ROLE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN LITERACY AND DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION: AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

The public library is an establishment that offers invaluable services to the community. It offers readers access to digital resources in addition to a plethora of educational, recreational, inspirational, and informational services. With the quick development of ICT and the evolving information needs of users, public libraries now play a different function. As more people visit public libraries in India than ever before to use their services, resources, and programs, it is now necessary to maintain a new vision for these institutions because community needs are always changing.One of the biggest problems facing a developing nation is illiteracy. As of 2017–2018, the literacy rate in India is shown. India's literacy rate has improved significantly in recent years. The lowest literacy rate in BDLSar is 68.82%, while Kerala has the highest rate at 93.91. A high degree of literacy is a fundamental need for a country to advance and catch up to other countries on the world stage. After all, every individual has a fundamental right to education. Additionally, it should be emphasized that India is a country with such disparities that some states, like Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh, and BDLSar, have achieved literacy rates above 90% while others still have appallingly low rates.

Keywords: Regional Parties, Communalism, Government, Goals, Result

Introduction

To put it simply, literacy is the ability to write and read. This new concept includes reading comprehension as well as technical awareness and the capacity to adapt to visual inputs. The idea at hand is complex, constantly growing to incorporate new elements in light of how society is becoming more globalized.Literacy is the capacity to identify, understand, interpret, generate, communicate, and compute with written and printed resources under a range of conditions. To help people achieve their goals, maximize their knowledge and potential, and fully participate in their local and global communities, literacy requires a continuum of learning. -- UNESCO

Causes of Illiteracy in India

Illiteracy in India is a big problem which has complex dimensions attached to it. Illiteracy in India is more or less concerned with different forms of discriminations that exist in the country. They are gender discriminations, income discriminations, state discriminations, caste discriminations, and technological barriers etc. which shape the literacy rates that exist in the country. India possesses the largest illiterate population in the world. Overall current literacy rates at 82.14% for men in 2011 and 65.46% for women. This small literacy is also responsible for the dependency of women on men for activities, which requires them to read and write. Thus, this all leads to the formation of a vicious circle.
Again, it is not a new concept that the rich households will have better access to educational facilities as compared to the poor. Poor households due to the lack of skills and knowledge involve themselves with uneducated labor in order to save bread and butter for the family, thus, this decreases the focus from achieving education as the main focus diverges to earning income so as to be able to survive in the society. States that spend more on education seem to have a higher literacy rates as to the states which do not invest heavily on education. Kerala is the state spends 685 dollars per pupil which also explains its educational levels.
One of the primary reasons for miserable literacy rates is insufficient school facilities. The teaching staff that is employed across the government-run schools is inefficient. Another reason which leads to the maximum dropouts among the children is the lack of proper sanitation. A study has stated that 59% of the schools do not have pure drinking water facilities. There is a shortage of teachers as well. India being a vast and diverse nation facing a lot of problems due to the illiteracy prevailing in various parts of the nation. Illiteracy is basically defined as the lack of ability to read and write. According to a recent UNESCO report "India has the highest number of illiterate adults which is a matter of serious concern. The major problem associated with it is the slow economic growth which in turn is stopping our country to become a developed country".

Adult Illiteracy

The 2001 India Census nailed adult illiteracy at an astounding 34%, i.e. onethird of the total population over the age of 15 on an average. There is a remarkable difference among men and women in the country. Adult non-literates being 23.3% among males and 45.1% among females. Compare this to two other countries in the region: China and Indonesia, both having established their governments, as they stand today, around the same time as India. A study showed that while all three countries had astronomically high illiteracy rates in the 40‟s and 50‟s (80-90%), China and Indonesia have made rapid progress, with their illiteracy rates brought below 10%, significantly lower than India‟s 34% in 2001. Comparing the efforts between the three countries, the study observed that, "India in no case was lagging behind in terms of formulating policies in this regard, but the greatest lacuna was witnessed in implementation of policy and planning. "The findings of the 2011 Census show only uncertain improvement. The overall illiteracy rate has dropped to 26% - around 18% among males and 34% among females. Illiteracy, therefore, still remains a concern for India, especially when it comes to finishing the gap between the literacy rates for males and females.

Additional perspective on the Literacy rates

In terms of education level, the 2011 Census indicates that out of all literate people in the country, 56% are only till the primary level education, and an additional 16% and 14% are educated till the middle school or secondary school level respectively. This means that only a meager 14% have received an education above secondary school level. So, while the literacy rates are showing improvement, the progress in terms of meaningful development of the human resources of the country does not look so promising.

Understanding adult illiteracy in the global context

"Education for All - Global Monitoring Report (2010)" of United Nations declared India is the country with the highest number of illiterate adults. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) estimates the illiteracy rate among adults (over 15 years of age) in South and West Asia to be around 38% currently, and is projected to drop to nearby 27% by 2015. This level of illiteracy is at the same level as SubSaharan Africa, and is significantly lower than all other regions in the world. Twothirds of these region illiterates are women.

India is little better in terms of adult illiteracy rates, but due to the size of the population, still leads by a huge margin when it comes to complete number of illiterate adults: India has about 287-300 million adults illiterate, way ahead of the next two countries on the list - China with 62 million and Pakistan with 50 million illiterate adults (UIS, 2012). In fact, India‟s illiterate adults form about 57-60% of the illiterate adult population of the Asia Pacific region (507 million). This is cause for alarm and a call to action. In India, like any other place, illiteracy is a function of poverty, with the concentration of illiterate adults being found in rural areas. Certain religious minorities and scheduled castes and tribes have much higher levels of adult illiteracy, again especially among women. Illiterate adults struggle with unemployment, or are relegated to degrading jobs, overloaded by employers and moneylenders, thus being further sucked into the vortex of poverty and exploitation.

Organizations Working for Adult Education

Government

The National Literacy Mission (NLM), flung in 1988, is the program undertaken by the Government for adult education. It has been the topic of discussion at various United Nations forums, and was awarded the UNESCO Noma Literacy Prize in 1999. By the end of the 10th Plan Period (2002-2007) the National Literacy Mission had made 127.45 million persons literate, of which 60% were females. To further bolster „Adult Education and Skill Development‟, the Government also introduced two new schemes, namely Saakshar Bharat and Scheme for Support to Voluntary Agencies for Adult Education and Skill Development, during the 11th Plan. Saakshar Bharat is the world's largest adult education programme, which predicts making 70 million adults‟ literate by 2017.

NGOs and other Initiatives

1)   **The Indian Adult Education Association,** probably the oldest organisation dedicated to the cause, was established in 1939. Dr. Zakir Hussain, former President of India, who served on the committee of the IAEA for 10 years as its Vice President, is quoted as saying, "The history of the IAEA is the history of adult education in India," from which it can be concluded that very little was done in this space prior to the IAEA"s formation. IAEA organises conferences and training programmes for adult educators in the country, as well as functionaries in the Government, and enrolls high-profile Government officials, educators and social workers. The International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education (IIALE) was set up by the IAEA in 2002.

2)   **NLM & NGOs:** As part of the revision of the NLM programme in 1999, NGOs were given a major role in the plan for adult education, either by partnership with the State Resource Centres, or by running their own continuing education programs, vocational training, etc. It was then expected that "NGOs would take up more innovative projects, which would serve as examples for making policy changes by the NLM." For this, NGOs were invited to apply for grants from the NLM.

3)   **Public-Private Partnership (PPP):** A number of public sector enterprises have extended their support to the Saakshar Bharat Program. There are partnerships with the private sector as well, for example, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) which has supported the campaign for literacy with its Computer Based Functional Literacy Program that has now been accepted as part of the 12th Five-year plan of the Government of India. The PPP model is emerging as an important channel in development, especially through the National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF).

4)   **Indian Literacy Project (ILP) and other Organisations:** this organization formed in 1990 in the United States of America, ILP partners with local NGOs to "Play the role of a facilitator for literacy". ILP has supported about 100 projects since its inception, benefitting around 220,000 children, youth and adults. There are also NGOs working in this space, such as Tara Akshar, Nirantar and CORO for Literacy.

5)   **Night Schools:** There are more than 200-night schools functioning independently in Maharashtra (150 of which are in Mumbai). The advantage of night schools is that they provide an opportunity for youth and adults who have to work during the day, can pursue their education post working hours. Though the concept of night schools is unique to only a few states (mainly Maharashtra), it would be beneficial to replicate the night school model across the country. "Masoom" is an NGO that works with night schools in Mumbai, and has developed a model for improvement of the night school education system.

Ways to Support the Cause

Although the current figures for illiteracy are still discouraging, it is heartening to know that the Government through its Literacy Mission, as well as citizens through various forums and organisations, are now systematically approaching the issue and bringing down the adverse rates gradually. Measures such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the Right to Education Act are wide-scale initiatives to ensure that the future generations of Indians will be given better access to education, and therefore, not be as susceptible to illiteracy as their predecessors. It is important to mobilize support for the promotion of literacy and adult education, especially in the following ways:

Public-Private Partnerships:

More or less some other organisations can play a better role to literate the uneducated people. In the private sector we can take the example of TCS and use their resources to develop valuable aids to assist the Government in imparting education to adults across the country. Technology-based solutions, especially mobile phone-based ones, are most likely to successfully reach out to a large portion of the population at a much lower cost.

Awareness & Fundraising:

Partnering with NGOs to create awareness for the cause – for example the "Back-a-thon" (backwards walk) organised by the NGO Make a Difference (MAD) in 20 cities across the country to raise public awareness on illiteracy. Fundraising initiatives would also go a long way in providing NGOs with financial resources to implement their programs, as well as draw attention and support to their work. Companies can also consider

options like "payroll giving" and regular NGO visits for their mployees.

Volunteering:

Assisting NGOs by enrolling as volunteers to teach the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. Professionals from all walks of life can also volunteer their services to help, build the capacity of the NGOs in areas such as strategy, financial management, human resource management, etc. to strengthening the NGO as an organisation would help set a strong foundation and enable higher productivity and success of the program.

Advocacy:

Outreach and impact can be significantly expanded when NGOs partner with the Government and avail the benefits of the various schemes and budgets, which can be utilised for program implementation. For this, strategic advocacy efforts are required on the part of NGOs in this space.

Collaboration of NGOs:

NGOs that are involved in similar causes would stand to benefit by collaborating their efforts and building on each other"s learning and proven successes in the field. Endeavors must be made to identify such NGOs and find a method to synergize their programs.

CONCLUSION

The study adult literacy initiate by the Public Libraries in Delhi NCR has come up with the new ideas and innovation. Such kind of study has not been initiated earlier. The Public Libraries are instrumentally taken the challenges to eradicate of the adult illiteracy silently. Even the ideas of eradication of the adult illiteracy have not coined earlier in the public library service in Delhi NCR. The facets of act of eradication can be measured from the newspaper subscription to layout of the libraries. It has been found that majority of the Public Libraries in Delhi NCR subscribed newspaper in local language instead of English and other foreign language, as every user can read daily information. This is the reflection the empathy of the Public Libraries in Delhi NCR towards its user group. The literacy of male & female ratio has increased from 1961 to 2011, as data shown. Subscription of periodical and DVD are also increased in the Public Libraries. The working hours of many libraries are extremely flexible for the adult illiterate people, Namely, Hardyal Municipal Public Library, RK Mission, Hazrat Shah Walliullah Public Library& Mahaveer Jain Public Library. Seating capacity also increased in accordance with the service to the adult illiterate users. The collection of the library also increased, in some extent the libraries try to acquire some basic books on adult literacy, but the not up to the mark, even library regretted for the unavailability of those books in the market. In the context of working staff of the libraries, it has found that the staffs are more in the library service and few are serving the adult illiterate as freelance, there is extreme scarcity of trained staff on adult literacy in the Public Libraries in Delhi NCR. Some of the libraries have created special area for the adult illiterate, but still more need to be done. The authorities of the said libraries, the government initiative need to be start freshly and many more activities need to be explored for the benefit of the adult illiterate in Delhi NCR.

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