

PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES FOR MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY: REVIEW OF LITERATURE WITH A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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This paper critically examines the literature published on 'Public Library Services for Multicultural Society'. Along with this, review is also conducted on the two more important topics i.e. 'Importance of Public Library' and 'Multicultural Society' separately to support the study. The primary objective of the study is to assess the present status of the public library services for multicultural society across the world. The inferences drawn from the review of literature revealed that currently public library services for multicultural society are not so encouraging and require major improvements in resources and services. Study also revealed that public libraries are important entities of the society and also that societies around the world are becoming increasingly heterogeneous in nature.

Key words: Public Libraries, Multiculturalism, Multicultural Society, Review of Literature, World, Resources and Services.

INTRODUCTION

India is home of many cultures, traditions and languages in fact, the very idea of India is engrossed with 'Multiculturalism'. India has been termed as an ethnological museum. Not only in India that 'Multiculturalism' is phenomenon but also it has become global phenomenon due to globalization. Today, whole world is rightly labeled as global village as all people live in an increasingly heterogeneous society. Multiculturalism can be defined as "co-existence of different cultural, racial or religious groups and is manifested in customary behavior, cultural assumptions and values, patterns of thinking, and communicative styles". (IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto, 2012).

However, in multicultural society setup, some communities or individuals may face social exclusion due to their different ethnicity, traditions, culture and language. There is always a possibility that, certain strong religious, ideological or economic groups can dominate and try to

oppress them. Lack of communication and trust between two communities can build misunderstanding leading to conflict. Too little knowledge and contact between these groups leads to prejudice, racism and discrimination. This is where role of public library comes into picture.

Multiculturalism is not a new phenomenon for public libraries. The fundamental principle of public library is that services for all and not directed to one group in the community to the exclusion of others. (Gill, 2001, p. 8) The UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994 defines that, the services of the public library should be provided on the basis of equality, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or economic/social status. As centre of information, education and culture, public libraries have the possibility of initiating social harmony in the society. Further, public libraries create and provide the forum for inter-cultural communication as meeting place.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literature review or review of literature is a search and evaluation of the available literature in a given subject or topic. It provides the state – of- the- art- report on the particular subject or topic. Reviewing is very first step towards any research quest and it provides theoretical and empirical background about research subject or topic. It also helps to understand how the findings of the new study fit into the existing body of knowledge. According to Borg & Gall, the review of literature involves locating, reading and evaluating reports of research as well as reports of casual observation and opinion that are related

to individual's planned research project. (Prabhakar, 2013)

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Today, public libraries are working in an ever changing and complex world. They are obligated to serve diverse information needs of the society. On the other hand, societies around the world are becoming increasingly multicultural and diverse in nature. Subsequently, their information needs also becoming more diverse. This is clear indication that, challenges for public libraries are only going to increase with the time. Hence there is need to carry out these kinds of studies to understand how public libraries are coping up with these recent challenges of serving multicultural society.

METHODOLOGY

The study is based on extensive literature search conducted through offline and online. It covers literature published in the form of journal articles, conference papers, reports and book chapters collected from various sources such as online and print journals, databases, consortiums and repositories. The literature then categorized in three components viz. studies on the Importance of Public Libraries; studies on the Multicultural Society; and studies on the Multicultural Society and Public Libraries. To make present study more systematic and precise, literature has been chronologically arranged and analyzed. Study highlights purpose(s), findings, suggestions and recommendations to accommodate more studies.

Studies on the Importance of Public Libraries

UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (UPLM) (1994) laid down the basic objectives

of the public library. UPLM rightly defines the public library and explained its functions related to information, education, literacy and culture. Document also discusses about public library funding, its legislation and management. Lockyer-Benzie (2004) tried to explain the concept of social exclusion and inclusion, how exactly the public libraries of City of Swan dealing with it. The author suggested that how public libraries should plan its services related to these excluded communities so that no person should be excluded from using the public library services. On the otherhand. Aabø (2005) discussed the role and value of public libraries in the society and point out the distinctive characteristics of public libraries as a social meeting place in a digital age. Study stressed on the need for strong public libraries in the information society. Scott (2011) explores how public libraries are promoting social inclusion and justice, and how public libraries construct a relationship to resources and community participation etc. author has given an example of King County and Seattle Public Libraries which are successfully contributing in community building from their service.

Howard (2011) investigated the attitude of twelve to fifteen year-old residents of an Eastern Canadian regional municipality towards the public library. Teens highlighted the lack of relationships with library staff, facilities, teen library web site, and teen involvement and participation as key barriers to public library use. Hu (2012) explained that, because of the lack service and the relative rules, it is important that, the government, society, public library and the vulnerable groups fill and locate the positions

according to the internal request for developing a harmonious society, endorsing social justice and developing the public library.

Saravanan and Jadhav (2013) made an attempt to identify the information needs and satisfactory level of users at Connemara Public Library, Chennai. Study focuses on availability of various library resources, services, facilities in Connemara Public Library. Study found that, majority of the respondents were satisfied with library collections and services. Oliphant (2014) attempts to determine the value and perceptions of public library in the eyes of people. Further, it also explores the characteristics of public library users, what resources and services they want or use and the role that public libraries play in building the society. Skelly, Stilwell and Underwood (2015) bring economic development and aspects of public library use in a single framework. Study explored the relationship between economic development and public library. Results revealed that, policymakers and librarians should take decisions regarding public library services keeping the economic growth and development of the society in mind.

Yuko (2016) examined the importance of public libraries as lifelong learning institutions by the analysis of citizens' independent learning activities provided in a public library. Study revealed that public libraries have the potential to help person's lifelong education and citizen participation. The article shows how public libraries are essentially linked with education and community involvement. Pateman and Pateman (2017) provided an outline for achieving cultural change in public libraries. The outline were

developed by synthesizing the ideas of Karl and Abraham Maslow. This combination of political science and psychology provides a new way of framing the challenge of cultural change in public libraries. It forms a solid theoretical basis for the changes required to transform public libraries. Thorpe and Galassi (2018) discussed the significance of diversity and inclusion in the goal of public library services. Authors provided a framework that could be used by other public libraries also to include deprived and different communities into public library services. Audunson et al. (2019) conducted literature review to scrutinize the shaping of public libraries as a sustainable public place. Study recognized few topics concerning the public library and public place and importance of public libraries by using Habermas's theory etc. Semanur and Tekindal (2020) aims to reveal the relation between the public library and gross domestic product (GDP) and also create awareness on the economic profits of using public libraries. Results showed that, GDP was affected when there was a change in the number of public library users.

STUDIES ON THE MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Dominique (2012) examines the foundation of the collected works of the Ontario's Multicultural Society history from 1976 to 1982 in the backdrop of the Canadian policy of multiculturalism. It also demonstrates the significance of understanding related aspects when evaluating the scope, content and limitations of library or museum collections. Juli-Anna and Kokkola (2013) contextualized the growth of multicultural themes in children's literature in the

history of Finnish nation-building and struggles for freedom. Article concludes with a concise deliberation of how these less than ideal books endorse pluralism. While Osbeck, Moghaddam and Perreault (1997) examined the relationship between perceived similarity and social distance among minority and majority groups in a multicultural context of Canada. Author suggests that the relationships between these two variables are stronger when minority group members are the target on the other hand, Lewis, French and Phetmany (2000) identified the cultural diversity in multicultural societies of Australia. Authors argued that with the change in business environments, cross-cultural management issues have become important.

Patrick (2002) argues that, many modern liberals increasingly accept that plural societies must seek to far more moderate and inclusive ideals of justice and citizenship than liberal policy would suggest. The central insight is that, extending the set of rights is the most helpful way to implement a just and stable multicultural society. Soekaret al. (2004) examines the views of Dutch native people and four immigrant groups (Surinamers, Antilleans, Turks, and Moroccans) on four topics relevant for the functioning of the Netherlands as a multicultural society. The study also examines the relation between ethnic hierarchy (cultural distance), educational level, and experiences of the ethnic groups. Burton (2005) attracted more attention to the issue of ethnicity within marketing and place it higher on the agenda for marketing academics and practitioners in Britain. Study highlights the potential of the ethnic market by assessing

demographics, social and economic factors and existing consumption patterns. Cassatella (2006) focused on a Kymlicka's major area of research, that is the matter of justice for minority cultures. It deals with his perception on cultural recognition in a multicultural society. The purpose of the article is to emphasize what the dangerous implications could be, in a multicultural society, were policies of cultural recognition to be predominantly or solely founded on liberal values.

Stanisevski (2008) raises the question about the role of public administration in facilitating the process of social inclusion of the culturally marginalized communities. Author argued that, government organizations could assist social inclusion of marginalized voices by supplying symbolic public identification of cultural differences. Portera (2008) analyzed the role of educational opportunity in a time of globalization, a new economy and life in a multicultural society, and gives an epistemological and semantic account of the concept intercultural education, distinguishing it from multicultural and trans-cultural education. Ramanujan (2010) focuses on the important discrepancies between the two dramatic interpretations of the movement in spite of their shared recognition of the omnipresent character of the tradition as well as its deep contemporary relevance to issues of religious and caste clash. Study critically evaluates the possibilities and limitations existing in appealing the past against its increasing homogenization and diminution toward the forging of a truly secular public culture. Significantly, Ommundsen (2011) confirmed that, battle and violent behavior were taboo topics in picture books for little children.

Hence, just three Norwegian picture books about war were published. However, many translated picture books about the war were published over the time.

On the other hand, Greenberg and Bar-Ilan (2014) surveyed Israeli students opinions and imply that if the student's second language is the language of instruction and assignment delivery than they should be given special attention from the library. Ravazzani (2016) explored Danish manager's perspectives on practices of internal crisis communication in multicultural environments. Study helps by offering important insights into internal crisis communication in organizations with a multicultural environment. Haghanikar (2017) examined how character and characterization, plot, setting and point of view are used to consider a book as multicultural. Study focused on the content of ten books that were originally published between 2009 and 2014 in the United States for young adults about Iran in American English and authored by Americans.

Boamah (2018) explored the information culture of immigrants from Ghana living in New Zealand. Author confirms that, immigrants from Ghana interested in getting information about New Zealand's education, health, environmental issues, politics and sports. Ghanaians give value to the information they receive and use in New Zealand. Johnnton (2019) presents the results of a case study in Norway on language cafes and integration. The results determined that the programming cuts inter-group intolerance by nurturing the adopting processes i.e. knowing about the out-group, developing affective ties,

altering behavior, in-group re-evaluation and offering a close friendship potential. Colomo-Palacios & Others (2020) investigated and compared emotions of three different countries while coding and presenting for software students. Results demonstrate that coding and presenting are emotionally different for the subjects of all countries. Study will help to improve computing literacy theory.

STUDIES ON THE ROLE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN RELATION TO MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto (2012) defines “Cultural Diversity” or “Multiculturalism”. It stressed that every individual in society including the culturally and linguistically diverse persons has the right to information services. It explained that, in a culturally diverse society, focus should be on information, literacy, education and culture. The core activities of library and information services for culturally and linguistically diverse communities are central, not “separate” or “additional”, and should always be designed to meet local or specific needs. Further it elaborated on actions, staff, funding, legislation and network. Roach and Morrison (1999) reports on a project i.e. ‘Public Libraries, Ethnic Diversity and Citizenship’ funded by British Library. The project examined how services of public library have responded to the proposition of ethnic diversity. The findings raised many issues to be solved by the public libraries in Britain. Malone (2000) reviews articles and books, related to experiences of African-American community in public

libraries and suggested ways and means for more inclusive services in American Public Libraries.

Kann-Christensen and Pors (2004) investigated the concept of political legality in relation to change processes in the public library sector. The concept of legality consists of politicians, users and staff. Study shows how the library director or library system has to navigate with different cross pressures in a multicultural society. Audunson (2005) want to develop an improved conceptual framework for researching and discussing the public library’s role as a meeting-place in a multicultural and digital society. Study analyzed public library’s potential role as meeting-place which is found to be very significant. Rodrigues (2006) found that, South African public libraries have failed to identify diverse nature of the communities they serve. Results stressed on the need for training in cultural diversity issues for libraries. Study also identified causes for this failure and given suggestions accordingly.

Pinto and Sales (2007) while describing about the information literacy for a multicultural society states that, the public library is an open ended vehicle of knowledge as it supports education, cultural development of the individual and social groups. Public libraries can play a crucial part in the integration of minority groups into the society through the promotion of cultural interchange and training programmes in information literacy. Ulvik (2010) presented the work of a multicultural memory group a project that intended to establish the public library as a meeting place for people from diverse cultures in a Norwegian public library. Findings of the

study states that, though public library provide place for meetings between people but, purpose of social integration will not succeed until an association to another planned activities. Khoir, Tina Du and Koronios (2015) developed conceptual framework to highlight information behavior of Asian immigrants' in South Australia. Framework connects immigrants' information needs, information seeking and sharing, and subsequent public library services to their ongoing settlement. Dali (2016) interviewed immigrant readers with the aim to assist public library in its practices with them. Findings revealed that statistics are vital for librarians because that gives chance to observe readers as individuals rather than unknown persons especially regarding multicultural populations.

Chen and Ke (2017) aims to investigate the societal value of public libraries, from the viewpoint of Singang Library, Taiwan. Results determine that, Singang Library is used as five different types i.e. a place, public place, a place for meeting diverse people, meta-meeting place and joint activities. Lihong Zhou, Cheng Cui and Luo (2018) aimed to develop a framework for multicultural services in China's public libraries to serve ethnic minority regions. Study found that, in spite many efforts the multicultural services in China's public libraries have not yet been good. Backman and others (2018) examined teen book acquisitions of 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016 at one urban public library system to know whether there was any significant increase in resources representing Asian and Asian American

characters which reveals that, there is lack of Asian American teen literature in an urban public library.

Lin and Boamah (2019) explored the different aspects keeping diverse cultures individuality in the New Zealand socio cultural systems. Paper also examined the gaps in multicultural services at public libraries of Auckland. Study revealed that, public libraries of Auckland had an advantage over other citizen service establishments in the growth and services of multiculturalism in New Zealand. Robinson (2020) brings multiculturalism and the public library together focusing on a south London library's newly started knitting group, consisting older women from racially and ethnically diverse backdrop. Author argues that the public library has a unique ability to become imperative spaces of everyday multicultural hospitality. Akbar and Asmiyanto (2021) aims to discover the role of public libraries in providing information services to multicultural communities through literature study. The results show that public libraries play a vital role in satisfying information needs and support the acclimatization to a new environment easy at the same time maintaining their unique identity and culture.

MAJOR INFERENCES ON THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. It is found from the review that, the public libraries around the world, are playing very important role in the development of an individual and as well as the society through information resources and services.

2. It is found from the review that, multicultural societies are increasing around the world due to globalization as all people live in an increasingly heterogeneous society.
3. It is found from the review that the public libraries play a significant role in protecting ethnicity, culture and language of multicultural communities through resources and services.
4. It is found from the review that the public libraries promote social harmony among multicultural communities by providing them common platform to meet the needs of the users related to information and knowledge.
5. It is found from the review of published literature that public libraries across the world are reluctant and rather slow in satisfying the information needs of the multicultural society.
6. Majority of the authors argued to provide better and quality services to multicultural communities and they also stressed on the need for further intensive research in the area.
7. The study also found that majority of the studies related to Multicultural Society and Public Libraries are from the United States and Europe.
8. It is found from the study that a very meagre articles were contributed by Indian authors on the subject of study.
9. There are a number of studies on the role of public libraries and multi-cultural society conducted in different countries.

CONCLUSION

Ethnical, Cultural and linguistic diversity should be respected, cherished and preserved. In this noble endeavour, public libraries can play a huge role by providing resources and services. Even if some communities are not in large numbers, it is important that they are represented in the public library. But, unfortunately, review of literature suggests otherwise. Today public libraries are not adequately equipped to meet these emerging challenges. They are still continuing same old services. With changing time it is really important that public libraries should come forward and take initiative in this regard. Public library services should include multicultural information in appropriate languages and scripts. Along with this, Provision of library services that are specially targeted to multicultural communities without discrimination based on cultural and linguistic heritage should be initiated. By providing appropriate resources to multicultural society, public libraries will not only achieve the goal of 'Information for all' but also address the issue of social exclusion.

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