Services for Community Development: A Study in the Context of Kerala State Central Library

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Abstract

Public library is a human institution in its entire for the public, by the public and of the public. They are indispensable to improve literacy, inspire imagination, and expand personal horizons. They support formal as well as informal education at all levels, enable access to a common cultural heritage and in general make powerful citizens. This paper analyses the role of Kerala State Central Library in the overall development of the community.

Keywords

Public Libraries; Community Information Centers; Community Information Services; Kerala State Central Library.

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INTRODUCTION

According to Satyanarayana and Vijakumar (2008)[1] "Public library means whereby the record of human thoughts, ideas and the expression of his creative imagination world are openly available to all". Rishi Pal Bhardwaj (2005)[2] states that the libraries slowly but surely develop a sense of goodwill and respect for the other groups, an appreciation of the difference in language, religion, customs and manners. He also opined that sectarian life styles will be substituted by democratic life patterns and in this sense, a public library justifies its existence as democratic institution and does play an important role in building, well informed, skilled individuals and tries to achieve this in a democratic way. Adequate Public Library Service is a basic input for the social, political and economic development of a country. Public Library as a Community Information Centre, it is to be considered as an instrument of social change. In order to improve living standards of society, the public library has its goals to increase facilities. Public libraries can coordinate programmes for continuing education, sponsor cultural and recreational events and also provide materials for specialized reference and research. Proper functioning of the State Central Library will support other libraries in the state, including academic and research libraries.

KERALA STATE CENTRAL LIBRARY, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

State Central Library is defined as "a library maintained by State funds for the use of State officials and employees, and usually for the use of all citizens of the State". One of the most important provisions made by the Library Acts in India is the creation of an apex public library in each State. This apex library is called by different Public Library Acts either as "State Central Library", or "State Library" and it is supposed to assume a leadership role to guide all the public libraries in the State. Kerala State Central Library (KSCL) is considered as one of the oldest libraries in India and the first public library in Kerala, established in the year 1829 AD during the reign of His Highness Sree Swathi Thirunal Maharaja of Travancore with the name of Trivandrum People's Library. In 1898 the library opened to the public. In 1958 the Government declared this library as the "State Central Library of Kerala".

Though the Act has not provided for a State Library Service or a network of public libraries comprising of district libraries and other public libraries, the KSCL

continues to be a separate department of the Government under Higher Education. The Act gives powers to the State Library Council to appoint and control required officers and employees for library development.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Sarada (1986)[4] has conducted an intensive study of branch library in Pendurthi village in Visakapattanam taluk in Andhra Pradesh. She analyzed the information needs of the village community and the nature of policy of the government towards the public library. Venkatappaiah (1999)[5] stressed the need to formulate a policy covering various areas of services, supporting education, preservation of cultural heritage, information sources, human resources, private and aided libraries, comprehensive library legislation and restructuring the existing library acts in India for public library services in view of the recent developments emerging in the field. Vijayakumar and Kumar (2001)[6] have made quantitative study on different aspects of rural libraries such as functions, staff, finance, collections, services and facilities in Shimoga district of Karnataka. Ranjith (2004)[7]has conducted a study on the rural libraries in Kerala, this study suggests the integration of public libraries under KSLC with a library network using a web enabled system that act as an interactive public interface to enable the public for effective utilization of the library resources. Parvathamma and Shanker Reddy (2009)[8] discussed the results of a survey conducted on the use of information sources and services of public libraries in Bidar District. The study helps in understanding the public libraries need for framing appropriate policies related to collection development and improve the quality of services for motivating users to use the library to enhance their competence level. Laila (2010)[9] explains the role of public libraries in promoting non-formal education in Kerala and also gives brief history of public library movement in Kerala. Jayakumara and Khaiser Nikam (2012)[10] gives a brief account of perception of young adult users towards public library services, to know the purpose for which young adults visit the library, factors that motivate them to make optimum use of the library. Prabin and Krishnapada (2014)[11] attempted to assess the library awareness among the non-users of Government and Government sponsored public libraries in the hilly areas of Darjelling district of West Bengal and concluded that there is need for improvement in public library services so that the non-users may get attracted to the library. In addition, the operations of the library should be automated. Pratap (2014)[12] highlights the role of public libraries in the society and its objectives and also reveals how the public libraries are in the community development process. Raymond and Kemparaju (2007)[13] examine the concept of public libraries in general, as well as the state of public libraries in India in the light of the new and emerging technological dispensation. Rachel (2011)[14] also narrated the community development role of public libraries to build a strong community. White (2014)[15] viewed the public libraries as a center for lifelong learning and community development.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study were as follows:

- To evaluate the information sources and services available in the KSCL
- To identify the existing infrastructural facilities available in the Library
- To examine the human resources in the KSCL
- To evaluate the community activities undertaken by the Library.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is on the role of public libraries in the society in the context of services of KSCL for community development. The study envisaged to analyses the leading role of KSCL in providing a networked services for the entire State of Kerala for community development. As the study is based on a survey in the KSCL, it cannot cover the entire State of Kerala.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research in KSCL. The library has More than one Lakh registered members and 75,000 members were active in position. The study used structured questionnaire for State Librarian, professional Staff and users in KSCL to collect data. Telephone and face to face interviews were also conducted with the State librarian and other professional staff. Observational visits were also done.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Total Collection of KSCL

Items	Total Number
Books	4,22,841
Periodicals	612
CD/DVD Documents	690
Bound Volumes	1500

Library Building:- The KSCL has 2.58 acres of land and building about 30,000 square feet area in three floors with Stack Room 17,304 Sq. Ft, Reading Room 3,573 Sq. Ft. and Children's Room 4, 268 Sq. Ft.

Library Collection: - As per the records of KSCL, during the period 2013-2014 the total budget of the library is 2, 82, 25,178/-. Library has rich collection of books in many languages like English, Hindi, Malayalam, Urdu etc. It has 4, 22,841 books, including purchased and gifted, 612 periodicals, 690 CD / DVDs, 1500 bound volumes and 28 newspapers.

Table 2: Number of Books Added

2010-11	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
7025	11980	18,274	18,768

Table 2 shows the number of Books added during 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014. As per the table during the period 2010-11(7025**)** numbers, 2011-12(11980**)**, 2012-13**(**18,274), and 2013-2014 (18,768)**.**

Table 3: Number of Periodicals subscribed in KSCL

Periodicals	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Bimonthly	Quarterly	Half yearly	Total
Malayalam	20	8	45	1	1	1	**76**
English	13	15	69	6	2	2	**107**
Tamil	6	6	2	0	0	0	**14**
Hindi	1	2	2	0	0	0	**5**
Children's Malayalam	5	4	6	4	0	0	**15**
Children's-English	1	2	19	1	0	0	**21**
Total	**46**	**35**	**143**	**8**	**3**	**3**	**238**

Table 3 shows the total 238 periodicals subscribed in KSCL during the period of 2014. It reveals that total number of periodicals subscribed in English is 107 and next comes Malayalam with 76 journals. It also subscribed 21 children's magazines in English.

Table:4 Number of periodicals received on gratis in KSCL during 2014

Periodicals	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Bimonthly	Quarterly	Half yearly	Total
Malayalam	9	6	107	4	2	-	128
English	3	-	35	2	3	-	43
Tamil	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
Hindi	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	**12**	**6**	**147**	**6**	**5**	**-**	**176**

Table 4 shows that 176 periodicals were received in KSCL on complimentary basis of which periodicals in Malayalam comprises the largest with 128 numbers.

Table 5: Available Human Resources in KSCL

Human Resources	Number of Staff
State Librarian	1
Other Professionals	44
Other Categories	49
Total	**94**

The table 5 shows the number of posts sanctioned in KSCL is 94 of which 49 is non-professionals. Besides these staffs some of them appointed as temporarily.

Table 6: Facility in the Net Browsing Centre

Description	Nos.
Net Cabins	15 nos.
Computers	16 nos.
ACs	04 nos.
Printers / Photocopiers	02 nos.

This facility is extensively used for internet browsing, online application, student project preparation, ticket reservation, scanning, printing, CD writing, etc..

Table 7: Furniture Available in KSLC

Items	Qty
Almirah /Shelf/Rack Steel/ wooden	750
Bench/Chair/Stool	964
Black Board	1
Book stand steel/Wooden	77
Catalogue Cabinet	38
Charge Tray	52
Box	4
Ladder Aluminium	2
Locker	13
Notice Board	06
Property Counter with cubicles	2
Screen	12
Tray	10
Table/Teapoy	233
Trolley	02
Wooden box	02

Table 7 shows the adequacy of furniture available in KSCL. It reveals actual number of each item.

Table 8: Details of Equipment's in KSCL

Description	Nos.
Computer Server	9
Computer	71
Printer Laser/ Dot Matrix/ Ink Jet/ Barcode	26
RFID Desktop/Handheld Reader	15
RFID Security Gate/ Drop Box	2
UPS 50 KVA	14
Barcode / Document Scanner	10
Photo copy Machines	3
Air Conditioners	10
External Hard Disk	2
Laminating Machine	1

Table 8 shows the details of available facilities existing in internet browsing center

SERVICES OFFERED BY KSCL

Following are the major services offered by the library:

Lending Service: -Books except reference books and journals are loaned to members for home reading. Duration of loan period is 30 days for books and seven days for magazines which can be renewed unless there is no reservation for the same. There is no reservation and renewal for magazines.

Reference Service: -A well-furnished A/C Reference and Information Centre is functioning in the first floor with rich collection of reference sources. About 200 users were visiting the reference section per day on an average.

Closed Reference Service: Rare and precious old books, Back volumes of journals and dailies are kept here for reference. Admission is given to users on written request.

Reprographic Service: -Xerox facility is provided for copying pages of documents on payment.

Gazette Service: -Kerala Gazette Section is a repository of Gazette published by the Government of Kerala. Certified and Non Certified extracts of Kerala Government Gazette will be issued on written request on payment.

Data Conversion Service: - Data Conversion certificate from Malayalam Era to Christian era and

vice versa is issued on written request. This service is chargeable Rs.50/- per certificate.

British Council Library Service: - A separate section in the library to members is started using the books received from the former British Council Library and will function as per the library hours.

Internet Service: -The Internet Browsing Centre of the KSCL was started in 2004. The working hours of this center is 10am to 5pm on all working days except Sundays. All internet related services like browsing, downloading, scanning, printing, CD writing etc. are provided to the users at a nominal cost.

Digital Collections of Rare Books: -The library owns a rare collection of old and precious documents that are not available anywhere else. The digitization programme started in 2005 and continuing in a phased manner. Library has developed a digital collection in searchable format of 707 books (3, 28,268 pages), including English (644) and Malayalam (63) books. Full text retrieval is possible using Malayalam Script. This is the first multilingual bibliographic information system in Malayalam with Unicode. Digital library of Travancore/Travancore-Cohin/ Kerala Gazette from 1903 by KSCL is only one of its kind in the entire nation. Gazettes Digital Library contains more than five lakhs of scanned pages of gazette with index related to the content. The digital archive of rare books and Government Gazettes of KSCL can be accessed from library's official website. The digital collection is archived using Nitya Digital Library Software. This software was selected because of its multilingual capacity to handle local Indian scripts effectively. The ultimate aim of the Digitization process is to preserve the documents for use to the future generation.

Children's Section: -The various periodicals and books are arranged in this section with multimedia facilities for the best use of Children.

Certificate Course in Library & Information Science (CLISc):- Library is conducting a Certificate Course in Library and Information Science with an annual intake of 41 students. The duration of the course is 6 months. The Government Scheme of Earn While You Learn has been successfully implemented during the year 2005 onwards.

User Education Programmes: -The Library provides regular user orientation and education programmes to make familiar the facilities, collection, services etc. of the library. Vacation and Summer Programmes for children on various topics and knowledge activities were also organized by the Library.

Public Relation, Publication and Library Extension Programmes: - Library provides regular public relation and extension programmes through media like newspaper, radio, television etc.Publications like administration report, library brochure and notices of programmes are also found helpful to the users. Library was also organizing talks, seminars and discussions on various socio-cultural issues. Programmes in linguistics and literature, quizzes, book exhibitions, exhibitions on local history, local festivals, art, photograph and painting, etc. attracting attention of the vide variety of the user community. Special programems were also organized on occasions like reading week, national library week, etc. Film festivals, literary competitions for school children, reading camps, etc. were also being conducted regularly.

FINDINGS

Facilities: - KSCL housed in a heritage model building with 3 floors having more than 20,000 sq.ft. A well-furnished A/C Reference and Information Centre, Internet Browsing Centre, minimum nearly 250 persons visit both sections and use the facility per day. The library was well equipped with modern ICT facilities for library management. Sufficient qualified professional staff was there in the library for organization and management.

Collections: -KSCL has a rich collection of information resources including books of more than 4 Lakhs, 600+magazines, 1500 bound volumes about 1000 CD-DVDs, 28 newspapers, etc.

Services: - The Library provides services to all categories of people in the community for their development whether it is in education, health, agriculture, industry, etc. It acts as a cultural center for art, literature, etc. It also inspires young writers and provide courage publish books and articles of any kind. The library is active for people come to know themselves and their communities. It performs important assignments in child and women development, train teens essential life skills through providing needed information.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study, the following suggestions and recommendations are forwarded:

- **Extension of Services**: - KSCL should be encouraged to acquire e-resources in addition to print based collection. Like other countries, e-books, e-zines, databases, e-reference sources should form part of collections with the target of providing services to the entire people in Kerala.A well-organized public library system developed in a hierarchical structure right from the State level to village level through regional, district and taluk levels shall be the foundation of a public library network for the effective sharing of the resources of the more than 7000 public libraries in the State.
- **Public Library Network**: - There should be one Central Library is each Local Body; City Corporation, Municipality or Grama Panchayath, in Kerala and there should be one Local Library is each ward or division of a local body. The membership in public libraries should be free and open to all residents of the concerned local body with provisions to avail inter library services from District and State Central Libraries. It is also recommended to restructure the constitution of library authorities in three levels as: State Library Council, District Library Councils and Local Library Councils. Most of the States has provision for Directorate of Public Libraries as a coordinating agency of all public libraries and Kerala may this pattern for effective public library system in Kerala.
- **Education and Culture:** - In a time education is increasingly expensive; KSLC can provide information and educational opportunities free for all people, regardless of their socioeconomic status. It must serve as the "people's University" ought to provide classes and discussion programs and be responsible for formal and non-formal education programs, and act as center for education through providing sources for lifelong learning. As the demand for distance education and open online open courses are getting strong, the library can directly offer such courses and also support courses offered by others. Developing a suitable career is a challenge in the modern world. The library can provide career orientation, employment guidance and soft skill training. KSCL can serve as catalyst for addressing social problems. Librarian know their communities firsthand, they interact on a daily basis with users from all walks of life. It is an established fact that many anti-social ailments can effectively curbed by developing good reading habit among the people. KSCL should conduct professional development programs for librarians and Education programmes for users.
- **Agriculture and Health**: - Updation of agriculture and health information is an important aspect in now days. The Library can deliver such awareness programs for people for better and health farming and living.

CONCLUSION

Public library is the best place to acquire knowledge and spend valuable time for the users. They not only to cater the information needs of the user community, but also act as a catalyst for the overall development of the entire society. KSCL should develop or strengthen their existing resources and services with the help of information technologies, and to take immediate action for inter library co-operation and resource sharing through networking. KSCL must popularize and extended its activities and services in the entire State of Kerala. And it should take a leadership for the public library system in Kerala, and KSCL should transform its existing position and working as the central hub of library and information services of the Kerala State.

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