



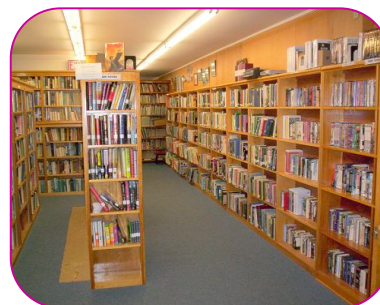
APPLICATION OF ICT IN RURAL LIBRARIES OF WEST BENGAL A CASE STUDY OF BIRBHUM DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

In the present era of advanced ICT libraries have seen a drastic change in their house keeping operation. This technology has not only provides easy access to information but also turned the whole world into a global village. Though the libraries in the urban areas are getting huge ICT facilities but the rural libraries are not getting the same. Rural libraries in West Bengal are facing financial problem, lack of manpower, lack of infrastructure. According to census report (2011) nearly 70 per cent people lives in rural areas but they are not getting the equal facilities and opportunities as per the facilities getting by urban people.



Thus rural libraries in West Bengal turned into a museum for the preservation of Books.

KEY WORDS : *Information and communication technology (ICT), Rural Library, Rural Development,*

INTRODUCTION

Present era is the era of information and communication technology. ICT has touched almost all the aspect of life and libraries are not exception of it. ICT has changed the library environment. New technology provides tremendous information; it has changed the whole educational environment. Now one can see the use of ICT in every activities of library. Libraries are using ICT in cataloguing, classification, circulation, indexing, and information dissemination purposes. Though the urban areas are getting ICT facilities in every sector but the rural areas are not getting the same facilities. There is clear cut difference between urban and local areas in implementation of ICT. Due to the increase in literacy rate in India there is a need and demand for gaining knowledge and information from all section of the society. Highly modernized and advanced libraries are present in India but these are located at urban areas only. According to census report (2011) nearly 70 percent people lives in rural areas but they are not getting the equal facilities and opportunities as per the facilities getting by urban areas people.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Khan (1991) has studied the function of public libraries in literacy and adult education in terms of information service, education, and cultural function in India.

Deshpandey (2000), has described the role of public libraries in developing countries and highlighted the characteristic of public libraries and there services

Parthasarathi Mukhopadhyay (2006), dissed about software frame work for public library based web enable multilingual community information services byutilizing open standard and open source software.

Brahma and Singh (2013), studied the problem and prospect of modernization of public library services in modern era.

Sultana (2014), suggested that rural libraries of West Bengal should maintain collection and other services for rural communities which aware them from framing to career opportunities.

METHODOLOGY:

Following methodologies have used for collection of data.

i secondary data from the website of dept. of mass education extension and library services, govt. of West Bengal ii Telephonic conversation with the staff of concerned library iii Interview of some of staff of rural libraries.

ROLE OF RURAL LIBRARY:

Rural libraries are first and foremost meant to serve the rural community generally. Rural library is a place where books, materials, and equipment's that assist users to read research and obtain needed information are kept essentially. The role of a functional rural library is to regularly disseminate information to the rural community through rural librarian. A rural librarian is supposed to acquire, process into retrievable forms and make the items of information available to the users. Unomah, J.I.(1987) believes that librarianship is about services; service to community and the public by acquiring necessary materials in forms of books, journal, magazine, newspapers and AV materials and other forms of recorded knowledge to satisfy both present and future needs. Following are important role of rural libraries in the cultural and educational development of rural community.

1. To help the rural people in maintaining the knowledge acquired from their education;
2. Help the rural community to understand the social, political and economic condition of the country;
3. Inspire the rural people to read, understand, acquire knowledge and to enjoy all the resources of the library for education and recreation;
4. Help in overall community development, provides materials of social, economic and health care development.

Application of ICT in Rural Libraries:

ICT has influenced in all the activities of library whether it is rural or urban. Rural libraries has started changing its day to day work from traditional to modern way by using computer. Preservation of information is shifting from print or manuscript to e-publishing, magnetic e-content etc. Generation of information is shifting from writing or typing to word processing, text editing, and character recognition etc. Technical job of the library i.e. cataloguing, classification, indexing has changed into data processing, artificial intelligence, Expert system etc. Cataloguing and information retrieval system has changed into data base management system Physical weeding technique for destroy or removing of information shifted into magnetic eraser, optical eraser etc.

Rural libraries in West Bengal

The paper concentrates on the usage and implementation of ICT on rural libraries of West Bengal basically concentrating of Birbhum district. WB is divided into 19 districts though one more districts is formed, but still I will consider the 19 districts of WB. Table 1 shows 19 districts of WB with their respective rural libraries out of total public libraries.

Table- 1
District wise public library in West Bengal

District	Total public library	Rural library
Bankura	130	119
Birbhum	124	110
Burdwan	212	163

Coochbehar	109	100
Daksin dinajpur	57	49
Darjeeling	99	91
Hoogly	158	121
Howrah	136	99
Jalpaiguri	110	87
Kolkata	96	0
Maldah	105	92
Murshidabad	145	131
Nadia	110	89
North 24 parganas	221	99
Paschim medinipur	158	130
Purba medinipur	121	106
Purulia	117	111
South 24 parganas	156	107
Uttar dinajpur	54	46

Source: Dept. of mass education extension and library service

The above Table shows the total number of libraries with their respective rural counterpart. Only Kolkata District does not have any rural library as it is urban district.

Table- 2
Some Rural libraries in Birbhum District:

Sl no	Name of library	Address	Name of librarian	Est. year	Total collection
1	Purandarpur Rural Library	Vill+Po-Purandarpur,Dist-Birbhum,Pin-731129	ShakshiGopal chandra	1940	3750
2	Koma Rural Library	Vill-Koma P.O-Januri Dist-Birbhum 731102	Godadhar Mondal	1981	2700
3	Bansanka vidyasagar Gramin Granthagar	Vill+Po-Bansnkha,Dist-Birbhum 731121	Chowdhury Abdul Hasib	1980	2680
4	Dhaltikuru Rural Lib.	Vill+Po-Dhaltikuri,Dist-Birbhum,731129	Md.Harun Al Rashid	1980	3050
5	Abnishpur Govt sponsored Rural library	Vil+Po-Abnishpur,Dist-Birbhum 731121	Prabhat kumar Singha	1951	3000
6	Nagari Bani mandir public library	Vill+Po-Ngari Dist-Birbhum 731126	Sudip Kumar Mondal	1980	2830
7	Margram Bandhab samity Library	Vill+Po-Margram, Dist-Birbhum 731217	-----	1979	3452
8	Ahmadpur Joy Durga public library	Vill+Po-Ahmadpur,Dist-Birbhum 731201	Bhagyadhar Das	1948	3850
9	Harimati Smiriti Pathaghar	Vil+Po-Mangaldihi Dist-Birbhum 731121	Rabindranath Ghosal	1967	3010
10	Kabi Joydeb sadaran pathaghar	Vii+Po-Jaydeb Kenduli,Dist-Birbhum 731214	-----	1980	3670
11	Panchra Kamala jube sangha rural lib.	Vil-Panchra Po-Panchra Hat Dist.Birbhum	-----		3550
12	Ghurisa Nirmal Milan Sanga Rural Library	Vil+Po-Ghurisa Birbhum,731214	Sri Sujit Kumar Rakshit	1954	2830

Table-3

Status of electrification in rural library

District of West Bengal	Rural Libraries	
	Electrified	Not Electrified
Bankura	96	23
Birbhum	106	4
Burdwan	161	2
Coochbehar	97	3
Daksin dinajpur	39	10
Darjeeling	75	16
Hoogly	115	6
Howrah	92	7
Jalpaiguri	73	14
Kolkata	00	00
Maldah	65	27
Murshidabad	100	31
Nadia	82	7
North 24 parganas	87	12
Paschim medinipur	94	36
Purba medinipur	77	29
Purulia	75	36
South 24 parganas	93	14
Uttar Dinajpur	31	15

Source: Dept. of mass education extension and library service

Table 3 divided the rural libraries into electrified and non-electrified parts. We can see the poor condition of rural libraries in few district of West Bengal. In this modern era electrification is the basic need of family or any institution. Due to lack of electrification rural libraries fail to attract the user or knowledge seeker. ICT and others equipment's like fan, light, computer are not available. So there is not a suitable environment in the rural libraries. District like Paschim Mednipur, Purulia, Malda, and Uttar Dinajpur has many libraries which does not have electrification. Uttar Dinajpur has worst condition among all which is 32% of non-electrified libraries.

Table-4
Availability of IT in few rural libraries in Birbhum District

Sl no	Name of Library	No. of Computer	Name of Library software(if any)	E-resources/Digital materials	Internet connection Yes(Y)/ No(N)
1	Purandarpur Rural Library(PRL)	1	---	Free E-resources through online	Y
2	Koma Rural Library(KRL)	---	---	---	N
3	Bansanka vidyasagar Gramin Granthagar(BVGG)	---	---	---	N
4	Dhaltikuru Rural Lib.(DRL)	--	---	----	N
5	Abinashpur Rural lib(ARL)	1	---	Free E-resources through online	Y

6	Nagari Bani mandir public library(NBMPL)	—	--	—	N
7	Margram Bandhab samity Library(MBSL)	1	—	Free E-resources through online	Y
8	Ahmadpur Joy Durga public library(AJPL)	1	---	Free E-resources through online	Y
9	Harimati Smiriti Pathaghar(HSP)	----	----	----	N
10	Kabi Joydeb sadaran pathagar(KJSP)	----	----	—	—
11	Panchra Kamala jube sangha rural lib(PKJSRL).	1	—	Free E-resources through online	N
12	Ghurisa Nirmal Milan Sanga Rural Library(GNMSRL)	—	—	—	N

Above table shows the use of computer and other technology to provide information. Table shows that those have computer also have access to internet thus could provide free e-resources to the users. Out of twelve libraries only five libraries possess computer and internet facility. It is noticed that no rural library has advanced library management software to maintain library services. None of the library has more than one computer and user does not get access to computer and internet facilities.

Table -5
Problems of IT implementation in Rural Libraries

Problems	PRL	KRL	DRL	ARL	NBMPL	AJPL	HSP	KJSP	PKJSRL	GNMSRL	MBSL	BVGG
Absence of IT training facility	N	Y	Y		N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Insufficiency of library staff	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Burden of work	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N
Absence of promotional reward	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Existing staff not interactive	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N
Shortfall of IT Skilled	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Financial issues	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Inadequacy of engrossment in learning IT	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y
Negligence's of		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

higher authority														
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Difficulties present in the implementation of ICT in Rural Libraries: Yes(Y), No (N)

12 Libraries have been selected to observe the problem and challenges in implementing of ICT in rural libraries on basis of 9 points that are needed to provide the better ICT facilities in the libraries. On the basis of the data collected from the libraries we can see that none of the library possesses all the points to qualify for better service. The above table shows the various problems exist in the library service of Birbhum District. Out of 110 libraries only 12 have been selected to observe the problem and challenges of rural libraries. This sample tries to reflect the extent of implementation of ICT in rural libraries of Birbhum district.

CONCLUSION:

Though the Govt. W.B is initiating different types of programme, better facilities and giving fund for the development but still rural libraries are not getting enough attention in regard to its achievement. Connecting rural people with ICT and provide them requisite information is a major challenges today. Some of the important issues that obstruct the information and communication technology are as under:

Lack of proper infrastructure, Political instability, Illiteracy and low level education, Lack of skilled professional, Inadequate Management support and finance, passive role of rural information centre, insufficiency of proper documents in local language fail to attract the local peoples. So rural libraries should give more emphasis not only as to the place of gaining knowledge but also as an institution that will provide knowledge beyond its collection of books and article. It should give information to the rural life such as to the farmer i.e. type of farming that should be done, modern technique, creating awareness etc. Rural libraries have potential to bridge the gap of digital divide. Therefore, government should give more emphasis on rural libraries not only as a place of gaining knowledge but as an institution that will provide knowledge beyond its collection of books and article.

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