

PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM IN THE STATE OF MAHARASHTRA AND MARKETING AND PROMOTION OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES: A FUTURISTIC APPROACH

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Abstract: - *The Public Library System in India is destined to remain peripheral to the actual information needs of the masses. This system is in miserable state and serves as little more than a warehouse of recreational reading materials. One of the major problems of Public Libraries is decreasing number of users. This is one of the biggest problems of public library system in the country. Marketing and advertising of information resources and services could be one of the solutions of this problem. Public Libraries can go for marketing for their information resources and services. It will help to enhance the number of users in public libraries of Maharashtra. Thus the purpose of establishing public libraries in the state may be fulfilled. The present study gives a detailed overview about Public Library system in the State of Maharashtra and marketing of information resources and services using different media like print, electronic or digital. The paper discusses about the benefits that can be drawn by the Public Libraries by advertising their services and resources and tends to know about the problems of Public Libraries for not advertising their information resources and services.*

Keywords: advertising; marketing; public library; resource marketing; media; publicity of library; utilization of library; public library of Maharashtra; Library legislation

Introduction

The Public Library system in the State of Maharashtra is quite strong. Libraries have been considered essential to educational and research endeavors and have relied on governmental support for their continuing operations. As far as

Libraries are concerned, they are non-profit organizations. When we talk about marketing of Library resources and services, we treat the service of Libraries as commodities and the users are the sole consumers of those commodities.

Marketing is the management process which

identifies, anticipates and supplies customer requirements efficiently. Librarians of Public Libraries of Maharashtra are participating in the process of advertising the resources and trying to fulfill the informational needs of their users. Public Libraries are the centers of acquiring knowledge for everybody. They always help people to enhance their knowledge but this is not possible unless people know about the location of Libraries in their area and the services offered for them. Information professionals must understand that it's essential to actively market their services. This goal can be achieved by marketing of information resources and services of Public Libraries by using modern marketing tools. Library marketing is critical for any information professional in order to spread information regarding their libraries. Marketing is very important in today's materialistic world to promote products and services. Knowledge must be considered as an important commodity and need publicity like other products and services. Advertising is bringing a product or service to the attention of potential and related users. Promotion keeps the product in the mind of the users and helps in stimulating demand for the product. People use only those items in their daily life of which advertisement they have seen on T. V., listened on Radio, read in newspapers, referred by some close friend and as seen on websites. Promotion involves ongoing advertising activities, sales and public relations are often considered aspects of promotion. Libraries can increase their

usability by publicizing themselves using modern day print and digital publicity methods.

Literature Review

Singson (2012), in his paper presented the marketing mix approach into library services and product as marketing deals with the process of identifying and meeting human and social needs. Societal marketing that have emerged in the early 1970's promising a more socially responsible and ethical model for marketing the product promotion and place in 4P are look into a new dimension and concentrated on distribution system which have the potential to minimizing costs to the consumer and to maximize timeliness and convenience of location. Taking advantage of the existing infrastructure in Web 2.0 environment methods like: In house, outreach and remote access can be achieved. The paper examines these three categories of service for their suitability and considers funding, methods of publicity and the control processes necessary to continuity of service effectiveness looking into the constrain of the remoteness and the social economic conditions of the rural belt of north east India.

Kanaujia and Walia (2007) in their paper which is the outcome of M. Phil research work stated basic function of public libraries as stated in UNESCO public library manifesto, 1994 and by Public Library Enquiry committee (UK) states problems of study and hypothesis discusses questionnaire based research methodology, and variable for data

collection form eight public libraries in Delhi. The review of literature gives user needs and pattern of use of public libraries in advance countries. It highlights the informational needs of public library users and their information gathering habits. It gives major findings and gives suggestions for the improvements of public libraries in terms of collection, services and facilities.

Kumar (2011) in his paper defined about readers, reading habits and explained the importance of reading, particularly for the emerging knowledge society. Public libraries are the local gateways to knowledge and play a vital role in developing reading habits. It enumerates various methods of inculcating reading habits in libraries. Reading habits can be inculcated at a young age and it will continue as a life- long activity for making better citizens. The responsibility of developing reading habits among children rests with the parents, schools and public libraries. The role of librarian of public libraries in promoting reading habits is discussed. More- over, public library have to carefully plan various programs and activities regularly to create awareness to modernize the LIS services by motivating children to development reading habits.

Objective of the study

1. To discuss about the Public Library System in the State of Maharashtra.

2. To know the need of marketing public library's resources and services.
3. To know about the methods and techniques, those can be adopted for marketing.
4. To identify the areas of public libraries where marketing is required.

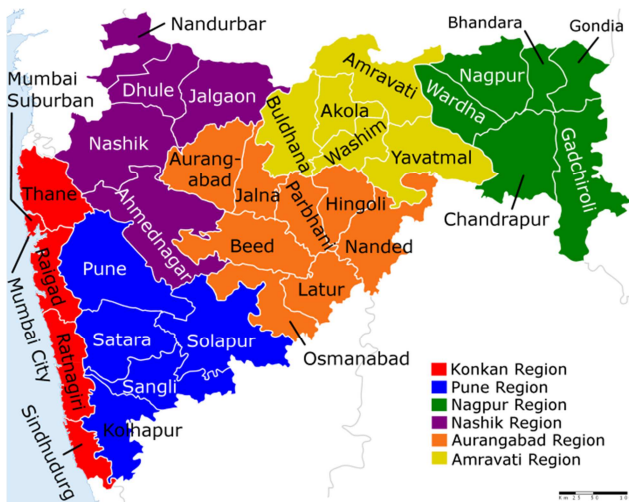
State of Maharashtra

Maharashtra state covers an area of 3, 07,713 Sq Km towards central and western part of India. It is according the census of India, 2011. The population of this state is 11, 23, 72,972 lakh. The capital city is Mumbai and the principal language is Marathi.

Historically, this state was earlier under the rule of Satvahanas from 230 BC to 225 AD. They are considered as the founder of this state. Under the Vakatakas, Maharashtra state flourished in to its tremendous growth in various fields of learning, arts and religion. Chhatrapati Shivaji took up Maharashtra up to a height. It was the leadership of Shivaji, this state picked up its growth. Shivaji was a symbol of new kind of patriotism and valour. He established a certain situation that stalled the Mughal advances in to this part of India. Maharashtra also became the home of Nationalist movement of India's freedom struggle and Mahatma Gandhi established his ashrams in Sevagram, Wardha.

This present state was evolved as the outcome of linguistic reorganization of India states which was

affected on May 1, 1960. Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh are at the northern side and Andhra Pradesh at its southern side, Chhatisgarh at its eastern side. Mumbai, the capital city is at the centre point of India’s financial and commercial markets. This state has attracted highest number of proposals having maximum employment potential. Industrial sector occupies prominent position in the economy of Maharashtra. (India: Annual, 2014)



(Source:- www.google.co.in)

Development of Public Libraries in Maharashtra

Libraries are associated with the Knowledge. For the spreading awareness to enhance knowledge, Britishers brought the concept of Public Library in India for the purpose of providing entertainment to the Britishers working here in India. Due to the British influence, the publication work of books, news papers were enhanced. Printing work was also promoted and an employment created in this

area too. The Literary Society of Bombay established in 1804 and its library started functioning in 1913. In 1828, the name of the society was changed to its present name of Royal Asiatic Society in 1828. This prestigious library has been given the honor of working as State Central Library. The Bombay Government wanted to encourage the establishment of Public Libraries. They also wanted to register the existing Libraries for copies of books from “Funds for the encouragement of Literature. They ensured that sufficient number of libraries must be there in the state. The Station libraries were also established to serve the reading needs and provide leisure to the British workers in India. The membership of these libraries was restricted to the Europeans till 1930. Various groups of people started thinking about the establishment of Public Libraries within the effect of Swadeshi movement. As a result Library for Marathi books was established in 1893 in Thane. Basically Maharashtra Public Library Development had some effect of Public Library Development in Baroda State by the then Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gayakwad. Maharashtra Free reading rooms and Libraries was established in 1921. Public Library conferences in 1921 and 1926 were organized and discussed various issues related to the Public Library conditions in the state. It was decided that the name of Native Libraries to changed as Sarvajanik Wachnalaya.

The Central Government's initiatives

The government emphasized for the development of public library services in the first five year plan and also to develop a network of public library in the state. The recommendations of Fyzee committee were also extended to gram and Taluk Libraries and to give them proper grant. The states of development as suggested by committee were accepted by the then MP government to be implemented in Vidarbha. The MP government established one central library and eight district libraries in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra during the second five year plan. Grant in aid Library services and integrated Library services were also started in western Maharashtra. During this time a pattern of reading rooms libraries and the training for library staff was also started during this time. The government during this five year plan did not provide separate plans but rest of all plans transferred to the state government. The financial portion to run public libraries was left on the people. The condition of public libraries during this time was not satisfactory. The state had a vast scope to implement the public library system in the state with using the recommendations of Fyzee committee.

History of Library legislation

In any of the state, for the sake of spreading knowledge and awareness, Library network is essential and this network cannot function to its fullest unless there is a strong provision in the Library legislation for promoting it with adequate

fund. Basically Library legislation is established to support a library network in the state. The countries like UK and USA adopted library legislation in the middle of the Nineteenth Century. The British Library act, which was passed in 1850, proved as the foundation of other state acts. This Library act has adopted the basic principles and objectives of Public Library establishment and survival. UNESCO has also organized many seminars to establish Libraries under the clear mandate of law by establishing a good library Legislation. This Manifesto was used in the IFLA conference as standard format for framing Library Legislation.

Importance of Legislation

The Library Legislation is very important for a state to establish a network of public library. It is a guide to help the government to look on the various steps and inputs to provide a cheap and best Library service to common man. Basically we can say the Legislation is backbone of Library system in a state. It purposefully gives the boundaries of State Government in the area of establishing libraries. It provides obligations of the state in terms of providing structure and funds to the Libraries. The government has to define the authority and structure to the Library system. The Legislation also provide some provisions for the funds and thus help the government to bear expenses incurred for running a network of Libraries in the state. The points provided in the legislation should have a strong legal cause for

justifying services and related cost. A strong legislation is very important for the state to provide a smooth public library service.

Public Library System in the State

Libraries are very essential for a society for its intellectual development. The slow and steady contribution of the Public Libraries for inculcating reading habits in the citizens cannot be underestimated. The State of Maharashtra has two types of Public Libraries system.

1. Government Public Libraries
2. Recognized Public Libraries

The provision of Free Public Library services to be provided to its citizens is in the Act. There is reading room facility to study the texts within Library and borrow books to study at home after fulfilling all the eligibility to become a member of the Library.

1. **Government Libraries:-** The Act has the provision to establish State Central Library, Divisional Library in each of the Division and District Libraries in each of district of the State. These Libraries are under the full control of the Government.
 - a. **State Central Library:-** The Asiatic Society Library, Bombay has given the responsibility of State Central Library. The Library's management control has been transferred to the Government. It was also recommended by the Fyzee Committee. This committee's report has also mentioned the role and responsibility of

State Central Library. This Library act as a repository Library under Press and Registration Act to get free copy of the publications. This Library also performs the tasks of Book selection committee, manuscript Library etc. The Library acts as an important Library in the state and the government should take care of it. The speedy work in the Library may carry out its objectives in a true sense. The Library Management should be there in the government hand not in the Asiatic Society's hand.

- b. **Government Divisional Library:-** At present there are three divisional Libraries in the state. These Divisional Libraries are established to link the people living in all the divisions to link together along with to preserve language and culture. The state of Maharashtra has been reorganized so the part of Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh got merged or separated to Maharashtra. According to the Act these Libraries act as revenue Libraries. Some Divisions are entrusted with extra work of monitoring district libraries. The Act does not give specific functions of Divisional Library. Nagpur Divisional Libraries are also monitoring District Libraries also. These Libraries get books under book selection work which is done in a centralized way in the state. These Libraries also appear working in an isolated way without having much connection with the State Central Library at the Top and Recognized Libraries at the bottom. There should be uniform pattern of working adopted in Divisional Libraries.

c. **Government District Libraries:-** these libraries were established to provide library services in the rural areas and to support the movement of establishing libraries there. These libraries are under the control of the government. These libraries are neglected so far for giving due importance in the budget. Prior to the Act, These libraries also take care of the task of inspection of libraries for grant in aid. There is a need to boost up district Libraries in terms of budget and manpower provisions. It is demanded from time to time that there should be post of District Library Officer to look after the issues related to the district Libraries. This issue was also recommended by the Page committee. There should also a post of Deputy Librarian to assist the District Library Officer. He may look after the day to day issues of the Library. The Library should publicize them to attract more number of people towards them. There should be publicity department to be created in the directorate of libraries.

d. **Manuscript Libraries: -** This library has been established to preserve rare manuscripts. These manuscripts have cultural and linguistic importance for the state. This Library may also advise the government in several issues related to the manuscript preservation. For this a separate committee was constituted to review this situation. It has been advised that a post of manuscript officer should be created.

1. **Recognized Public libraries: -** These libraries are maintained and administered by private bodies.

a. **Libraries of Private Bodies: -** It has been seen that the true library movement in the state has come because of the efforts taken by Private Libraries. These libraries also played an important role in freedom movement. After independence, these libraries have been chosen for giving grants under grant-in-aid program. These libraries have been recognized and evaluated on the basis of certain criteria. These libraries have access to the lower level of the society. The Government Public Libraries are rendering very limited services. So the importance of these recognized public libraries have been increased. A planned proposal had been drafted to make all the recognized libraries of the state under one roof. The grants were provided to these libraries on a condition that these would provide free service to the people. The control of Government in overall activities of the recognized public libraries is essential for rendering even better services to the users. The act has to make provision to review this situation.

b. **Libraries of Local Bodies:-**

In other countries like Boston, where local body government had initiated to popularize public library movement there and make it a success by levying taxes but In India no local

government has initiated such type of project for the promotion of Public Libraries. Local libraries are also recognized as public Library. Local emphasis is always required to boost up the library movement in an area. India has a different type of population with different literacy and economic levels. A different type of proposals for local self government in terms of spreading library movement is required. Such type of proposals was also prepared and propagated by Dr. S. R. Ranganathan. The main problem that comes in the way of Library movement is limited fund support. If the problem of expenditure is resolved, the movement can be taken to the next level. The government has also limited sources of income. One of the important solutions to this problem is levying tax on the public. There is also a dire need to put the whole system of Public Libraries under strict single control. The whole network of Libraries may be organized under the control of Director.

Importance of marketing of product and services of Public Libraries

This market driven age is running on the basis of marketing strategies and implications. The advertisements of products regularly appear in newspapers, magazines, posters, handbills, hoardings, radio, T. V. and internet. These advertisements and promotional activities help people to get a product of their choice. People

who are really interested in reading for spending their leisure will surely be benefited by the promotional approach of public libraries. Public Library can be proved to be a good place for self study of students According to Dr. Ranganathan, the aim of general publicity is to emphasize 1) the value of books and reading; the superiority of books as a source of opinion, information, inspiration and education over other forms of print. 2) The library as a public institution should be publicity supported and administered. 3) Library publicity may be carried on through press notices, magazines articles, radio talks, public lectures, demonstration, tours, window displays, posters, personal talks, attractive sign boards and the free distribution of leaflets and bulletins. For this purpose the Indian Library Association arranges the National Library Week from 14-20 November every year. (Ranganathan, S. R., 1963). Marketing of Public Libraries is much required if we want people to come to the Library. Libraries are like temples of knowledge for the society. The Library staff should be aware with all the latest marketing techniques for the promotion of Libraries. Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, the father of Library Science in India was a great thinker and visionary. He has observed this need of marketing of public libraries years before. The five fundamental categories developed by Dr. Ranganathan was a perfect example of marketing of libraries. In each of his laws marketing point of view was given a prominent place.

Ways of Marketing Public Libraries

News Papers and Posters

Regular advertisement in local newspapers and magazines are a means of promoting Public Libraries locally. This will also help the residents to know about the situation of libraries in their nearby areas.

Radio

Radio is an effective means of communication because of its portability even in mobile phones these days.. Radio jingles can be broadcasted like short stories/ play form in regular intervals regarding importance of public Libraries.

Internet and Social media

Internet sites related to Libraries can be used for publicizing libraries. Social media like Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp can be used for spreading awareness regarding the use of public libraries. More and more number of Libraries should be equipped with high speed of internet facility so that users even visit the library for using internet related activities and giving mass publicity to the Libraries. Library site should have all the details regarding the Libraries.

Mouth publicity

This method is one of the best methods of promoting library activity. Nukkad natak or community seminar can be organized to publicize the importance of the Libraries. Libraries must satisfy their existing users. Satisfied users will

automatically tell others to become members of a nearby library. This is an inexpensive way of publicity but expenses are included in the hard work of library staff and maintenance of library.

Promotional Campaigns

Outdoor publicity of Libraries is required. This may be done with the help of some NGO's who are also running some Public Libraries in some prominent areas. Inviting people for talk or lecture for current issues on the society may also be a good step towards promotion of Public Libraries.

Areas require marketing

1. Information Resources

Promotion of Information resources of the Libraries is an important activity in this regard. This may be done by preparing a public catalogue and distributing to the prominent places of the society. Interested people can look for their desired materials from that catalogue and then come to the Library for further study. Thus in this way users are trained to use catalogue and may be familiarize to the library.

2. Library as place for silent and self reading

Marketing of reading room hall invites readers to visit library for study and prepare for their examinations of competitive nature. A library

can perform this function by providing them a peaceful area for their self study. This will be a good initiative for public library for providing the students a comfortable space for their study and for preparations of examinations. Thus public libraries can play a good role in nation building.

3. Borrowing of books: a joyful activity

Library's circulation counters should be opened for maximum period or even on holiday so that maximum users from their busy schedule can spare some time to visit libraries. Best borrower can be announced after each financial year so that more number of users can be encouraged to borrowing books.

4. Digital Libraries

Setting up of Digital Public Libraries may encourage many people to use digital platform for accessing libraries. There should be a need of such system which is useful for the users to access and use the libraries from their home or work place.

5. Organizing Public Lectures

For marketing of reading room and creating awareness for the use of reading hall, it may be given for rent to organize seminar and meetings for various social occasions.

Support from the Government for promoting Public Libraries

1. Libraries are not earning bodies so it is not an important priority from the government. Libraries are the future of the country so it is expected from the government to make policies regarding the promotion of public Libraries as well.
2. The Government should give financial freedom to public libraries and have sufficient budget provisions for promotional activities.
3. Like other public welfare programs, Publicity of public libraries should go in the similar way to reach to masses.

How will the situation be changed

1. The government has to play a very important role to improve the situation. A team for Promotion of public libraries may be constituted at each district level for the promotion of public library's information resources and services.
2. Community Radios may be chosen as one of the fastest local means of publicizing library by broadcasting educational content round the clock.
3. Library should perform their duties in an efficient ways so that people have a sole believe to get their desired information on time. In this direction public libraries must

work as community centers but not just only preserver of study materials.

4. Library should host its website with relevant information to educate users. Digital Public Library will be one of the best medium to link with the users.
5. Public libraries may have their stalls showcased in local fairs of rural areas. Public Libraries must showcase themselves in Book fairs of district, state and national levels to give a momentum to this mission.
6. Mobile libraries may be utilized to have a door to door access of libraries to users.
7. Public Libraries can act as an intermediary between the public and government by converting themselves as community information centers and thus inviting more number of users into their premises and having publicity at a large scale.
8. A good treatment which is given by library staff to the users may always attract more number of users at all time turning a part of mouth industry.
9. All the public libraries should collaborate and join hard with local government schools to invite school children for some activities giving prizes and certificates. Thus making children habitual of using libraries at a tender age.

Conclusion

The condition of public libraries in Maharashtra is quite encouraging but more needs to be done. Maharashtra Public Library act ensures easy access to the people to the Libraries. It is seen that in lack of proper publicity campaign, Public Libraries are facing a dearth of users. Public libraries are a centre of acquiring knowledge as a life long learning activity. This can be hopefully done by marketing and promoting library resources. It is very important to educate users to utilize libraries. It is the philosophy of the Public Library which is established by the public, maintained by the public and easily accessible by the public. Marketing enables people to know about the resources and services offered by public libraries of their locality. Advertising, promotion and publicity can help library services achieve their desired place in the knowledge society.

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