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Emerging Nature of Community Services by Libraries in view of Village Adoption by Institutions of Higher Learning

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***Abstract:** Libraries of higher educational institutes besides serving their parent organisation can provide extension service towards the society or the local community. This idea generated with the Government guideline of the MHRD for the Educational Institutions called Unnat Bharat Abhiyan for adopting village for their development and bridging the gap between urban and rural. This paper deals with how libraries being part of the institution can contribute in shaping the development of the adopted village through active participation of the community and setting up village community library under the patron of institutional library. It can bridge the gap between rural and urban community in terms of social and economical development, creating a visible change of adopted village and becoming a model village for other villages in its vicinity.*

Keywords: Village adoption, Academic Libraries, Community Service

1. Introduction:

The rural population of India in general and particularly in the Northeast is lagging behind due to lack of basic amenities available in the villages. Rural people are unaware of different schemes and programmes of the government despite some of them having accessed to Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The farmers, women folk, youths and children are not well informed about the plethora of services provided by the government from time to time. Still the rural people or the community are lagging behind in all aspect of their all round development. In 2014, the Government of India issued a directive to all the educational institutions to adopt village so that those village becomes a model village which other village of the vicinity adopt the technique they have developed. As educational institutions have intellectual bodies and necessary infrastructure, they definitely have potential to educate the village nearby besides serving their own institution; similarly the libraries being part of the institutions can play a vital role for the growth and development of the adopted villages.

2. Community participation and Adoption:

The participation of the community itself into the system is one of the most fruitful mechanisms in mobilising the development of the community. There has been lot many of experiments to develop or building a community but without involvement of the community itself it becomes less effective. There has been many successful programmes through the active participation of the community in other related programmes such as removing mal-functioning of Tea labourers in Tea garden areas, eradication of alcoholism in a community, building of schools in remote areas and many more.

The Violence Prevention Through Urban Upgrading (VPUU) of Cape Town is one of the success stories where successful implementation of Community Services by the Community people are done making overall development for the community through innovative strategies, a good methodology with a good team or community champions along with some funding partners. Marcia Sias, a Senior Librarian, having more than 20 years of experience is one of the Community Champions who specialises for the Development of the Youth. (VPUU, 2016).

Similarly Agha Khan Foundation is another example doing innovative services internationally and this being effectively done in India as well Nizamuddin Basti in Delhi is one of the successful implementation in India. They have been doing active work for the rural upliftment emphasising for the youth development, women folks and children for the all round development of the community in rural areas. This foundation has done active work for the revival of Iraq libraries and Museums which has been destroyed in the Iraq war. (<https://www.akdn.org/our-agencies/aga-khan-foundation>)

So adopted village as a community can be made fully active participatory through the innovative design of services by the libraries and materialise the mandate of Government guidelines. The execution of ideas into reality with regard to Adopting Village into 'practicality' can be done in the following ways which according to Ramesh (2015), the modes of operationalising Village adoption can be divided into five ways:-

1. Village adoption in Conventional Mode.
2. Village adoption in Naturalised Mode.
3. Village adoption in Demonstration Mode.
4. Village Adoption in Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) Mode.
5. Village Adoption in Action Research Mode.

3. Library as a mediator for the adopted village and the Institution:

Institutional Library or the Library of Higher Institution does not limit its area of service to the affiliated organisation but can also extend its service to the nearby village for the betterment, growth and development of the community also. As

institutions are filled up with erudite faculties they can accelerate ideas holistically for the development of the rural dwellers. The Librarian as an information packed person can inform people about their livelihoods and sustenance for their lives through various organisations of the institution like NCC and NSS wings. In doing so a separate section in the library can be maintained for Community Service Section where services would be provided solely for the Community of the adopted village.

4. The Work procedure:

Librarian may personally visit the adopted village or the selected village by the Institution and make a simple baseline survey of the population to know about the present condition or the status of the community. After the survey, meetings can be arranged and organise a small awareness programme on information system for their development and sustenance for their livelihood. A team of the community can be set up so that the community themselves actively participate with the institution for their benefit and exchange of information related to their well being.

Library may provide free membership to the community and made a mandatory to visit once a week or fortnightly, the community representative team can visit library and a formal discussion can be conducted about their various problems they are facing. The Librarian along with the faculty of the institution can actively participate and hear the various problems.

Now services of the Library may not be limited to issue and return of documents alone but also patiently hear the problems of the people so that their problems can be overcome in due course of time by providing them the information that they are dearth of relating to Health, Social problem, Economical, Educational, Communication, Transportation, Natural Resources and Human Resources and many more.

Libraries can support in providing the information relating to various issues of the community or the village, support them in obtaining various information. They can be made aware of the various schemes and programmes launched by the Government from time to time for example, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Generation Act 2005 (MGNREGA), Prime Minister Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) for homeless people, POLIO vaccine and other Immunization dates for the infants, DIC notification and other Job advertisements for the unemployed youths, Self Help Groups for the Village Women for their financial help from NABARD and other Financial Institution for funding of their organisation and as such other related information.

The visits of the local people can fulfil the purpose of Library being importance to the society in general and community in particular. The Institutional library undoubtedly become the part and parcel of the Community in hearing the various problems on periodical basis and try to solve by giving them information be in the

Local Government i.e Gram Panchayat or Block Development Offices, Health Institution like Public Health Centres and other such Public institutions.

Libraries can support setting up of own Community Information Centre run by the community itself and having direct linkage with the Institutional Library. It can transform people in setting up of reading habits, educating among the masses and inculcate curiosity to learn new things so that younger generation do not waste their time in indulging addiction and falling into certain unwanted evil traps but come out with the innovative ideas through the available resources within the community and make a better living for the community and the society.

5. Information needs of the Rural Community

Rural people are always in the need of information and giving the right information at the right time is what they really matters. The types of information are multi-dimensional and Libraries are the best place to gather and provide them information. Some of the basic needs of the information can be categorised as follows:-

Basic information needs: on problems of water and power supply.

Health issues: how individuals can prevent diseases, awareness on health programmes.

Agricultural occupation: need on the information about the farmers, regarding plantation, soil conservation, prevention of animal and plants diseases, farming equipments and various other agricultural activities.

Education: Information of availability of nearby primary schools, modes of teaching and learning process.

Housing Facilities: Information on several housing schemes provided by the government like the PMAY and provision for financial inclusion.

Family welfare matters: Information on marriage related problems, care of the children, juvenile delinquency, etc.

Crime and Safety: Information is required on prevention of various criminal activities, safety of the women folks, abstinence of drugs and alcoholics by the youth.

Government policies: The information on various schemes launched by the Government from time to time and the active participation of the people in their political field.

These are some of the basic information, although there are many more, required by the rural community and providing them the information would let them a sustainable development towards achieving or targeting a standard living in the society.

6. Making the Community People Library Friendly:

The village community would periodically come to the library and actively participate to all the discussions of different problems of the community. The Librarian can provide each of them books on their interest and make them discuss on the book they have read, on their next visit and discuss among themselves. Such type of practise is generally done on rotational basis in the Community Library and Information Centres (CLRC's) of Nepal under READ (Rural Education and Development) Centres in some of the districts of Nepal. This enables the community people strengthen their unity, build fraternity and arouse among them the importance of reading and would definitely ignite the minds of the people for better purposive education.

The exchange of the ideas and solving the community problem together will increase their height of understanding among themselves and transform into liberal community. The community would value the system of education and create interest in visiting libraries which could be a platform for transforming into noble ideas among the people.

7. Finding means of livelihood among the community

One of the most important factors for living in the rural or urban area is finding means of livelihood. If that is satisfied then people may think of other necessity or amenities such as education and job hunting. Libraries along with the faculty staff can find out or explore available natural resources in the community and also the human resources. For example we can enlighten them about the use of Betel nut tree leaf for the use of making disposable plates, as such trees are grown abundantly in rural areas, the unemployed youths could be given training on the preparation of such plates from the (District Industries and Commerce Centre) DIC or (Industrial Training Institute) ITI or any other training institute and that too the information can be provided to the community from the Libraries, Similarly for agricultural products the best market place to sell off with maximum benefits could be informed which the community people would get maximum satisfaction. The young children could be provided books and other educative materials for their academic purposes and enthuse them about the reading habits and use of libraries and helping them out through tutorials that may be provided by the Institution. One of the most important matters that the rural people concern is about health. Libraries can gather information about various prevention measures that some of them are suffering from, also the Libraries can intimate about various dates for vaccines or any other any Health drive taken by the Government for rural service. This would ultimately satisfy the slogan for the Sustainable Development Growth of the United Nations as "leaving on one behind". The motive behind adopting the village would be satisfied if community people follow the design and promote the use of library resources and services.

8. Finding result after a period and compare with the baseline survey

The process of adoption would take some time and could not be finished in an overnight. As the word 'adoption' literally signifies the liability on the part of the adopter as to look after in every possible steps and stages. Such sort of things definitely would take time to see the changes. The seemingly progressive nature of the adopted village can be measured in the following label of approaches towards:-

- Personal, Human, Economic and Social life
- Participation of community in local level development.
- Initiating in different Government programmes and schemes.
- Build in partnership with voluntary organisation, co-operatives.
- Interest building in academic affairs and education for all.
- Practicing of clean and safe environment.
- Diversified agricultural techniques and practices.
- Skill development for the eligible youth.
- Self Help Groups (SHGs) and their Financial inclusion.
- Strengthening Goan Panchayats (GPs), Social Audit and many more

The most important among the approaches would be on the scenario of the community people active participation towards use of information services and resources and effective use of Libraries.

9. Conclusion

Libraries of the Higher Education Institutions such as College Libraries, University Libraries, Special Libraries of Technologies and Medicines, etc can play an important and vital part in changing the scenario of the rural community. Though such libraries have been imparting effective services to their respective parent organisation and fulfilling the needs of students and the faculties, at the same time it has the responsibility towards the community nearby so that communities do not lay behind in the race of development. The village community are the one who should be taken care of so that visible changes could be witnessed. These changes would not only satisfy the mandate of the Government towards adopting a village by educational institutions and transforming rural village into a global village, but also streamlining the rural areas at par with their urban counterpart.

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