

IMPORTANCE OF BOOK COVER AS INFORMATION RETRIEVAL TOOL IN DIGITAL ERA: A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES IN WEST BENGAL

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Abstract: - *The book-jacket is the paper cover that wraps around a book to protect it. Many people strip off these jackets and throw them away, but a nice dust jacket can be the major part of the value of a book. The jackets could also give short excerpts from the book. It is difficult to buy a book without knowing what it is about and in the days before dust jackets, this information would be on the title page. This paper described about the book cover in details- concept, importance, information embodied, relation with library and use has been discussed.*

Keywords: Bibliographical Information, Book Cover, Flap, Importance of Book cover, Library Automation, Public library.

1. Introduction

A Book is an important tool by which people may get reliable friend, shelter, medicine, and career and after all it provides life. One of the very first things that catches the eye is the cover of the book; sometimes even before the title or the author. The popular idiom is “Don’t judge a book by its cover,” but despite how true it might be in an idealistic sense, the reality of the book industry is that the vast majority of readers do indeed use the cover of a book as a deciding factor in not only whether or not they should buy the book, but

if they will enjoy it as well. In this paper we want to discuss the concept of book cover, its types and parts, importance in Public library, role in digital era.

2. Objectives of the Study

The Objectives of this Study are as follows:

- ▶ To know the importance of a book cover;
- ▶ To know how it play an important role for public libraries; and
- ▶ Finally, what is the situation of book cover in present digital age.

3. Scope of the study

Here we have considered only Bengali books including stories, novels, children's book etc. Periodicals are not covered by us in this study.

4. Methodology

Primary data collection have been made through survey of some libraries where some selected book covers observed. Without this, data also have been collected through interview of some Librarians. Books have been selected through the scanning of List of Bengali Books digitized Phase II of National Library, Kolkata. During survey of different libraries interview has been taken of some users simultaneously. Primary sources like different journals have been used for data collection. Beside this as electronic sources some websites have also been viewed for data collection. Secondary data have been collected from different books related to this subject.

Collected data have been analyzed in a organized way. After analysis the collected data, it has extracted some findings and from these findings conclusions have been prepared.

5. Public Library

IFLA/UNESCO Manifesto [3] describes the public library as the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users. The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status.

Specific services and materials must be provided for those users who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospital or prison.

All age groups must find material relevant to their needs. Collections and services have to include all types of appropriate media and modern technologies as well as traditional materials. High quality and relevance to local needs and conditions are fundamental. Material must reflect current trends and the evolution of society, as well as the memory of human endeavor and imagination.

6. What is book cover?

A book cover is any protective covering used to bind together the pages of a book. Beyond the familiar distinction between hard cover and paperbacks, there are further alternatives and additions, such as dust jackets, ring-binding, and older forms such as the nineteenth-century "paperboards" and the traditional types of hand binding.

The book cover (sometimes book jacket, dust wrapper or dust cover) of a book is the detachable outer cover, usually made of paper and printed with text and illustrations. This outer cover has folded flaps that hold it to the front and back book cover. Often the back panel or flaps are printed with biographical information about the author, a summary of the book from the publisher (known as a blurb), and/or critical praise from celebrities

or authorities in the book's subject area. In addition to its promotional role, the dust jacket protects the book covers from damage. However, since it is itself relatively fragile, and since dust jackets have practical, aesthetic, and sometimes financial value, the jacket may in turn be wrapped in another jacket, usually transparent, especially if the book is a library volume. [1]

According to Concise Oxford English Dictionary,[5] a book cover sometimes calls book jacket, dust wrapper or dust cover is a removable paper cover on a book.

In Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English [6] book cover means, it is a hard or soft plastic cover on a piece of equipment that protects the book when it is not being used.

7. The Importance of Book Cover

A Book cover is an important tool for information retrieval in various points of view. There are two basic points of view – Publisher's point of view and another is reader's point of view. Some are importance for both. We are trying to illustrate them in the following paragraphs.

i) **User attention:** A Book cover plays an important role to attraction of users' attention. Since, it is more important to the user in case of unknown books where user can remind his required subject only. It is the first thing which a

reader can see and picks up the book for detail observation from the open access display of a library. In case of known book, users search through author or title or collaborator or series.

ii) **A reminder:** A distinct jacket helps to identify and remind of known books and previously used books by a user. It is easy to find out a particular edition of a particular book from a database if the database contains the illustration of book covers. If anybody needs a mnemonic device for it, simply picture the jacket in his / her mind's eye.

iii) **An information booth:** A Book is called an Information package. The jacket or cover of a book displays the information about the book. The cover displays two types of information – bibliographical information for identification of the book and another type of information for identify the subject on which the book has been written. Under bibliographical information there contain title of the book, name of author(s) sometimes short biography of the author (s) may exist on the fourth cover or second flap, collaborator of the book (if any), edition, publisher's name with logo (if any), ISBN number with bar code and Price. Some information about the subject or content of the book also exists on the jacket. It may exist on the front flap or second cover and back cover of the book. So users can easily identify a book on a subject.

iv) A decoration: The pictorial matter may be broadly interpreted as the general design of the jacket, whether typographic, decorative or illustrative. The pictorial parts, especially reproductions of works of art, are added to the art or picture collection. Relatively few libraries, it seems, collect jackets on a permanent basis as examples of the graphic arts or as illustrating trends in the book arts and in publishing history, it is certainly true that because of their high artistic quality, many jackets, especially those from abroad, constitute an important contribution to the graphic arts. A user also can select font design from jacket.

v) A Status symbol : A book jacket advertise the status of a reader. During reading a book we may assumption about him or her from the information contain on the jacket of that particular book. Public libraries procure all types of books for all types of users irrespective of education, age, religion, etc.

vi) A teaser: A jacket is also a teaser, in the sense of a trailer, in that it should give us just enough information to entice.[4] Users expect much information from the jacket according to their requirement to select appropriate book from different book on a subject.

vii) Sources of Information for Cataloguing: Book jackets are more important to a Librarian. It helps to prepare the library catalogue which act as

an inventory tool of a book in a library. Users can find out their required book in a library with the help of catalogue whether it is either Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) or Manual Catalogue. Maximum information required for cataloguing of a book contains on the Book Cover.

8. Automation of Public Libraries

Library automation of Public libraries in West Bengal has been started in all public libraries with the help of different Library Automation software like Koha, LibSys, etc. But due to lack of sufficient trained manpower and finance this automation work yet not completed. As a result some libraries cannot provide OPAC service to its users. Circulation process is performing in manual way and users losses more time to borrow a book. Some libraries maintain closed access system till today. So users do not get chance to see another books which are may known or unknown to them.

West Bengal Public Library Network has introduced a Digital Repository [2] of copyright free rare books which are under the custody of various libraries of West Bengal. This repository was initiated with the assistance of Mass Education Extension and Library Services Department, Government of West Bengal and Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), under Ministry of Information and Technology, Govt. of India. It has started its journey on 12th August, 2010. State Central

Library, [7] West Bengal is acting as Apex Library in this Network. In this repository anyone can search rare books on different subject and download freely.

E-Books are not available in Public libraries in West Bengal except Digital Repository of rare books. Without this published digitized Bengali books or electronic version of Bengali books are not available in the market. This is also true for the books written by other regional languages of India. So users have to see only printed books and to find out his / her required books they have to search OPAC. Users of Public libraries can obtain bibliographic information only about a book. They cannot find the jacket or book cover and much other information like number of authors or collaborators, biographical information of author(s) or collaborators, about the book, etc.

9. Findings

From the above discussion we can say that printed books with jacket have no alternatives. Reading printed books in your own time and own posture cannot be replaced by 'e' books on computer screen. Modern e-books no doubt is handier than a tome and may have more portability (if available) but cannot give you same comfort and pleasure of reading. A computer is meant for fact finding and raw information seeking. Besides, a computer can be used for entertainment purpose. Social media can develop

personal contacts. But none can substitute a book.

10. Suggestions

Some recommendations may file in respect of the above discussions. They are as follows:

- ◆ Every library should preserve each book cover / jacket;
- ◆ Each book cover should have a serial number;
- ◆ Each book cover should mark with call number;
- ◆ All book covers should be organized in a systematic way like classified order;
- ◆ Make a scanned copy of each book cover and preserve them in a file where all covers should be organized in a systematic way; and
- ◆ Finally, user should have access to this scanned copy.

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