



The Role of Public Libraries in Socio-Cultural Development

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Abstract:

Libraries play a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of human life by serving and providing knowledge resources to the readers, users, students, teachers and researchers. Public libraries work as catalysts to change and develop the community's providing information and knowledge to their users and influencing the lives of its users regarding social, economic and educational & cultural change individually and in many ways. Public libraries engaged in shaping the individual in particular and lifelong learning faster social development in all ways in general. This article discusses the importance and role of public libraries in the coastal area of Maharashtra regarding the socio-cultural & economic development of public library users.

Keywords: *Knowledge resources, Public libraries, Communities, Social and economic development, Information resources.*

Introduction

Public libraries right from ancient times influenced the individuals and communities where the user's pursuit of knowledge economic, educational & cultural opportunities for the overall development of society providing library resources in the form of reading materials, organized programs and cultural & educational events, book clubs, book exhibition and different types of programs organized by public libraries.

By providing knowledge and information resources along with organizing different programs and activities public libraries enable individuals to expand their horizons, increasing their knowledge base and expanding their thinking capacity depth of knowledge, consciousness and scientific temperament personal and professional growth. The public libraries are engaged in lifelong learning providing access to everyone in spaces where people gather together from different backgrounds and classes breaking the thinking of discrimination and social barriers and strengthening the bonds that tie everyone together and make the society develop in many ways. Public libraries not only provide reading material to different class and age groups but also create reading environments and social values all types of literary encoring dialogue and human values. Libraries contribute to making individuals more understanding and sensible towards social values and the necessity of social relevance for social and nation-building.



Public libraries provide various knowledge and information resources and arrange and celebrate various cultural, and educational programs for the users. Public libraries are the places where every individual can feel good and stratified as they provide support, guidance and a sense of dignity. The main role of the public library is very important and noticeable that is the commitment to social equality and social justice, providing its resources and assistance without discrimination. Public libraries can act as very important institutions for local community and individual library resource users for broad community development and temperament and play a significant role in the social, educational and cultural development of society. The importance of public libraries in rural and coastal regions & disadvantaged communities & the main objective of the study.

Objectives of the Public Libraries:

- Public libraries collect and ensure all sorts of information and knowledge resources to users.
- Facilitating all types of reading material according to the needs of the local user and local community & the resources which may be useful to them for this & individual and community development.
- According to IFLA/UNESCO's direction public libraries should work for information access, training schemes, reading promotion schemes, personal development and services to young children (FIA 2001)
- Facilitating reading material to everyone right from the child to the age of readers.
- The main objective is to create, develop and extend reading habits amongst all individuals & in the local community.
- Supporting formal & informal education, providing educational resources in traditional and modern forms.
- Creating awareness regarding local cultural richness by organizing cultural programs celebrating with the participation of the local community.
- Providing and motivating all individuals to come to the library and making them self-sufficient, and self informed.
- Facilitating all new technologies available in the field to get information & access knowledge to the readers.
- Supporting and organizing the library literary programs for all age groups from the local community.
- Modern public libraries are providing free and fair public access to computers & all information communication technology services so that they can use friendly and get benefits for individual development.
- Public and today's users need fast and correct information so public libraries help them to locate information in the easiest way.

Role of Public Libraries

- Libraries are not merely structures of buildings but help the community and ultimately the nation to develop a society empowering individuals to deal with their problems by all means anytime.



- Public libraries through their collected & presented wide range of reading material and all types of resources support the individual & communities for the overall development of the society.
- Public libraries also help the underprivileged, a most marginalized members of society have access to the resources and help they need to improve their lives.
- Users from the underdeveloped society get information regarding different schemes and programs for development.
- Public libraries shape the children's develop essential pre-reading skills and enhance reading habits in their lives.
- Public libraries enhance the understanding of tolerance among the users which benefits indirectly to society to make a civilized society.
- Public libraries also encourage its readers by providing resources on democratic constitutional provisions, rights and duties. Providing current development in administration and policies and making their views about policies and decisions taken by the ruling government involved in the political development.
- Public libraries promote to readers directly or indirectly in many ways for social change, to eliminate discrimination and social evils making the social bond changing the community.

Review of Literature (Literature Review)

- The study of MD. Ashikuzzaman on the economic and social import of libraries within their libraries have shown that public libraries are playing an important role in changing society. They also have shown that in the modern age public libraries are providing all the facilities to their users regarding ICT & knowledge resources.(Ashikuzzaman, 2023)
- The study of Sumi on community information needs and the role of information rational infrastructure to meet the informational needs of highly literature users of Hamirpur district, Himachal Pradesh. In this study reports books and periodicals are the most information center resources. It is also reported that users are not satisfied with the facilities provided by local public libraries. (Sumi, 2012)
- American Library Association in 1943 which states," Public libraries transmit information and ideas that are necessary for a community's current well-being and future progress." (p.g)
- In 1994, section ten of the third version of UNESCO's manifesto on public libraries highlights public libraries' mission in providing information services adopted to local business, associations and groups on the internet. (Abid, 1996)

Conclusion

According to the study organized by researchers and literature review, public libraries are playing a fundamental role in society. Basically, they are educational information centers, and cultural centers to provide information regarding employment, health, education, art, culture, science, tradition and business knowledge public libraries are essential institutions for the betterment of a democratic developed society by providing free and equal access to all users without any discrimination with high-quality information with the help of ICT tools. Some researchers also focus on some public libraries making more efforts to provide



diverse knowledge resources, increasing collections, using modern and evolved ICT technologies and arranging cultural, educational, and social programs & activities to promote the participation of local community members in the libraries to promote and increase reading habits among the children and new readers.

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