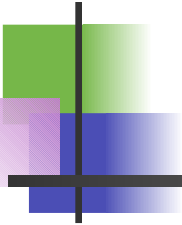# AUTOMATION AND NETWORKING OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN GUJARAT

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Introduction

- Public libraries can educate, inspire and recreate the different age groups through the reading material. Public libraries must therefore, be allowed to play a role of fundamental importance in the development of future systems of lifelong learning.

Mission of Public Library

The following core of public library services are;

- Creating and strengthening reading habits in children at an early age

- Providing opportunities for personal creative development

- Promoting awareness of cultural heritage

- Ensuring access for citizens

- Providing adequate information services to users

- Facilitating development of information and computer literacy skills

- Supporting and participating in literacy activities

Types of public library

Mainly public library system is divided into following two types of public libraries:

Urban Public Library System comprises of following:
- State Central Public Library
- Regional or Divisional Library
- District Public Library
- City Central Public Library

Rural Public Library System comprises of following:
- Sub-Divisional Library
- Block Public Library
- Village Public Library

Library and information services available at public library

These services are as follows:
- Lending Services/Loan of reading materials for home
- Reading Room Services;
- Reference Services;
- Current Awareness Services;
- Computerized SDI Services;
- Abstracting Services;
- Indexing Services;
- CD-ROM based specialized subject databases Services;
- E-mail/Internet Services;
- Inter-library Loan Services;
- Organisation of book exhibition, lecture, seminar, workshop, literacy awareness, AIDS awareness, etc; and
- Counselling and Guidance Services, etc.

Improvement of Public Libraries of Gujarat

The major issues pertaining to the development of public libraries are listed below.

- Network of rural to be linked up with the state library system

- RRRLF to provide assistance in addition to the state gov. for providing expansion of Public library facilities

- Public libraries must cater to the needs of both the students community & senior citizens

- Public Libraries should contain relevant books written in regional languages

- National Book Trust to assist in the production of books needed for Public library user on priority basis

Why should we automate our public library?

- Public libraries play an important role in making the people more informed. Such library occupies a very important place in the various programmes like Adult Education Programme, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, Indian Literacy Mission, Rural Mother–Child Health Care Programme, and many other welfare programmes available in rural areas for overall development of the society. After 66 years of Independence, the development of public libraries of Gujarat is huge.

- With the introduction of automation and networking in public libraries, the people will receive desired information and knowledge. With the introduction of Internet facilities, access to agricultural information, business based information, vocational information, and instant communication through e-mail, or social networking sites would be easier. People will be connected to mainstream and global access to information would be possible. Nowadays, information is considered as a strategic resource. With the introduction of ICT, the public libraries may act as community information centre or community information university.

- Due to advent of mobile, wireless and Internet technology, the public libraries should take advantage of these technologies for its modernisation and providing community information to the community for the overall development of the whole society.

Purpose of Automation & Networking of Public Libraries

Following are the purpose of automation and networking of Public library

- To reduce the repetitive work and save time of library professionals in routine housekeeping operations and library services

- To bring accuracy and speed of work

- To bring economy and provide prompt library services; to increase efficiency of technical processing over a manual system

- To do financial savings due to automation; to improve library and information services for end users

- To improve the efficiency of library administration and management

- To facilitate resource sharing in networked environment at local, regional, national and international level; automation helps in providing enormous capacity of data storage and retrieval; To improve efficiency of work and provide consistency and improve work control

- To bring all this valuable information on indigenous knowledge to the people of Gujarat.

Areas of Public Library Automation &Networking

- Acquisition of reading materials; cataloguing and indexing
- Circulation control; serial control; library administration & management
- On line public access catalogue; information retrieval and dissemination
- CD-ROM databases searches
- Inter-library loan or ILL (cooperative sharing of library materials)/resource sharing through library network
- Access to e-Resources through INTERNET
- Developing local digital library/institutional repository
- Desktop publishing (DTP) for report generation;
- Office automation

Steps for Improvement of Public Libraries

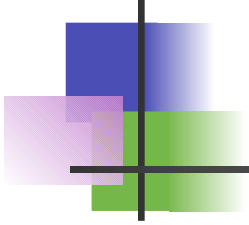Following steps should be taken to improve the conditions of public library in Gujarat,

- Creation of computerized databases,

- Formulation of preservation programmes for libraries which have rare books/manuscripts,

- Awareness creation among users and library staff regarding the need for libraries and preservation of books,

- Modernization and automation of libraries for easy accessibility to use,

Conclusion

The present paper is based on the development of public library network for automation, networking and digitisation of public libraries scattered throughout Gujarat.

There is a financial support from RRRLF to run the public libraries of Gujarat. For the overall development of public libraries in Gujarat, there is

a need of enacting library legislation in all the district of Gujarat.

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