

RESTRUCTURING AND EXTENDING OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES REGARDING HEALTH INFORMATION: A FUTURISTIC APPROACH

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Abstract: - *Public libraries are trusted community institution that provides the information literacy expertise, community convening capacity technology infrastructure, and equitable access to reliable resources that can improve health literacy. This paper gives an overview of why public libraries are important for providing health information, activities that public libraries are taken regarding the health awareness initiative through this initiative Public Library extend their service which is most valuable in rural areas.*

Keywords : - **Health information, Public Library, Health Literacy , Govt. and non Govt. organizations.**

Introduction:

As a common citizen of our locality we may have opportunities to visit and make it accessible for our own purpose or we may even as a member of a public library. Among the different types of libraries evolved by the society in modern times, public libraries are the most popular, because of the function they perform. They play a very significant role in the welfare of a society. Public Library plays a major role in the cultural

development of the individual and social groups. According to UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, one of the key mission of public library is supporting and participating in, literary activities and programme for all age groups, and initiating such activities. In this paper we mainly discuss about the role of the public libraries in health literacy initiative. Public health is a basic human right and it is the fundamental duty of every nation to ensure its people universal health care.

In recent time the health related problem is a major factor in our society. For this reason the public libraries can play a major role in providing health information.

2. Objectives of the study:

- i. To help the user to navigate the health care system.
- ii. Develop health information programmes through Govt. and local organizations.
- iii. Prevent the common disease in our local community.
- iv. Provide adequate, qualitative and preventive health care information within the user.
- v. To ensure greater access of primary health care through Public Library services as close to the people as possible.

3. Scope and limitations of the Study :

The present study mainly based on the futuristic approach because in West Bengal no public library provide health related information. But if public libraries taken health literacy initiative they serve the user community in a better way.

4. What is Health Literacy?

The patient protection and affordable care act of 2010, title V, defines health literacy as the degree to which an individual has the capacity to obtain, communicate, process and understand basic health information and services to make appropriate health decision.

(<https://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/learn/index.html>)⁷

5. Understanding Health Literacy:

The main purpose of health literacy is not only providing knowledge but also provide skills to develop and adapt a healthy behaviour. Health literacy is important in every one life because our everyday life facing many problems and we can't overcome this due to lack of awareness. We all need to able to find, understand and use health information and services. Taking care of our health is a part of our everyday journey, not just when we visit doctor or clinic. Health literacy can help us prevent health problems and protect our bodies when we faces those unexpected problems occur in certain time.

(<https://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/learn/Understanding.html>)¹

Here we discuss five points about understanding health literacy:

- 9 out of 10 adults are struggling to understand and use of health information because it is unfamiliar and most complex.
- Limited health literacy is more effective and the result is higher than necessary morbidity and mortality.
- Health literacy can be improved if we practice clear communication strategies and techniques.
- Clear communications means using familiar concepts, words, numbers and images presented in ways that make sense to the people who need the information.
- Testing information with the audience before it is released and asking for feedback is the best way to know if we are

communicating clearly. We need to test and ask for feedback every time information is released to the general public.

(<https://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/shareinteract/TellOthers.html>)²

6. Why public libraries are important for providing health information?

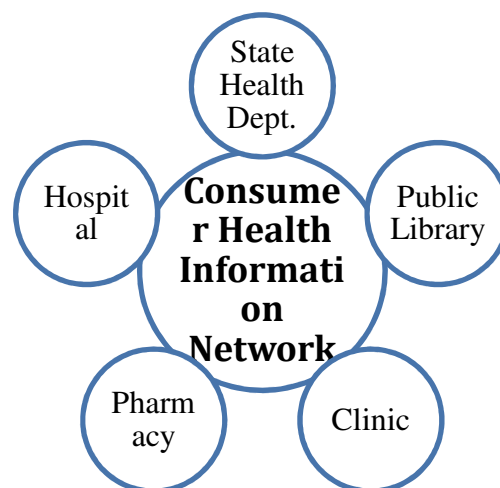
- Many segments of the community use public library. Public library is primary medium for providing any type of information.
- Often people may afraid to visit clinic and hospital. Some time they forgot or disagree to ask something near doctor.
- Access in hospital libraries may be limited for local users.
- Public library store large amount of printed magazine than any other libraries. It also stores health related magazine that help to the user.
- Provide free access to the health information.

7. Basic health literacy topics that public libraries can serve to the local community are:

- Nutrition and healthy diet of all age group people.
- Smoking effect.
- Dental hygiene.
- Promotion of mental health.
- Dengue and Malaria protection.
- HIV/AIDS awareness programmes.

- Swine Flu prevention.
- Cancer protection programme.

8. Community- Centred Information System:



According to Consumer Health Information Network model, Public Libraries played a major role for providing health information near the local people.

Role of Public Library in health information system:

- Distributed materials:** The public libraries played a major role for distributing the materials about the diseases which attack the society and are communicable in nature like- Chicken Pox, Polio, HIV/AIDS etc.
- Published article in local newspapers:** In the rural/urban community where the major no of peoples are fear about the diseases which are communicable the librarians taken the initiative for publishing the articles about the diseases.

- c. **Mounted display in library:** In the Health Awareness Days in calendar year's like- HIV/AIDS Day- 1st December; Tobacco Day- 31st May; Cancer Day- 4th February etc. should be displayed in the big projector screen in the front of the library.
- d. **Create a community group:** For creating awareness in the society the libraries with their registered users create a community group which are taken the initiative for sharing their useful information about the diseases.
- e. **Sent information packets to local clinics:** Public libraries collect the health information of peoples belong to all age groups and it sent to the local clinics so that peoples easily cure their problems and they can't feel hesitated at the time of going clinics.
- f. **Participated in open house/health fair:** Public library librarians always participate in the health fair and it is very helpful for them to collect information about how they can behave with the patients, what information should be collect, what medicine will be provide at the time of emergency etc.
- g. **Radio Talk shows:** Health related radio shows are very unique radio based health literacy programmes which are cost effective, sustainable and participatory community based. The radio has its own

title song and music, to which the local peoples are very familiar.

- h. **TV Shows:** TV shows are very powerful tools for conveying health messages to a wide audience. TV is a potential platform for improving health literacy. Successful collaborations between TV producers and public interest groups have bolstered public health campaigns about issues like smoking, HIV/AIDS, Dengue and Malaria etc.
- i. **Prepared local flyer/brochure:** The health information brochures/flyers are mainly focuses on increasing knowledge about a particular diseases which are more effective. An information brochure tells patients, healthcare users and their families about the care that is being offered, and adds to the information given verbally by the healthcare professional. It is not a substitute for verbal information but can help patients and users to take part in decisions about their health.

9. Role of National Medical Organization/Institution for supporting in Health Information:

There are some National Health Organization which played a vital role for providing and supporting health information and health care services.

Central Bureau of Health Intelligence:

1. To Collect, Analyze & disseminate health sector related data of the country for evidence based policy decisions, planning and research activities.
2. To maintain & disseminate national health profile, health sector policy reform options database.
3. Facilitated capacity building & Human resources development.
4. To carry out need based operation research for efficient implementation of health information system.
5. To collaborate with National & International Institutes for imparting knowledge & skill development.

(http://dghs.gov.in/content/1370_1_CBHI.aspx)³

Health Management Information System: It is statistics information portal. This portal will be a gateway to a wealth of information regarding the health indicators of India. It support web based monitoring system of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Provide services through the large network of health facilities across rural and urban areas and also provide key inputs of health policy formulation and intervention.

(<https://nrhm-mis.nic.in/SitePages/Home.aspx>)⁴

National Medical Library: It aims to provide Library and Information Services to the health science professionals in India. It functions under the administrative control of the Directorate

General of Health Services. It became the Indian focal point of HELLIS Network under World Health Organization in 1982. It has organized 17 orientation courses in Health Science Librarianship and trained over 150 Librarians in India. It has also conducted training courses on specific topics like MEDLARS searching, Computer application, Library management software, Indexing and Abstracting etc. in different regions.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Medical_Library)⁵

All India Institute of Medical Sciences: In the field of Post-graduate education, the most important function of the institute is to provide opportunities for training teachers for medical colleges in the country in an atmosphere of research and enquiry. Postgraduate students are exposed to newer methods of teaching and given opportunities to actively participate in teaching exercises. The other objectives of the institute are to bring together in one place educational facilities of the highest order for the training of personnel in all the important branches of health activity and to attain self-sufficiency in postgraduate medical education. Also provide Community based teaching and research.

(<https://www.aiimsexams.org/info/AboutUs.html>)⁶

Here we discuss four renowned institutions and organizations which motto is to provide better accessibility and services about health information for users and local community.

Our local government must take initiatives to collaborate with local Public library and that institutions and organization. Librarian and library staff are accruing such knowledge helps our local community so that they may prevent some common regional diseases. The collaborative association also has a responsibility to build up the awareness in the local community, so that they take necessary steps at an earlier stage.

10. Suggestions:

- ❖ Public Library should organize health camps in every month at local communities.
- ❖ Health literacy programme may be arranged through the Public Library.
- ❖ Public libraries can make a bridge through Govt. and non Govt. organization to provide health information.
- ❖ Public libraries should make an honest & sincere effort towards awareness for preventing some common diseases through the booklet, magazine & books.

11. Conclusion:

Through these suggestions Public Libraries can extend their health information services to the local community. Public Libraries librarians now trained as “community health specialists,” and the libraries offer programs and assistance for people of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds. Libraries and librarians contribute two particular strengths to advance a culture of health: accessibility and trustworthiness.

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