backbone of the country because the farmers are born there who cultivates land which helps in the economic development of the country. It is suggested that the books which are old and used by the students of urban areas should be donated to the rural areas. They should not sell the books. 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. If they are unable to reach there, they can fund the organizations working in this field. It will again make the India a Golden Bird as it was known during Independence.

Gandhi’s idea to develop the Indian society was based on his understanding of the society and hence based on the village system. Talking about the importance of village, he wrote in 1936, **“I would say if the village perishes, India will perish too. It will be no more India. His one mission in the world will get lost.”** Harijan. 29.08.36.

He was aware of the realities of the village life and knew the plight of half starved masses of India. He often acknowledged the same in his vivid descriptions

of Indian villages. He wrote, “instead of having graceful hamlets dotting the lands, we have dung-heaps. The approach to many villages is not a refreshing experience. Often one would like to shut one’s eyes and stuff one’s nose, such is the surrounding dirt and offending smell”. (Gandhi: Constructive programmes – its meaning and place). His understanding of the plight of the people has been extremely well brought out in his writings, identifying his emphasis on removal of poverty over aesthetics.

The revolution in information technology had changed the scenario of libraries and made the system of study very easy and comfortable. About seventy percent (70%) of population lives in rural areas. In addition to other sources, a major source of information is library. Earlier studies stated that the libraries in rural areas are traditional in nature and not well equipped according to the need of the rural people. It had adversely affected the development of a library system. The major reason for the present status of rural libraries is lack of adequate resources, financial and human. 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 library acts as a resource centre and a clearinghouse of information on rural development in India. Government publications, research reports, and data apart from journals and other unpublished material form a massive resource base of the library. It has developed a computerized database of the resources in its collection. The computerized database consists of nearly two lakh references. The library has also fully automated its day-to-day operations. There should be a continuous work done in the field of library revolution in rural areas. This continuity will maintain sustainability in our country and follow the Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles provided our Constitution. The dreamers of our country will be happy when they see the rural development and rural reconstruction through the way of library. Information technology had made a remarkable work in this field. This has led to all ways of communication easy and comfortable.

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