

Feasibility study on community services by academic libraries: A review of literature

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to agglomerate the functions that are feasible for the academic libraries to provide extension service other than their parent organisation. It examines the role of community libraries for the development of community. The review focusses on concepts of outreach and extension activities by libraries, successful implementation of extension or outreach services by public libraries and academic libraries towards the local people. It also provide information on the problems and limitations on providing community services and also reviews that are relating to the adoption of villages by higher academic institutions for providing community services in accordance to the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan scheme of Government of India.

Keywords: Community service, Academic libraries, Village adoption, Extension service.

1. INTRODUCTION

The demand of library services and the corresponding task of librarians have been in transformation with the spirited task and with changing trend of information seeking and delivering of the information. Libraries irrespective of its types are indebted to provide best of its services for the development of society. Regardless of any such libraries be it public libraries, academic libraries or any other libraries, the motive must be naturally for the service of the people. This sense of responsibility towards the society has made the feeling of one's service to the mankind and service beyond the boundary. The traditional method of library service needs to be refined with the attitude and demand of the requirement of various information by the users as well as non-users. Information is always required for the wellbeing of the people for generations and this is inscribed as information rich and information poor nations the former being the developed countries. Any Library being an information centre has the capacity and potential to inform people and that is the need to inculcate a habit of informing people for the betterment of the society at large, this would definitely serve the purpose of establishing library for developing people's thought and idea after getting services from the libraries. Academic libraries are one who caters the need of the parent organisation, this are attached to the organisation and perform task that are required by its patrons.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of literature is one of the key aspects of the research study whereby ideas are drawn with the development of concepts and later it is theorised. This review of literature is specifically drawn out in order to conceptualise as to estimate the research that has been done in this particular area. It enhances new endeavours to the approaches of solutions to the chosen research problem. Pertaining to the idea of the problem this review of literature throws light on the feasible nature of the academic libraries to undergo community library services.

Halin & Abu (2017) are of the opinion that academic library outreach programme has many definitions in terms of outreach services. But the scholars wanted to confine the definition of extension or outreach programme by the academic libraries towards the stakeholders i.e. students, teachers and staff of the institution and public libraries outreaches its services towards the outside community. The scholars feel that outreach is important on the part of the libraries as because it encourages the use of library resources and promotes users as according to them outreaching almost signifies anticipatory library services towards the teachers and the students and in other sense they agree the marketing of services

and for that various activities for the promotion of services innovative ideas and activities need to practice by the libraries. The scholars also found in their study that proper funding and adequate staff is very much essential to make the outreach programme successful. They came to the conclusion that outreach service programme for the academic libraries is although confined to teachers and students but cannot be limited and consideration need to be stressed for the community leaders and the local people.

Mehra & Srinivasan (2007) “The library community convergence framework for community action: libraries as catalysts of social change” This paper highlights to a call on library’s role to participate more fully in community action and enhance its role as a proactive catalyst of social change. It preaches for a holistic approach for the libraries to build a relationship with the community in order to bring change in public domain and heighten interaction between libraries and multicultural public. It developed a framework on the basis of two cases of descriptions on ethnographic perspective.

Njoku et al. (2022) in “Fostering literacy through extension service: an academic libraries for sustainable development” writes extension service as a mechanism to stay connected with the people around. They are of the view that Sustainable Development Goal of United nations (2015), in its target of “quality education” can be carried out through academic libraries in maximising literacy. They have the notion that academic library services should not be limited with the stake holder only but through system of extension service must enhance literacy towards the locality, after all knowledge, information, skills, etc are the value which adds towards sustainable goals.

Singh & Emmelhainz (2019) In the article “Listening to unaffiliated users of the Academic Library” it gives a detail pilot survey on the non-members of the library at the university of California. It establishes the fact that people from the community already visits library for their own personal interest in search of information. In the article it finds that non-affiliated users feel alienated as they do not belong to regular member, as such it feels the need of giving recognition to those members as they represent important members from outside the university.

Matava, Coffey & Kushkowski (2010) in “Beyond library walls: embedded librarians in academic departments” have thrown light on the concept of embedded librarian as to how librarian are in anticipation about giving service to the users with the support of information and communication technologies in providing resources directly to the required resources without visiting the library by the users. This is based on the case studies of four departments in the Iowa state university.

Shukla (2010) in the article “Extension areas of library in modern era” deals with the theoretical and practical aspects of extension services of library. He opined about extension services by modern libraries to the people who are unaware about public libraries. In the form of extension service libraries must provide many service beyond its traditional way of service such as Library as Career Guidance and Information Centre, Outreach and home-bound services and many more with the objective of providing maximum service to the people who are located nearby the public libraries. It also dealt about various conventional and non-conventional methods of extension services. He further says that extension service are the real services that are to be followed by every libraries so that maximum number of the people get used to the use of libraries and this can cause the greater development of society.

Abutayeh (2021) It writes about the need of changing the trends that are usually followed by the public libraries such as collection and preserving of books and disseminating to the rightful users. The libraries must come up with innovating in making the library space into learning space with the use of technologies that are available in today’s world. He feels that library should promote sustainable information development among the marginalised section of the society and bridge knowledge gap and digital divide by engaging partnership among individuals and the institution. He further fees that libraries must aim to enhance community participation and build an active and positive presence in the community they serve. He is also of the view that libraries should encourage community members to overcome cultural and linguistic barriers by organising dialogues, training workshops and cultural exchange programmes which will open up the horizons of community members to their culture and languages and to engage members with other communities. The purposes of the libraries would be fulfilled if it come up with innovative ideas to serve its community.

Brewer (2015) in elucidates how libraries are important in changing the perceptions of the communities. Communities need to engage themselves with the community libraries and help themselves in transforming communities which are selected by American Library Association. The libraries invite community and communicate with various progressive ideas and how to change themselves for a better society. The exchange of ideas and thoughts are further communicated

with the district authority or the local government. This is how the community library is step forward on the pavement of development for the betterment of the society and country as a whole.

Scott (2011) describes in his article about five aspects of public libraries as agencies of community development. It described libraries as medium for accessing information, supporting social inclusion, promotion of community engagement, bridging resources with the community and encouraging economic development within the community. It discussed on specific strategies that libraries employed to create and operate library programme which can effectively and efficiently build a library.

Kalra (2018) wrote about the strategies of rejuvenating academic libraries as a social hub, he is of the thought that many towns or the rural areas in India do not a proper public library system, but a good library exist in a good educational institution and such libraries can serve as a social hub in engaging local communities to the library. He is of the view that either library professionals fail to attract users or the information that are easily available in the handy gadgets has led to the less footfall in the libraries. Hence he is of the view libraries must engage people with various strategies by extending library facilities to college/university alumni, eminent persons of the region, and other interested readers. Another strategy is inviting eminent persons and make delivery of lectures to ignite minds of young people.

Gayton (2007) in “Academic libraries: “social” or “communal”? the nature and future of academic libraries” is of the view that there are three factors which according to him academic libraries is declining or in verge of death. The causes as assumed by him, firstly due to the declination of print materials as users are relied on electronic resources, secondly reduction in the use of reference service due to excessive use of internet and thirdly decrease in the footfalls in the libraries. To overcome this short-fall he is of the opinion that library should be open for communal space for non-academic purposes with a space for information commons, performing social function like cafes, art gallery, group study facility and create a gateway for communal academic library.

Sharma (2013) conducted a study on use of public library cum community information centre by farmers in Madhya Pradesh. It was found that effective use of public libraries by the farmers were not used and as such farmers lack many information and other related knowledge about modern farming. Imparting information to the farmers that are utmost necessary as because the backbone of Indian economy is farming. The information centres must reach the related information and other agrarian knowledge to the farmers. For this he suggested libraries must keep resources for the benefit of the farmer community, Agriculture department must give information to the libraries, where libraries can arrange meeting for the farmer community and as such enlighten them would enhance agriculture production and improved the economic status of farmers and country.

Gohil (2014) in “Role of Library Science in rural development” states that rural libraries need to play important role in the communities they serve. He is of the view that smaller the community, the bigger looms the library. He says that no matter how much the library has books or size of the collection what matter is the relationship with the people it serves. The book discussed on the concept of information which are meant specially for adult literacy and means for enhancing social and economic conditions of the people by keeping themselves well-informed about society and well-being. He feels libraries can only bring changes to the development of the society with regard to social and economic growth through information exploration.

Satpathy (2006) approached about the necessity of community information service by public libraries. He is of the opinion that many western countries have adopted this system of community service by the public libraries for the local community and this has been providing by the libraries in India in an informal way. The public library professional must take the social responsibility seriously. Other than providing reading materials the public libraries must assist individuals with daily problem and help them solving it in a democratic way. He projected ways in which how a public library can work as a community service centre through proper system of identifying problems and sorting out with the system of networking of the public libraries in the area and also keeping in touch with the government schemes and policies for the betterment of the society from time to time. Such works would definitely make a public library a really working library which would be truly meant for the society.

Mallik & Bhar (2017) studied about public library and community information service and suggest that Library should have the adequate space to arrange meetings of the community where they exchange their thoughts, ideas, understand each other, share their problems. They have indicated about library to arrange life skill programs so that community can

able to develop themselves and provide priority to the disadvantaged group of the society. They also elucidated about the Government's role for to better the services of public libraries by establishing community information services.

Krishnamurthy et al. (2012) studied about the importance of Community Information Centre for the rural development in India. The paper defined CIC and the functions and objectives of it. He suggested for Gram Panchayat libraries to take the lead of CIC and be instrumental in the process in rural development in the state of Karnataka. He further suggest that the government must frame rules and policies for the development of comprehensive rural library system.

Venkatappaiah (1999) in his article "Community information services" has very concisely and pin pointedly explored about the need of CIS as this idea has been adopted from the West and its service in India is very much attached with the Gram Panchayat. He pointed out several services that a CIS should provide its information towards the community, and the idea of National policy on Library and Information System should lead CIS from various organisations. With the idea of an informed citizen to be an asset in the democratic form of Government, he suggested that government should provide directive to the universities to include CIS in curriculum and such other various organisation and hoped that such courses will highly benefit in enhancing library services to the needy community.

Patel (2010) writes about the ample opportunities for a public library in contributing for the development of the knowledge society. The researcher is of the opinion of library being the legacy of social awareness and community involvement can create various services for benefitting different people in the society. The researcher portrayed distinctive principles that libraries can play a significant role in today's society such as "collaborative partnerships". Libraries need to be transformed with the changing dimension of technology in the society with the developing ICT, even special services could be delivered to the disabled and the physically challenged person and service to the senior citizen. He is of the opinion that university libraries can perform well with all the above activities where community library services are poor or are not available.

Das (2018) writes about the richness of Academic libraries in term of resources and infrastructures comparing to public libraries in Assam. It has become part of social responsibility by the college libraries to impart social service in various forms such as engagement of the locality in information literacy programmes, arranging of awareness relating to health and hygiene for rural women. The college libraries can provide a space for meeting and cultural events. He further suggested that college authorities need to formulate certain rules to open college library space for general public of the locality. Prominently the fund for development of college library infrastructure and resources is to be provided by the Government at regular intervals.

Sadlapur (2014) in "Community information centres and role of library" is of the opinion that as information is very much essential for the people and society in terms of economic and social development, Government needs to initiate centres where information could be imparted and make them readily reach to the needy. In such a state of importance, Community Information Centres can crucially play role of imparting training and provide information in the form of news, citizen centric news of various Government schemes and programmes. The researcher throws light on development works of Warana Cooperative in Maharashtra, ASHA in Assam on a consortium on Agri business and assam small farmers with a goal for self-employment and wellbeing of the farmers and also the Swaminathan Foundation in Pondicherry for village information project. The researcher is of the opinion that public libraries must co-operate with local institution and actively participate in providing local knowledge and resources. So as to enable development of the community in terms of livelihood and sustainable development.

Singha & Dey (2021) highlighted on the emerging natures of the community services by academic libraries, they are of the view that academic libraries should not be restricted to the services of academic institutions where they serve, but should come up and contribute to the nearby locality where information is needed for their sustenance. The scholars have expressed about the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan a Government of India scheme launched in 2014, where every higher educational institution must adopt villages for the all round development of the village in the vicinity of the institution located. Most of the Public libraries in India are located in the heart of the town and are ill managed mostly in the North-Eastern part of India but academic libraries associated with the academic institutions are somewhat better in resources and services and are almost located in the nook and corner of the districts, hence academic libraries can play a major role in providing essential information on agriculture, health, education, family welfare and various important Government schemes and programmes. They are of the opinion that community people should be made library friendly so that they may visit library without hesitating and also making them engaged with the information resources available in the library and creating a culture where community come and learn as exemplified by many such community libraries

in developed countries. Librarians can be mediator in executing such a noble cause as being the information provider for both the community and the authority of the academic institutions.

Sidorko & Yang (2011) The scholars portrays the successful initiatives undertaken by the libraries of Hong Kong University. They highlighted how the libraries are extending services in order to exchange knowledge through the engagement of the communities with the localities. The libraries have prospectively embraced open access system so as to multiply user community. The libraries in the university of different departments have made the best use of maximising transfer of knowledge with the academic communities. The local communities also organise special events such as arranging Book Talks highlighting from the leading members of intellectual community. The libraries promote sales of books to outside community where duplicate of books are available through donation, honouring people with books and contributing to special local groups such as High Schools and giving special care to people with disabilities. The Hong Kong academic libraries have consistently contributed for the community lifelong learning and have transformed the society and elevated its status among the Asian countries and the world.

Shires (2006) conducted a survey in academic libraries of Florida about the use of academic libraries by non-affiliated user or the local communities. He found that there is a partnership between academic and public libraries. The researcher is of the opinion that private universities libraries or any other academic libraries must be accessible to the public as because such institution are using public funds and so it must be open to the public. Further the researcher is of the notion that scholarly reference material are not found in the public library, for the cases in communities with limited resource academic libraries administration should consider the information needs of the user beyond the academic community. The researcher goes to the extent that showcasing a library can be powerful tool for marketing which may be advantage for academic library to attend outreach services and promote more involvement with the community by emphasising the institution's importance in lifelong learning.

Sukula & Awasthi (2019) in the article "Outreach in library! Serving beyond the walls" likewise the name of the title it emphasises about the serving the people beyond the four walls of the libraries. It basically aimed in supporting the student and research scholars with regard to the scholarly communication issues, author copyrights and publishing models for teachers and creating a model for outreach through social networking service such as twitter. At the same time they have thrown light on community outreach programmes where needy people are identified and then designed the program through education, motivation and creating awareness. This particular outreach is for the people who are deprived or underprivileged of the society and are effectively helpful to the needy community.

Yahaya & Abba (2017) in "Library extension services in rural communities: an opportunity towards a knowledge based economy" describes about the concept and significance of library extension service and helpful for the community. They expressed how libraries are facing difficult in providing such service and it has affected lives in Nigeria being too illiterate or too ill due to information poverty. As such they have adopted methods for extension services like individual contact method, office and home visits and demonstrative method for upliftment of rural communities in Nigeria. They feel that upliftment of the people can be made possible with the intervention of the Government emphasising the need of information, which could be gathered with the enriching of libraries.

Mostert (2013) in "Community libraries: the concept and its applications with particular reference to a South African community library system" found that some of the community libraries are very active with service oriented and need based information of the community relating to health, education, government notices and many other information relating to the development of the community. He suggest community engagement is needed for the community development and funds are always required to run such organisation.

Hines (2015) in "Connecting individuals with social service: the library's role" writes about how libraries are eager and have mission to connect the people with necessary information in anticipatory. Library through their motive of social service have appointed staff from social work departments to deal with the needy people. She has pointed out in providing such services there are many barriers and also provided suggestions on how social services can be provided by libraries with less cost and maximum benefits to the needy community.

Islam & Ahmed (2012) intends to explain the library services available to rural people and a outline of focus group discussions (FGD) conducted in northern districts of Bangladesh. This paper is divided into two sections. The first section describes services of rural libraries of Bangladesh. The second section discusses the result of focus group discussions carried out separately in ten rural communities in northern areas of Bangladesh. The results of the focus

group discussions emphasise the general information needs of rural communities, their reading, listening and viewing habits and awareness of rural library activities. The findings suggest that the rural libraries largely meet the informational needs of the local community and play a vital role in the educational development of local people.

Shrestha (2013) In her article “The Changing Role of Community Libraries: Emerging Centres of Sustainable development” highlights some successful stories and confrontation of the READ (Rural Education and Development) program, which has been spirited in the building and progression of community libraries in rural and distant areas in Nepal. It focuses on how the scope and role of community libraries has been changing to the needs of the local communities and the Nepalese society at large, and these libraries address the critical issue of sustainability. It executes that community libraries are not only meant of reading and lending of books, but as a community development centre with a strong focus on grass roots education, empowerment and economic development.

Emasealu & Umeozor (2015) in “Bridging the gap between town and gown: role of librarians in community service programme” tries to put in place a link between community service programme and purposeful librarianship in Nigeria. It elucidates reason for not actively involved by librarians and gave suggestion to re-evaluate curriculum and design for achieving the objectives for building the relationship. It also further recommends establishing function for community information resource centre with library that would serve as databank for all community service projects.

Nwokocha & Chima (2018) in “Library and Information Services for rural community development in Africa: problems and prospects” projects that information is the main carrier for the development of the rural community. In the rural community CIC are paving a great role in gearing up the sustainable development of various communities of the country. It has helped in framing up for economic and political growth and participation. They felt that due to the inadequate attention of CICs in some of the region some of the community is not benefitted, the interest of the people as well as the eagerness of the government can overcome the poor status in some of the regions of the part of Africa. They feel ICT and its development can be a boon in all round development of the region be in the matter of agriculture, education, health, politics, socio-economic information, culture and recreation of the people.

Mazumder (2016) writes about the importance of information without which survival and development of human life is not possible. He also expressed about community information service issue which need to be tackled by the librarians and those are necessary both for the urban and the rural communities. The public librarians need to play an active role in providing proper guidance to the needy community which would pave for the development of the society. He also elucidates about the initiation of CLIC that is Community Library cum Information Centres by Public libraries in West Bengal in providing various information by the libraries such as about health, government information and publications, self-help programmes, livelihood, employment, weather, travelling and many more. He also mentioned that in all such services there is always requirement of funds that may be in the form of recurring or non-recurring expenses.

Borgohain & Nath (2020) in “Public library extension service as a community development programme a case study”, found in the study that extension service by public libraries specially in upper Assam cannot be properly functioned due to lack of infrastructure, manpower, financial support and without systematic planning. It urges the government to regulate useful plan so that public libraries be given importance. It emphasised that extension service rely upon the active participation of the community. It appeals to change traditional system of service to modern way so as to attract people.

Deore et.al (2022) highlighted about the importance of working procedure and the prospective view of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan, a government initiative of 2014. They emphasised UBA being Government of India programme with a view of providing rural access to all the amenities that are required for the overall development making them access with engineering techniques in agriculture, health concerns and healthy living condition through the medium of higher educational institutions in India. The researchers draw out the procedures that are required in order to proceed for the adoption of villages with the beforehand task of identification and selection of village, social mobilization, conducting primary data about the availability of the resources and the required facilities with the extension of IT enabled so as to simplify the exhaustive use of research in pertaining the theme of obtaining the overall human development and economic or the material development for creating the model village with the expertise in providing information from educational institutions.

Singha & Dey (2020) are of the opinion that academic libraries must come up from the comfort zone of four boundary walls and find out scope for services beyond the assigned task. They are of the view that Librarians job is dynamic and

should find out scope for contributing in the development of nation by helping the nearby locale who are dearth of information relating to their survival and sustenance. They feel that librarians must come in contact with the local government and find out solution in providing necessary information to the community. Academic librarians can make a platform for development of the community by fixing a particular once in a week or month for the visit by local people, keeping children books, provide training platform for infusing knowledge about modern agriculture, addressing women and child health issues and developing reading habit in the library for the community and make use of available ICT in the library for effective use.

Prabhakaran & Muthu Kumaran (2019) in “Impact of Unnat Bharath Abhiyan (UBA) scheme on rural development in India” the scholars are of the view that India still has 70% population in rural areas and 30% in urban areas, hence developmental procedure in rural is affected in terms of inequality in health, income, education, employment, etc. So in order to overcome the detrimental state of rural areas need to be taken care of and could be possibly carried out by intellectual society as adopted by the scheme of Unnat Bharath Abhiyan. The scholars wrote about dismal state of education as faced by the rural people, the students getting poor quality education and the educational initiatives in some of the rural areas need to be taken care of. The UBA team or the institution adopting the village need to strengthen the structure of education by developing a model so that children get proper education set up. The scholars depicted various activities of the Abhiyan that need to be imparted by Higher Educational Institution and formation of required framework and to be mentored by respective institution. The scholars feels that such a system should not be for a short period of time but planned for a sufficient time so that institution could cope up the difficulties faced by the villagers and the institution could come up with systematic solution in bringing UBA a successful scheme.

Garg (2019) in “Pretext of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan of HRD and villages development of university” wrote on how Jayoti Vidyapeeth Women’s University being a participating institute of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan under MHRD adopted 5 villages and created UBA cell in the university, under the tagline of “Mera Gaon Meri Pahchan”. The scholar highlighted those work that are to be carried out in the phase manner in terms of “Health and Hygiene”, “Agriculture and Rural Technology” and “Education and Communication”. For every activity to be done they sort out the executive plan on how to deal with the programme procedure with the village community and find out the measures that have been benefitted to the local villages.

3. Conclusion

Community development is one of the priority that has been taken up as a challenges by the government. The academic institutions are one such agencies that can execute such process and the libraries can become the catalyst in imparting information resources through which changes could be impacted. The village adoption policy of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan 2014 and the inclusion of extension activities in the New Education Policy 2020 have paved libraries a strong hold in imparting such extension programmes for the development of the community in the nearby of the educational institution. The purpose of this paper is to find out the feasibility of community service by the libraries in terms of information as well as library services so as to assist the role of libraries towards the development of the society.

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