

Role of Public Libraries in Continuing Education Programme (CEP) in Chennai Corporation, Tamil Nadu: A Study

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(Received on 01 September 2011 and accepted on 02 March 2012)

Abstract - Public libraries play a vital role in development of Adult and Continuing Education at gross root level in developing countries. The Continuing Education Programme is to provide life-long learning opportunities to all people beyond basic literacy and primary education. For this Continuing Education Libraries are the sole source. The study focused the pattern of functioning of the system of Continuing Education Library users. The literacy programme implemented by Corporation of Chennai has gone through 3rd phase like Total Literacy Campaign (TLC), Post Literacy Programme (PLP) and Continuing Education Programme (CEP) benefiting of the slum population. The study revealed that women are the major beneficiaries of the Continuing Education Libraries.

Keywords: Continuing Education, Corporation Chennai, Literacy Campaign, National Literacy Mission, Neo-Literates, Public Libraries, Total Literacy

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental human right and access to educational tools including books and library facility, are central to realizing this right. "Education-for-all" is the vision with which adult-literacy systems throughout the world functions. In order to achieve effective service to the needy public, libraries in the adult and continuing education field have to essentially concentrate on the procurement, maintenance and distribution of reading materials and provide facilities. The aim of the processes should ensure that necessary supplies of books of the right quality and quantity are delivered at reasonable cost and at the right time through a fair and transparent system. While the national literacy functionaries have been striving to provide essential library services despite resource constraints, its efficacy needs to be examined further through a systematic and scientific research study comprised of methodological rigor and academic insights.

'Education' and 'Library' are two inseparable-indivisible concepts, both being fundamentally and synchronically related to and co-existent with each other. One cannot be separated from the other and the existence of one is impossible without the other. None of them is an end in itself; rather both of them together are a means to an ultimate end. One dies as soon as the other perishes. One survives as long as the other exists. This inter-relation, this co-existence, this dependence

of one upon the other has been coming down from the birth of human civilization to posterity through a process of evolution in accord with varied needs, changes and circumstances of various stages of human life.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The importance of non-formal education and a brief history of public library movement in Kerala - the initiatives taken by governmental non-governmental agencies and various other organizations in propagating non-formal education among rural masses are briefly discussed [1]. The historical development of the rural library services in Africa and modern rural village libraries in Ghana. It builds on previous studies of rural village libraries in Uganda and provides more support for the concept of village community library as being a potentially powerful solution for provision of reading materials in rural areas. Literacy continues to be a major factor in terms of economic and personal development in underdeveloped nations, and all libraries but perhaps these small village libraries even more so, have the potential to play an important role in the eradication of illiteracy, development of a reading culture and provision of services for the newly literate [2]. The public library is often considered a community learning center with the ability to effectively respond to the growth of adult and continuing education has created greater needs for learning opportunities in rural areas [3].

The role of the library is one of the essential ancillary services to the functions, activities, and operations of literacy education. The need for library services that help to develop a habit of continues readings even after literacy classes are completed. Library services are needed to keep the skills that have been acquired through literacy classes alive by the provision of good literature [4]. Librarians who encourage development of reading and writing can make significant contributions to the profession, local cultures and the global community. It focuses on the immediate and long-term problem of illiteracy. It is intended to motivate librarians across the globe by providing information about the effects of illiteracy on individuals or marginalized groups [5].

The public libraries providing family literacy programme to make a sound investment in future, by developing the future

of the family, the community, the library and the nation. Family literacy programs help the adult parent or caregiver to fulfill his / her role as the first and foremost teacher of his / her children. Public libraries are natural as a family literacy provider. Many public libraries deliver many of the basic components of a sound, family literacy program. In addition, family literacy programs bring more resources into the library than they use. It explains why this is so and provides a thumbnail sketch of the first statewide, state-funded, public library-based, family literacy initiative, for Literacy Program [6]. The recent education policy reforms in Sri Lanka, which emphasizes the expansion of literacy and lifelong learning, and describes the role of the public libraries in this task and discusses the status of the Sri Lankan public libraries. It gives reasons for the unresponsiveness of public libraries to the changing educational requirements [7]. The role of UK public libraries in adult literacy provides support for promoting the pleasure of reading to adults with poor literacy. The re-branding of adult literacy collections was recognized as the ideal starting point for the rejuvenation of adult literacy work and identifying adults with poor literacy was acknowledged as part of multi-agency work [8].

Surbhi Saini studied deals with the role of Government and Library Authorities in the implementation of public library legislation in North Eastern region of India. It is important that the authorities and library professionals should take the responsibilities for the development of public libraries in rural areas of north east India [9]. Henry D S Kinya discussed the manpower development, distribution and qualification in public libraries in Kenya [10]. The growth of a mass higher education system in the UK and the need for increased diversity of educational opportunity have meant that institutions have had to reshape their conventional provision. The main drive for qualifications and for vocational relevance has taken place in the context of major changes in the labour market and shifts in the UK's economy. The growths of an agenda for change as personal and professional learning converge, highlighted the innovations in teaching and learning methods for continuing education [11].

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the research study are to identify CE Libraries and to assess the functioning of such libraries in selected areas in Chennai Corporation.

1. To find out the profile of the respondents (beneficiaries) in terms of their age, gender, occupation, duration of learning per week and level of reading skills improved;
2. To find out the collection of books adequate to the users;
3. To assess the influence of CE Libraries in retention of reading skills by the selected beneficiaries in the Continuing Education Libraries.

IV. CONTINUING EDUCATION IN INDIA

Continuing Education scheme was introduced in India in the year 1995-96 as an integrated and growth oriented scheme funded by the Government of India. The objective of the programme is to provide life-long learning facilities. The basic unit of the scheme was the Continuing Education Centre with a Nodal Continuing Education Centre overseeing and supporting the working cluster of Continuing Education Centres (CECs). The Continuing Education (CE) scheme is implemented at the district level by the District Continuing Education Council, which functions under the district supervision and control of the respective District Collectors. The beneficiaries of the scheme include neo-literates, people who had discontinued education after reaching a certain stage, school dropouts and any enthusiastic persons who want to continue their education.

V. NATIONAL LITERACY MISSION (NLM)

The National Literacy Mission was launched on 5th May 1988 and its objective is to achieve a sustainable threshold level of 75% literacy rate by 2007 AD. Its emphasis is to impart functional literacy to non-literates in 15-35 age groups. It adopts campaign approach to achieve its objective by means of Total Literacy Campaign (TLC), Post-Literacy Programme (PLP) and Continuing Education Programme (CEP). The Total Literacy Campaign has defined goals like area specific, time bound and total coverage of given age group, volunteer based approach, environment building and mass mobilization, improved pedagogy with emphasis on learning outcomes, monitoring and evaluation and low cost in, order to achieve the National Literacy Mission objectives [12].

VI. CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN CHENNAI CORPORATION

The Continuing Education Programme was implemented in Chennai Corporation from the year 2002. The Continuing Education Programme through which the library and other functional programmes were from the slums. The libraries cum information centers numbering 330 are located in the major slums; libraries are extending their services to the neo-literates, school drop outs, women and children.

The city of Madras, now called as Chennai has a population of 4,681,087 (4.6 million) as per 2011 census. The literacy rate is being 90.33% with male 93.47% and female 87.16%, 1/3 of the city's population lives in the 1214 slums, out of which a 1/3 of them have been found illiterate. The city of Chennai being an urban metropolis has shown gradual increase in literacy rate from 47.27% in 1961 to 85.33% in 2001. At present it has been increased to 90.33%. Reasons like migration, workload and lethargic attitude have been the

reasons for slow progress, inspite of large-scale urbanization, besides attitude of males in attending the literacy centres. Whereas the female literacy shot up due to full thrust on women i.e., by 15% in 1971-1981 and 30% in 1981-1991 and again 15% in 1991-2001. The reason has been the impact of the Total Literacy Campaign, Post-Literacy Programme and CE Programme and the didactic efforts of the local body.

Chennai Corporation has 330 NCE Libraries and CE Libraries are functioning in the slum areas and located at corporation schools, corporation division offices Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) centres and local association buildings. Besides, newspapers, 1129 title books are issued in each of the libraries the women and children are most frequently used the library facilities, and 1,54,729 enrolled as members and benefited through this libraries.

VII. METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on Survey Method. The survey is a non-experimental, descriptive research method. The data has been collected through questionnaire method. For this study the Chennai Corporation has been selected and it consists of 155 wards / divisions. The target area of the definite universe of the study comprised of 330 CE Libraries in Chennai slums representing the low-income areas of the city where 1/3 of the underprivileged masses live. The slums are scattered throughout the city. Out of the 1202 declared slums by Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board (TNSCB), 454 are in the North Chennai and 748 in South Chennai. A recent survey by the Continuing Education project of the Corporation of Chennai (2003), there are 1214 slums with a population of approximately 15,90,182 people. The literacy programme, implemented by the corporation of Chennai has gone through 3rd phase like Total Literacy Campaign, Post-Literacy Programme and Continuing Education Programme benefiting of the slum population.

For the purpose of this study, responses were collected from 177 CE Libraries representing the different geographical zones in Chennai Corporation. Total of 531 respondents have been selected in the present study. In each CE Library three beneficiaries / respondents selected. The three respondents have been selected according to their regular utilization of the library. The respondents have been selected in random from the users list / records maintained by the each CE Library using lottery method, so as to ensure that the sampling is scientific and representative of the population studied.

TABLE I ZONE-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF CE LIBRARIES

Sl. No.	Name of the Zone	No. of NCE Libraries	No. of CE Libraries	Total
1	Zone – I Tondiarpet, Chennai – 600 021	3	30	33
2	Zone – II Basin Bridge, Chennai – 600 001	3	30	33
3	Zone – III Perambur, Chennai – 600 012	3	30	33
4	Zone – IV Ayanavaram, Chennai – 600 023	3	30	33
5	Zone – V Kilpauk, Chennai – 600 010	3	30	33
6	Zone – VI Triplicane, Chennai – 600 005	3	30	33
7	Zone – VII Nungampakkam, Chennai – 600 034	3	30	33
8	Zone – VIII Kodampakkam, Chennai – 600 024	3	30	33
9	Zone – IX Saidapet, Chennai – 600 015	3	30	33
10	Zone – X Adyar, Chennai – 600 020	3	30	33
Total	10 Zones	30	300	330

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VIII. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data were collected from 531 respondents at the Nodal Continuing Education Libraries and Continuing Education Libraries in Chennai Corporation of Tamil Nadu, India. The collected data were analyzed by using appropriate statistical tools. The data were quantitatively analyzed for framing interpretations between the independent and dependent variables of the study.

The table shows that the majority of the respondents (89%) are women. Only 11% of the respondents are men.

TABLE II SEX-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Sl. No.	Sex	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	60	11
2	Female	471	89
Total		531	100

TABLE III AGE-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Sl. No.	Age - Group (in Years)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	25 and Below	51	10
2	26 to 30	108	20
3	31 to 35	141	27
4	36 to 40	135	25
5	41 and Above	96	18
Total		531	100

The table indicates that the majority of the respondents (27%) belongs to the age group of 31 to 35 years, 25% of the respondents belong to the age group of 36 to 40 years, 20%, 10% and 18% of the respondents belong to 26 to 30 years, 25 years and below, and 41 years and above respectively.

TABLE IV OCCUPATION-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Sl. No.	Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Coolies	330	62
2	Agricultural Labourers	24	5
3	Unemployed	132	25
4	Others	45	8
Total		531	100

The table shows that the majority of the respondents (62%) are working as coolies i.e. on daily wages, 25% are unemployed, 8% are occupying different jobs including quasi-government jobs and only 5% are agricultural labourers.

TABLE V DAYS SPENT FOR LEARNING / WEEK-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Sl. No.	Duration of Learning	No. of Respondents	%
1	2 Days and Below Per Week	78	15
2	3 Days Per Week	114	21
3	4 Days Per Week	201	38
4	5 Days Per Week	96	18
5	More Than 5 Days Per Week	42	8
Total		531	100

The table shows that the majority of the respondents (38%) visited CE Libraries for 4 days per week, 21% were visited Continuing Education Libraries for 3 days per week, 15%, 18% and 8% have visited CE Libraries for 2 days and below per week, 5 days per week and more than 5 days per week respectively.

TABLE VI LEVEL-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Sl. No.	Level of Reading Skills Improved in Studying at CE Libraries	No. of Respondents	%
1	Yes	525	99
2	No	6	1
Total		531	100

The table shows that the majority of the respondents (99%) of them said that the level of reading skills, improved gradually through studying at CE Libraries. Rest 1% of the respondents said that the level of reading skills not improved.

TABLE VII AREA-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Sl. No.	Location of CE Libraries	No. of Respondents	%
1	Not remote	432	81
2	Remote	99	19
Total		531	100

The table shows that the majority of the respondents, (81%) said that the CE Libraries located in near the house. Only 19% of the respondents said that the CE Libraries are located in the remote areas.

TABLE VIII COLLECTION OF BOOKS-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Sl. No.	Collection of Books Adequate to Users	No. of Respondents	%
1	Yes	447	84
2	No	84	16
Total		531	100

Table shows that 84% of the respondents said that the collection of books, journals and children related books are satisfied the users. Only 16% of the respondents said that the collections of books in the CE Libraries are in adequate.

TABLE IX PRE CE LIBRARY USAGE IN QUALITY OF READING-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Sl. No.	Pre CE Library Usage in terms of Quality of Reading	No. of Respondents	%
1	Very Poor	117	22
2	Poor	48	9
3	Moderate	120	23
4	Good	123	23
5	Very Good	123	23
Total		531	100

Table shows that 22% of the respondents said that before visiting the CE Libraries their quality of reading of books were very poor. 23% of the respondents in each repeatedly said that their own reading quality before visiting the CE Libraries were moderate, good and very good respectively. Only 9% of the respondents said that their reading ability before visiting the CE Libraries were poor.

TABLE X POST CE LIBRARY USAGE IN QUALITY OF READING-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Sl. No.	Post CE Library Usage in terms of Quality of Reading	No. of Respondents	%
1	Very Poor	27	5
2	Poor	57	11
3	Moderate	60	11
4	Good	180	34
5	Very Good	207	39
Total		531	100

The table indicates that 39% of the respondents felt that after visiting the CE Libraries in terms of their quality of reading improved in a very good manner. 34% of the respondents said that the quality of reading was good after reading the materials available in the CE Libraries. Repeatedly 11% of the respondents felt that their reading quality was moderate and poor after the reading the materials in CE Libraries. Only 5% of them said that the reading quality were very poor even after visiting and reading the materials in CE Libraries.

IX. SUGGESTIONS

1. Web junctions should be incorporated in the CE Library. Web Junction is addressing many of the online communication and training issues that were identified. It is a huge resource in creating the online communities of practice and peer connectivity that is necessary to sustain public access computing and staff excellence.
2. To maintain Information Technology (IT) access for getting information and is designed to promote sustainable best practices and models of technical support for public access computers in public libraries.
3. Through the CE Library the Government of India should organize the symposium, seminars related to Information Technology, rural information system, libraries etc.,
4. To allow more CE Library staff to participate in national, state and regional activities.
5. Government need to expand the CE Library users circle and need to connect rural- affiliated groups who have a concern about and a stake in the successful development of local rural libraries. To bring people together who care about rural issues, not just about rural libraries, so that we can use all our assets and demonstrate that rural libraries are essential to rural communities.

6. In all CE Library be supposed to have the study centres in future. Even few of the 10th, +2 students may be preparing for their competitive exams.
7. Imparting and improving professional skills through special training and developing curricular linkages between fieldwork and action.

X. CONCLUSION

To eliminate illiteracy and develop the people's literacy skills, the public library system in our country plays a major role to achieve this goal. Measures were taken in the line of National Literacy Mission (NLM) to eradicate illiteracy and to develop the people literacy skills through CE Libraries in our country. As a part of our National Literacy Mission norms, Chennai Corporation had developed Continuing Education Libraries in Chennai. The study highlighted the fact that women are the major beneficiaries of the CE Libraries and 99% of respondent were developed their level of skills in terms of reading, writing and comprehend the reading materials is a real success of the continuing education programme.

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