

ROLE OF PANCHAYATI RAJ ACT AND SSA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL LIBRARIES IN MADHYA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

Library can act as an important resource for promoting literacy as well as education in rural areas. For getting information, education is must. In fact information and education are inter-related as compared to an uneducated person. An educated person is capable of getting and absorbing information quickly and utilizes it in an effective manner. Unfortunately approximately 70% population of rural area in our country is illiterate. Literacy is the primary part of education. So eradication of illiteracy is must. In rural areas, literacy rate is very low in comparison to urban areas. In cities, sources of information are large but in villages they are small. Although school, college and university libraries, special and public libraries, book stalls, television and internet facilities have enriched sources of information in cities, villages are in acute shortage of these sources of information. Library can act as an important channel for promoting education. In fact our villages need good public libraries, which can help the illiterates, adult-literates and literates for locating their information needs. In India Panchayati Raj Act for libraries plays an important role in promoting Rural Libraries in villages. Library can provide information not only through reading materials, but also by audio-visual means, which can play an important role in the development of rural community.

KEYWORDS: Rural Libraries, Panchayati Raj Act, SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan), Information.

INTRODUCTION

In fact Panchayati Raj is a system of self-governance at local level in rural areas. It encourages micro level planning and helps in the rural development programmes by mobilizing, exploiting and utilizing local level resources. This system helps the local people to take part in the implementation of rural development programmes which have been made for their entire progress and prosperity.

There are three levels of Panchayati Raj System :

Gram panchayats

This level is the lowest level of all three types of panchayats. It is established for five years from the day of its first meeting. "The gram panchayats are established for one village or for a group of villages having 10 to 20 wards depending upon population from 1000 or more".

Janpad Panchayats

This level of panchayat is established over a population of 50,000 or more having 10 to 25 electoral segments.

Zila Panchayats

This is the largest level of all three panchayat levels divided into 10 to 35 electoral segments with population of 5 lacs or more.

Gandhiji's dream of each village being a republic has come true with the implementation of three-tier Panchayati Raj system. This system is created to encourage local people's participation in rural reconstruction and development.

- (a) As per the estimates prepared by UNESCO in 1950, adult literacy rates were 20% in India. And in 1930 it was nearly 10%.

India is called "country of villages". Around 70% people of the country live in rural or suburban areas. Illiteracy is still a most burning and crucial issue of the country. The government has introduced so many schemes to overcome this problem. And number of schemes are successful and playing a vital/significant role in the promotion and advancement of literacy and rural library development.

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ROLE OF "SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN" IN PROMOTION OF RURAL LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN MADHYA PRADESH

"Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan" is a unique scheme of government to promote and provide the pace to the mission of literacy. It is a system through which rural people can learn, study, get their desired information and education.

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Literacy

Literacy means being "familiar with literature" "education in the nineteenth century was meant by the ability to read and write. The literate person may be one who can read and write in any language."

"Literacy is the ability to [read](#), [write](#), [listen](#) and comprehend, and [speak](#) a language. In modern contexts, the word refers to reading and writing at a level adequate

for [communication](#) or at a level that lets one understand and communicate abstract ideas."

The Importance of Literacy

1. It is a key to enhancing human capabilities,
2. It is a societal and an individual phenomenon,
3. Crucial for economic, social and political participation development, especially in today's knowledge societies,
4. It promotes active citizenship,
5. It leads to critical thinking,
6. It improves health and family planning,
7. It prevents HIV/AIDS,
8. It reduces poverty.

Literacy as a Human Right : Some Efforts

'The right to literacy is implicit in the right to education, recognized by the 1948 universal declaration of human rights'. 1948 universal declaration of human rights says that education is a fundamental human right. In 1989 'convention on the rights of the child' said in article 28 that primary education should be compulsory and available for free to all.

EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006

"Globally, 47 countries have achieved Universal Primary Education (UPE).

Projections show that 20 additional countries (out of 90 relevant data) are on the track to achieve UPE by 2015; 44 countries are making good progress but are likely to achieve the goal by 2015.

1. Public spending on education has increased.
2. Aid for basic education has more than doubled from 1999 to 2003.
3. Women account for 64% of the adults world wide who can not read and write with understanding."

It is a fact that about 70% of the worlds poorest live in rural areas.

Table

Decadewise Difference of Literacy Rates Between Male and Female Population

Year	Person	Male	Female	Difference of literacy rates between male and female
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86	18.30
1961	28.30	40.40	15.35	25.05
1971	34.45	45.96	21.97	23.98
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76	26.62
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29	24.84
2001	65.38	75.85	54.16	21.70
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46	16.68

Some Facts about Indian Scenario

- (b) In 2002-04, India had 34.6% adult illiterate population one of the highest percentage in the world.
- (c) In 1990 Indian share was 31.2% in world illiterate population.
- (d) As per the UNESCO report, the reduction was significant in China but India achieved only minor reductions.
- (e) It has been observed that there is a relation between poverty and illiteracy. If poverty rate is higher then literacy rate is lower.
- (f) In India 2001, Kerala had 91% adult literacy rate while Bihar had only 48%.

Panchayati Raj Act – A Brief History

The concept of Panchayati Raj was first introduced by Mahatma Gandhi. He had in his mind the transfer the power or authority to local community or end-village. In 1957 Balvant Rai Committee (Govt. of India) recommended decentralization of democracy through creation and implementation of Panchayati Raj and to make the community development set-up more effective.

In the history of India 24 April 1993 is a golden day when constitution (73rd Amendment) Act came into force to provide the constitutional or legal status to the three-tier system of Panchayati Raj (i.e. Gram Panchayat at village level; Janpad Panchayat at block level and Zila Panchayat and district level).

The major features of this act are :

1. To provide three-tier system of Panchayati Raj system for all states having a population over 20 lakh,
2. To hold Panchayati Raj election regularly every five years,
3. To provide reservation of seats for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, women (not less than one-third of total seats),
4. To appoint state finance commission to make recommendation regarding financial power of the panchayat, and
5. To constitute district planning committee to prepare draft development plan for the district as a whole.

The provisions of Panchayati Raj Act 1996, extend Panchayati Raj to the tribal areas of several states (viz. Gujrat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Jharkhand and Rajasthan). This act came into force on December 24, 1996.

MADHYA PRADESH PANCHAYATI RAJ ACT AND LIBRARIES

The Madhya Pradesh state adopted the Panchayati Raj Act 1993, on January 24, 1994. According to the Madhya Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act section 50(1) the function of Janpad panchayat includes "Education". The Madhya Pradesh government has given the rights/power to panchayats to control, monitor and utilize the resources, man power etc. of various departments, like health, education, rural engineering etc. for the benefit of rural people. It means panchayat has power to plan, supervise, and monitor the literacy programmes/libraries.

After the creation of Panchayati Raj in Madhya Pradesh, several development programmes have been running for the socio-economic, educational and informational advancement of the village and villagers by MP government under the direct control and supervision of panchayat. There are 529 rural libraries in united MP (by 2001), which are run and managed by the committees of elected members of public. These libraries are getting grants from the directorate of panchayat. In 26 January 2003 a project has been launched by the government of MP. Under this project 50,000 libraries have been started in the rural areas of MP.

Now 18 states have passed public library act in their respective states. These states are Madras (Now Chennai), Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharastra, West Bangal, Manipur, Keral, Hariyana, Goa, Mizoram, Udisa, Gujrat, Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Pandichery, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand. The act ensures free flow of information to the users. But in MP there is no public library act.

Under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan there is a programme to establish rural libraries in rural areas. They have provided infrastructure and books to the village libraries. These village libraries are established in school premises or panchayat buildings. A prerak (who looks after the village library) appointed for each library in respective villages. The person who is appointed as prerak belongs to same village.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Under present investigation. It is felt that the status, resources activities, services rendering towards users, etc. are much limited due to fulfillment and dependent on its parent institutions motives. The basic objectives activities and services towards its users communities yet to be achieved. In this direction, planners, policy makers, administrators and concerned professionals should come forward so that it could be strengthen for proper functioning in right direction for rural society. In Panchayati Raj governance it should be also cover to do needful action within possible approach and local resources. In such way at local level rural library's activities and services should be organized and managed for rural society. Some following suggestions are made on the basis of empirical background of present study.

1. Raja Ram Mohun Roy Library Foundation should come forward to establish organize rural libraries services in MP. Local authority of panchayati raj institution at rural level should also approach for the development of rural library.
2. The intellectuals, professional and administrators should make some efforts for the development of organized rural library infrastructure, resources and services.
3. In MP library legislation should be pass, so that expected rural library infrastructure and fundamental resources could be availed.
4. Rural library should acquire and collect the information about local and other agriculture resources, climatic resources, geographical resources etc for their proper exploitation for the progress of rural society.

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