

**Vol. XII  
Number-1**

**ISSN 2319-7129**

**(Special Issue) April, 2018**

**UGC Notification No. 62981**

# **EDU WORLD**

**A Multidisciplinary International  
Peer Reviewed/Refereed Journal**

**APH PUBLISHING CORPORATION**

**PRINCIPAL**  
Loknete Gopinathji Munde  
Arts, Commerce & Science College  
Manjlegaon, Dist. Ratnagiri. 415203

ISSN : 2319-7129

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*(Special Issue)*

*Chief Editor*  
**Dr. S. Sabu**

Principal, St. Gregorios Teachers' Training College, Meenangadi P.O.,  
Wayanad District, Kerala-673591. E-mail: drssbkm@gmail.com

*Co-Editor*  
**S. B. Nangia**

**A.P.H. Publishing Corporation**

4435-36/7, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj,  
New Delhi-110002

  
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# Rural Public Libraries in India : Role and Challenges

Jagtap Dagadu Arjun\*

## ABSTRACT

Libraries are the informational backbone of the society on which the overall development will depend. The public libraries are at the center of developmental activities though the development of each activity depends upon the information. The Public libraries are the prime sources of information. In this age of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) lot of problems put to the public libraries to provide the quality service to the community which they expect and for which the public libraries is meant for. To provide the effective and efficient library services libraries need technological, financial, and skilled human resources. In this respect these libraries facing lot of problems. In this context this paper focuses on the role of public library and problems in performing this role in the society.

**Keywords:** [Society, ICT, Challenges, Development]

## INTRODUCTION

The development of any country, society depends upon the developments of the libraries in that country. Libraries are the knowledge reservoirs of the society. These are the knowledge resource centers of the society. The development of the society is not merely the industrial development or the physical resources; it really means the overall development of an individual i.e. physical, mental, health, education, political, economic, and social.

The Public libraries can play very important role in overall development of the society. It is centers of community development. Public libraries act as catalyst for the educational, economic, political, cultural development of the society by providing the relevant informational resources to the users.

## PUBLIC LIBRARY

### Definition

Wikipedia defines 'A public library is a library that is accessible by the general public and is usually founded from public sources, such as taxes. It is operated by librarians and library paraprofessionals, who are also civil servants'.

### Role of Public Libraries in Society

The library is always been at the center of every human activity. Every activity of human activity depends upon the available information and the most important source of information is the libraries. The institutions may not have the libraries in physical form; it may in digital form in this age of Information Technology. The development of the society depends upon the social, political, economic, cultural development of the society.

\*LGM ACS College, Mandangad, Dist. Ratnagiri – 415 203 (MS) E-mail: jagtapda@gmail.com

## Education

Education is the prime requirement for community development. The development of the society depends upon the development of education and libraries are the heart of the educational system. Libraries can run without any institutions but the any institution cannot run without libraries.

The society's development is depends upon the educational development. In present scenario there is poor advancement in educational system as compare to rural setup. In this regard public libraries in rural areas can play in educational development of rural by providing the informational resources to the rural students.

## Life Long Learning

Public libraries can play vital role in life-long learning process. The public libraries can plays important role by provide the reading material and resources which is useful for life-long learning of the society.

## Literacy

Literacy is very important for social, economic, political and cultural development of the society. Particularly in rural community the literacy rate is very low. So it is important to increase the rate of literacy. In this context public can act as a catalyst to increase the rate of literacy and rural public libraries would be at the center and can play vital role in literacy programme.

## Economic Development

The public libraries can play very important role in the economic development in the society. The libraries can provide the literature useful for creational work. There is lot of fields which requires the information for processing and production in this context libraries are prime source of information. In this regard the public libraries can organize the programm for rural unemployed youths to guide for development of self-employment.

## Democratic Governance

The prime object of the education is overall development of an individual and transforms them into better citizen which is useful for democracy. The public libraries can play very important role in providing the relevant information to the users, citizens, and they can play active role in social, political, and economic, and cultural development of the society which is base for democratic development.

## Cultural Heritage

India is multicultural country having unity in diversity. There are different states having various cultures. It is very important to preserve this heritage and variety of culture for the coming generation. In this regard the public libraries in rural areas can play key role by conducting the cultural programmes for the community to inculcate the cultural knowledge among the new generation.

## PROBLEMS FACING THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN RURAL AREAS

### New Technology

Advent of new technologies put the big challenges to the public libraries. The technological advent of new technology put more impact on the public libraries in rural areas as compared to

  
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the public libraries in urban setup. The public libraries facing the serious financial problems, so it becomes very difficult to acquire the new technological tools and to provide the services to users. It becomes again expensive though the libraries facing the financial problems particular in rural area where managing resources are very meager.

## Financial Crisis

There is one truth that there is always lowest priority given to the libraries and the requirements. The budget of the public libraries had given the lowest priority. Because

There is a think behind that it is not so important for the society than other things. The think is that the development of the society is not depends upon the development of the libraries.

## User Expectation

Libraries are not for profit for making organization. These are for to cater the informational needs of the users. In this age of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) the users are become smart in using technology with smart phones. They become techno savy and they expect more effective and efficient library services. In this digital information environment the diversified users required quality library services. In this complex digital information environment the users require very nascent and relevant information which is available in the cyberspace.

It is a challenge to the libraries has to equip with the tools and techniques to provide the quality services to the users in this digital information environment. It is the big challenge to the rural public libraries to cater users such requirements in low budget crisis.

## Human Resource Management

Human Resource Management is the big problem in every kind of library and public libraries are no exception for it. There is always problem of insufficient and inefficient library staff. It is very difficult to manage the library information resources for which the library are meant for and library staff in constraint budget. In rural public libraries the library staffs is not sufficient and have the skills and techniques to face the challenge put by the ICT to provide the quality library services.

## CONCLUSION

The overall development of the society depends upon the development of information access mechanism. The Public libraries are the main information channels for the society. It provides the information to members of the society and causes the development of the society and the nation as well. Information flowing through these channels in society likes the blood circulation in the body. Public libraries are prime source of knowledge in rural areas serving with lot of challenges. The members of the society have to look after these problems and have to support to these knowledge reservoirs for survive and to preserve the ancient informational heritage to coming generation.

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*B. S. M.*

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