

Collaboration of Public Libraries and Literacy Programmes to Uplift the Economic Well Being and Rural Development of Tribals of Odisha

Prof. Kailash Chandra Das*

HEAD

PG Dept. of Library & Information Science,
Utkal University, Vani Vihar
Odisha, India
prof.k.c.das@gmail.com

Dr. Bhabani Kanta Satapathy,**

Lecturer

Pt. Nilakantha College of Library & information
Science
Bhubaneswar, India-751007

ABSTRACT

This paper includes various aspects relating to collaboration of public libraries with literacy programmes to uplift the economic well-being and rural development of Tribal's of Odisha. The scope of the present investigation has been confined to the scheduled areas of South Orissa viz Koraput, Kalahandi, Kandhamal and Ganjam districts. In Orissa, majority of tribals, called .Adivasis live in these four districts of South Orissa. To uplift their economic well being and rural development, a collaboration of public libraries and literacy programmes arc essential. The sample size of this study has included all the librarians of District Public Libraries, Libraries run by the Public bodies, NGO's and other Private and Public Organizations of these tribal districts. The data were collected through questionnaires from 153 samples from all the four districts have been taken into consideration by random sampling. The data collected were properly analysed with different statistical tools and at the end findings, suggestions have been incorporated.

Key words: Information needs, Information seeking behaviour, University Library, Research Library, E-resources.

0. INTRODUCTION

Information sector as an emerging area for the overall social development is an essential prerequisites for the present social milieu. All information problems usually stem from information poverty, the concept which appears to be highly wide spread and a pervasive in rural India. Although several factors can be attributed to this phenomenon, the parameters are not yet established to identify the information issues in the context of rural development. Improving the quality of life of rural folk by providing greater access to the information needed to affect their development. The broad areas of rural development approaches the requirement of information and satisfying users' information needs that stand as the pillars for defining the whole spectrum of information flow to several functionaries and beneficiaries involved in rural development programmes.

Even after sixty five years of planned efforts in the sector of education, we are still far away from achieving the goal of 100% literacy in our country. The most deprived are rural poor, tribal and other socio-economically disadvantaged groups which are marginalized and excluded from enjoying the present exceptional economic resurgence taking place in India. This gloomy picture has been also clearly reflected in the Tribal Districts of Odisha. The two concepts of rural development and rural education are intertwined with each other to such an extent that it becomes difficult to talk of one without the other. Many include rural education as a part of rural development. Rural development, in fact, consists of strategies, policies and programmes for the development of rural areas.

1. WHO ARE TRIBALS?

The word 'tribe' has not been defined anywhere in the Constitution of India. But it has been stated in Article 342 that: "The scheduled tribes are tribes or the tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be scheduled tribes in relation to that state". From one estimate there are 427 distinct scheduled tribe communities in the country. However, when the state wise list of scheduled tribe communities is computed the aggregate may add up to more than 600 groups. The total tribal population in the country as per 1991 census is 6, 77, 58, 380; and out of this 50, 07,354 only live in urban areas, and the rest reside in rural areas.

Scheduled tribe communities, by and large, are economically and educationally more backward than the general communities. All the tribal communities are not on the same socio-economic level also. They are at varying stages of the general techno economic parameter. At one end there are economically and educationally advanced communities like the Mina, Bhil, Khasi, Mizo, Naga, Garo, Bodo, Santhal, Munda, Ho and Oraon, and at the other end, several primitive groups, like the Onge, Jarwa, Sentinelcsc, Bonda, Juang, Lanjia, Saora, Birhor and many others are there, who are still at the hunting, fishing and gathering stage.

2. TRIBALS IN ODISHA

In Orissa there are 62 scheduled tribes, and out of these 12 communities, namely, Lodha, Khana, Mankirdia, Juang, PauriBhuiyan, Bonda, DongriaKandha, KutiaKandha, LanjiaSaura, Soura, Didayi and Birhor have been identified as primitive. There are also some advanced tribal communities in the state such as Santhal, Ho, Munda, Bhumija, Kandha, Bhuiyan, Bathudi, Oraon, Kisan and the Gond.

The total tribal population of the state is 70, 32,214 as per 1991 census, and out of this only 3,61,708 live in urban areas and the rest reside in rural areas. All the 62 scheduled tribe communities of the state are classifiable into three categories, namely (1) Indo-Aryan,(2) Austro-Asiatic (Mundari), and (3) Dravidian. The speeches of the tribal communities of the Indo-Aryan category are variant dialects of the regional language; whereas each of the tribal communities of the other two categories has its own distinctive speech. The Tibeto- Burmese language family is absent in Odisha.

3. TRIBAL LITERACY AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Literacy is an essential feature of human dignity and self-image, a window to the world of knowledge around and a prelude to modernization. Literacy has been defined in the census enumeration as the “ability to read and write a letter with understanding denoting formal schooling, at least up to the primary level”. But this test is seldom applied to persons claiming literate status. Low level of literacy and educational backwardness among the tribal communities are due to (i) acute indigence of the tribal people ;(ii) want of positive motivation for education; (iii) lack of adequate educational infrastructure in their neighborhood; and (iv) deficient communication system.

Regional disparities in literacy rates between states, between districts and between tribal and non-tribal areas are significant. Thus, there is an urgent need to accelerate ongoing literacy programmes organized by various Government and Non-Government agencies, especially, in rural and tribal areas. Public libraries can play an active part by participating in these programmes. In the communities where there is no flow of appropriate reading material and no stimulus to write, literacy itself may have little significance.

Libraries have always played a vital role in promoting education and research, in developing reading habit and in the dissemination of knowledge and information. It is a matter of great

concern that the role of libraries in promoting literacy and reading habit has not been fully realized in our country. Whereas, the growth of interest in library as an institutional tool for adult education and promoting literacy has been on a remarkable higher key in the U.K., U.S.A., Russia and Japan. Literacy programmes should be integrated with social, cultural and library activities. These should be planned, keeping in view the provision for library facilities. Librarians should be fully involved at each stage, right from planning to implementation covering pre-literacy, literacy and post-literacy stages. A well developed network of public libraries would be able to play its role effectively in promoting literacy (Das, 2006).

4. ENSURING A BETTER FUTURE FOR TRIBAL POPULATION

The Constitution of India has made several provisions to safeguard the interests of the STs in Articles 15(4), 16(4), 46, 243M, 243 ZC, 244, 334, 335, 338A, 339(1), in the Fifth as well as in the Sixth Schedules. Despite of these elaborate provisions in the Constitution and other laws, it is an unfortunate reality that social injustice and exploitation of Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections persist. Cultural norms and values which lead to the persistent discrimination against the tribal population can be changed through the media, public campaigns and setting up a legal framework which discourages discriminatory behaviour and strengthens the civil and political rights of the tribal population.

There is bewilderment in tribal development because the government administrative machinery is an impersonal omnibus. Administration always lays stress on the fulfillment of financial and physical targets. In other words development is measured in terms of money spent. Development signifies both quantitative and qualitative achievement. For realization of this objective, development priorities, strategies and implementation modalities should be tailored to the special problems, situations and felt needs of the tribal beneficiaries. There are certain constraints in the educational process of tribal children, and these must be obviated. What is true of Orissa is also true for the rest of the country.

The Public libraries and media can play an increasingly powerful role in shaping everyday perceptions about difference and diversity within a society and can be mobilised to educate, inform and entertain in ways which break down some of the barriers that separate socially excluded groups from the rest of society.

5. RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND ICT

Mahatma Gandhi said ‘India lives in villages’, since more than, seventy percent of the total population in India live in villages. Therefore, development of the country depends on the improvement of rural areas. Development of the rural areas alone can lead to the real development of India. Development of the rural areas can be achieved by solving the problems of the rural masses. This cannot be achieved through conventional methods and it is only through technological means that the rural population- can be empowered, since information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be used as a medium for synthesizing: knowledge possessed by the local communities with the information available on databases or with the global pool of knowledge and thereby pave way for the formation of Knowledge Society. ICT should be available to the rural masses and the digital divide that bifurcates rural from the urban masses should be surpassed, so that knowledge becomes the fundamental resource for all types of developmental activities. It is a known fact that knowledge is an important resource that can liberate people from poverty and empower them. Effective, efficient and optimum utilization of knowledge can create comprehensive wealth for the nation and contribute towards improving the quality of life, in all its perspectives, like health, education, infrastructure and other social indicators.

6. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Our contention is that the ills in rural development lie not in lack of programmes, but in neglecting the most fundamental input called proper rural education. The word functional literacy is vague and serves no purpose except making many to read a few lines. The real need is to equip the rural masses for rational and scientific thinking and apply the education for their own betterment. Hence, we advocate, a concerted effort to develop and implement a “Rural Educational Technology” suited to rural masses living at the Tribal Districts of Orissa and at the same time provide linkages with public libraries.

7. OBJECTIVES

The present research work was planned to undertake with specific objectives in view, to study the following points in respect of Tribal Districts of South Orissa, Kalahandi, Koraput, Kandhamal and Ganjam Districts.

- i. To study the existing public library facilities and conditions;
- ii. To study the role of public libraries in literacy movement, i.e. how these libraries have performed in eradication of illiteracy;
- iii. To study the collaborative effect of public libraries and literacy programmes on Rural Development;
- iv. To study the information support in combating fatal superstitions in Tribal Rural Society;
- v. To study how far Information and Communication Technology has been applied in Rural Development Programmes.
- vi. To analyze and study the impact and contribution of public libraries and education in social reform movement of Tribals;
- vii. To make an assessment of the tribal learners with regard to their attitude towards the public library and their achievement;
- viii. To examine the learning opportunities of the tribals to access the elements of continuity of tribal traditions, belief and practice;
- ix. To understand whether the public library was helpful to them in the process of their empowerment in the society; and
- x. To suggest practicable solutions for healthy growth and development of public library systems with responsibility for successful literacy programme for these tribal districts.

8. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

Keeping in view the vastness of the areas and size of the tribal population scattered in different parts of the State, it has been decided to take only the thickly populated districts where in a large number of Tribals resides. Accordingly, the scope of the present investigation has been confined to the scheduled areas of South Odisha viz Koraput, Kandhamal, Kalahandi and Ganjam districts. In Odisha, majority of tribals, called Adivasis live in these four districts of South Orissa. To uplift their economic well being and rural development, a collaboration of public libraries and

literacy programmes are essential. Therefore, we have undertaken this study to create awareness among the tribals keeping in view of their culture, tradition and safeguarding their right to life and above all right to education. The role and objective of the public libraries in these tribal areas should always be a total user satisfaction. Thus limitations of this research study are:-

1. The Districts covered are divided and created districts after re-organization.
2. In the present investigation, users those who use the public libraries, their opinion shall be recorded.
3. This is a case study of 4 thickly populated tribal districts; detail case study of each tribal District in Odisha may unearth the actual scenario.

9. SIZE OF THE SAMPLE

The sample size of this study has included all the librarians of District Public Libraries, Libraries run by the Public bodies, NGO's and other Private and Public Organizations of these tribal districts. Data were collected through questionnaires from 153 samples from all the four districts that have been taken into consideration by random sampling.

10. METHODOLOGY

The data were collected from available published sources (Both conventional as well as E-Resources), through literature studies, interviews, and also through personal visits to public libraries located in these tribal districts. To collect accurate and reliable data with regard to various parameters, one structured questionnaire in multiple choice questions, for public libraries librarians were designed. To provide more flexibility in the questionnaires, simple and open ended questions were included. Due care was taken to make these questionnaires comprehensive and easy to understand, so as to cover all aspects of public libraries and their role in literacy movement and rural development programmes in the tribal districts of South Orissa, namely, Koraput, Kalahandi, Kandhamal and Ganjam. Data analysis and Data interpretations were carried out using various statistical techniques.

11. FINDINGS

After a wide analysis of data and demographic study it was found that their demographic features like age, gender, qualification and designation were very much effective to come to a conclusion. The findings of the present study revealed that, lack of information and literacy prevails superstitions in tribal community. However significant co-relationship was found between the tribal women and fatal superstitions.

It was inferred from the data that people belong to tribal community do not use public library and they are not totally aware about the public library. They very often come to the library available in their locality. Usually the tribal people are illiterate. They even do not know their signature. So any written document or information is very much difficult to understand for them. Therefore any information in written form is inaccessible to the tribal people.

As the data indicate, very serious efforts are needed for future development and welfare of tribals. However there are a number of areas in which we have to focus for their development in general. If the concerned state governments focus on these three (health, education and income) developmental indicators in particular than a remarkable positive change in tribal communities can be brought about. But this is not enough, if we really want our nation to progress we have to give equal focus to all weaker sections of society in general, and tribes in particular. They constitute more than eight percent of nation population but 40 percent of displaced persons due to developmental projects are tribal's, without any rehabilitation programs.

Success and progress in developing countries lies with the development of their rural communities. Effective information service delivery and coordination is the essential ingredient for development.

12. SUGGESSTIONS

1. Partnerships between Public library and stakeholders in both private and public sectors should be encouraged to generate support for literacy programmes.
2. Community engagement should be key priority for Public library service planning
3. Story telling should remain key programme for all Public libraries
4. Public library should provide free access to their services so that it will attract more number of users.

5. Government should prioritize the development of public libraries in the tribal districts.
6. Mobile library services for the physical and visually disadvantaged and other vulnerable groups should be enhanced as a complement to conventional services
7. ICT's should be incorporated into the Public library service's literacy programme
8. There is need for a Public and School Library consortium that will coordinate Public Library development and work with National Literacy Mission.
9. A Government Ministry dealing specifically with Public Libraries and related institutions in tribal areas should be set up for proper coordination and implementation.
10. Efforts should be made to educate the rural population, teaching them about government policies and facilities as well as skills in the use of ICTs.
11. In order to enhance access to information by rural dwellers, the government should provide and maintain communication support infrastructures.
12. Computer education has not been introduced in schools in the rural areas. Computer exposure should start from primary schools in the rural areas where pupils learn to use them as an intelligent toy.
13. The use of local languages in the radio and television programmes should be encouraged. This will go a long way in conveying the intended/desired messages to rural dwellers and help them perceive radio and television as sources of information. /
14. Computers and other ICTs should be used in adult education programmes.
15. Libraries have to be an essential part of a long-term policy framework for the whole education sector, embracing literacy, information provision and lifelong learning;
16. Libraries must be supported by specific legislation and must be adequately financed by national and local governments;
17. Libraries offer a unique and cost effective means of providing access to information for all by sharing resources;
18. Libraries have to be based on a community needs analysis and constantly make their services relevant to community needs;
19. Libraries have to offer a wide range of activities, with a special focus on reaching out to marginalized groups;

20. Libraries are the logical access point and support centre for community-based literacy programs. They have to particularly support family literacy, as a literate home environment is the key factor in enabling and motivating children to read;
21. Libraries have to co-operate and network with other education stakeholders and the local publishing industry;
22. Libraries can only be effectively strengthened as part of the local book chain.
23. Adequate funds should be made available for the acquisition of information resources and the provision of quality library services to the rural population.
24. Training and retraining of staff in ICT and related areas should be a continuous exercise in our libraries.
25. The government should make a deliberate policy that ensures that libraries in rural areas have Internet connectivity.
26. Information and communication infrastructure should be given urgent attention as appropriate to the present global information economy.

13. CONCLUSION

Information is raw material for development for both urban and rural dwellers. Prosperity, progress, and development of any nation depend upon the nation's ability to acquire, produce, access, and use pertinent information. Okiy (2003:1) says that, "Rural development is a basis for economic development and information is an important ingredient in development process. People in rural areas whether literate or not should have access to any kind of information which will help them to become capable and productive in their social and political obligations, to become better informed citizens generally." Similarly Diso (1994: 143) holds the view that "information must as a matter of policy, be seen as a basic resource for development if durable structures are to be provided for effective access and utilization, which entails information capturing, coordination, processing, and dissemination". Effective information service in the rural tribal community enhances development. Despite the conditions of the rural tribal dwellers one may ask; in what ways can enhanced information service contribute to the development of the rural tribal communities in Odisha? Very serious efforts are needed for future development and welfare of tribals. However there are a number of areas in which we have to focus for their

development in general. If the concerned state governments focus on these three (health, education and income) developmental indicators in particular than a remarkable positive change in tribal communities can be brought about.

REFERENCES

1. Abdulla, A.D. 1998. The Role of Libraries in Somalia's Reformation. *Libri*48(1): 58–66.
2. Bhattacharjee, R. (1999). Role of Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation in the promotion of public library movement in India. *Herald of Library Science* 38 (1-2)
3. Boyce, J.I., & Boyce, B. R. (1995). Library outreach programs in rural areas. *Library Trends* 44 (2). Available: <http://bubl.ac.uk./archive/journals/libtre/v44n0195.htm>
4. Callison, D. (1997). Expanding collaboration for literacy promotion in public and school libraries. *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries*, 11 (1), 37–49.
5. Das, K. C. (1992). Importance of Library Services in promoting Literacy and Reading Habits in India: Programme and Prospects. *Orissa Review*, Vol.49 (1), p. 35-38.
6. Das, K. C. (2013). Imbibing Public libraries and Corporate Social Responsibility to promote Rural Development. *DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology*, 33(1), 11-16.
7. Fischer, D. R. (1988, spring). Libraries and literacy: A partnership whose time is now. *Texas Libraries*, 49, 6–7.
8. Ghosh, Maitrayee. (2005). The public library system in India: challenges and opportunities. *Library Review*, 54, 3, 180-192.
9. Husain, M. (2009). Promotion of Tribal Development; issues and Suggestions. *Kurukshetra*, Vol.57 (9). P40-43.
10. Iwhiwhu, E.B. (2008). Information repackaging library services: a challenge to information professionals in Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice*. Available: <http://unllib.unl.edu/LPP/iwhiwhu3.htm>
11. Johnson, D. W., & Cole, J. Y. (1997). Libraries and literacy: A tradition greets a new century. *American Libraries*, 28 (5), 49–51.
12. Lakshmaiah, T. (2001). Tribal Development; need to evolve people-oriented approach. *Kurukshetra*, Vol.50 (2), Dec. P18-21.

13. Singh,D.P.(2004).Strategies to boost efficiency of Rural Development Programmes.*Kurukshetra*, Vol.53.No.2, Dec.P .4-8.

Follow us on: [IRJLIS](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)