

LIBRARY HERALD

Vol 59 No 1

March 2021

Community Outreach and Inclusive Programmes in Library: Stakeholder Feedback

CH. IBOHAL SINGH*

NGANGBAM TEZEEB SINGH**

The purpose of the study is to assess and analyse the feedback of the stakeholders on their participation in various community outreach and inclusive programmes in library. The study has been confined to the community living in Bishnupur District of Manipur State. The same has also been studied based on the programmes conducted during the National Library Week Celebration, 14-20 November, 2017. The feedback of the stakeholders has been analysed. Department of Library and Information Science, Manipur University, Imphal conducted National Library Week during 14-20 November, 2017 under the theme "Role of Library in Quality Education". As a part of the week, different library related programmes were carried out at Kumbi College, Bishnupur District, Manipur. Deliberation of keynote address, distribution of resource materials, conduct of extempore speech competitions, interactions with the resource persons by the participants who are stakeholders of the programmes, collection of duly filled in feedback forms from them, etc. were the main events that took place during the programme. The feedback so collected are analysed using simple mathematical techniques and presented through tables, charts, etc for empirical interpretation. Feedback of stakeholders shows that 74.29% of them are familiar with the National Library Week and with 43.8% of them rated the celebration "Very Good". They considered the resource materials provided to them and contents of the topics also very good and useful. Understanding the significance of the celebration, they also expressed views and other comments for further overall improvement of the programmes which are useful for the service providers in the field. The study is first of such kind in the region. No other scholars have worked on such issue. The findings of the study

* Associate Professor and Head, Department of Library & Information Science, Manipur University, Canchipur, Imphal-795003, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7768-885X>, E-mail: ibohal68@gmail.com Mobile No. +91-9436033910

** Research Scholar (UGC-NET), Department of Library & Information Science, Manipur University, Canchipur, Imphal-795003, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9847-2521>, E-mail: tezeebng@gmail.com Mobile No. +91-9774685904

reveal new vistas in the field of librarianship in the area of community outreach and inclusive programmes.

Keywords: *Community Outreach; Inclusive programme; National Library Week; Library related programme; Feedbacks.*

1 INTRODUCTION

Reaching the unreached community is one of the important goals of the 'library service for all' programme. This calls for outreach and inclusive programme to make the community aware of the significance of library and its services on a continuing basis. During the celebration of National Library Week (14-20 November) in India, a number of such programmes are conducted to make the participants aware of the same. The present paper attempts to assess the feedback received from participants of such an event organized in Manipur, a border state in India's North East. Library Awareness Programmes conducted during the celebrations such as: Library Day, Library Week, Open Access Week, World Book Day, etc. play an important role to educate the stakeholders, the masses on various facets of library and its services. The roles of libraries, library schools and library associations in this regard are quite commendable and beneficial for the participants in many ways. The present study made, based on the feedback received from the stakeholders who participated in different programmes of National Library Week Celebration organized by the Department of Library & Information Science, Manipur University, Imphal collaborating with different organizations, gives us many clues on the community outreach and inclusive programmes in the library.

2 OUTREACH AND INCLUSIVE PROGRAMME

An outreaching programme is the one that is designed to help and encourage disadvantaged members of the community. According to Tablan & Sanders¹ Community outreach programmes are an important mechanism to increase social capital and such programmes link organizations with external partners to achieve mutually valued goals for targeted populations. In fact, such a programme is multi-cultural in nature. Social inclusion is a multi-dimensional process to ensure equal opportunities formally. It aims to create conditions to enable free and active participation of every citizen of

the society in all aspects of life- civic, social, economic, education, political, etc. so as to let them participate in decision making process. Social inclusion programme can reduce inequality, exclusion and disadvantages thereby benefiting the disadvantaged and marginalized group of people living in the society due to many reasons. Such programmes also can dispute discrimination and social exclusion by the acceptance of diversity. Outreach is the only means by which library services can be effectively provided to the rural areas where the population necessary to provide the public financing of quality information service is so dispersed that a single location facility will not be accessible to large portions of the population contributing to the service². On theoretical grounds, people might respond to social exclusion with either an improvement or an impairment of self regulation³.

3 SOME RECENT STUDIES

Switzer ⁴ carried out an inclusive study, redefining diversity and creating an inclusive academic library through diversity initiatives. The contents of the study identified and remain mindful of the needs of an increasingly diverse student demographic to ensure that academic libraries were the place for all students. Reach dimensions of public library services for identifying the unreached has been assessed by Kalra ⁵ wherein he explored the dimensions and levels of public library and information services reach to the users within their jurisdiction. The study agreed on few dimensions by which to find out how they reached, the under- reached and the unreached for public library services. Regarding providing mechanisms to reach library services to unreached sections of the society, Jeyaseeli, 2011⁶ explored the transformation in library. LIS helps library professionals to provide utmost service with resources whatever is available. In the knowledge society, the libraries have reached the users using ICT rendering service who need information through the role of library professionals to serve the unreached society. In the outreaching study, Giridhari ⁷ highlighted the need for state public library policy in the knowledge society- making reach the outreach and the role of public libraries in shaping the society. The study suggested the need of public library acts. In a study, Sobita ⁸ explored users in different information environment and mechanism to reach library services to unreached sections of the society. On outreach programmes, Du ⁹ in a study found the developing community-centered programmes for rural information professionals. The study found out what their constituents wanted and built community-centered

outreach programmes, it gained institutional support and increased competitiveness of rural information professionals. Abdullah and Chu, 2015¹⁰ explored libraries' efforts in inclusion and outreach activities using media. The study examined the existence of policies that encourage the use of social media and the challenges that libraries faced when integrating social media into their services. On accessibility of information, Kaufman-Scarborough¹¹ has studied the problems of public-researchable accessibility information. He has given recommendations for inclusion for able-bodied persons. The study examined the accuracy and completeness of publicly-researchable accessibility information for restaurant and entertainment venues in metropolitan areas.

4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are to:

- understand the community participating in the outreach and inclusive library programme in terms of their background, affiliation and qualification;
- assess their awareness about National Library Week and know their rating of the programme;
- ascertain the rating of the participants on the resource materials used and the topics of the discourse; and
- draw their opinions and views for the overall improvement of the programme and library services.

5 APPROACH, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The Department of Library and Information Science, Manipur University celebrated National Library Week during 14-20 November, 2017 under the theme "Library for Quality Education" collaborating with a number of agencies of Manipur and carried out different outreach and inclusive programmes for the community. As a part of the weeklong programme, one day library awareness programme cum district level extempore speech competition was conducted at Kumbi College, Kumbi, a historical place in the Bishnupur District of the State. Kumbi College is one of the affiliated Colleges to Manipur University. The programmes conducted on the 18th November, 2017 included the followings:

- Formal inaugural function during which dignitaries and invitees delivered talks on various facets of librarianship and its outreach programmes;
- Keynote speech on National Library Week;
- Conduct of District level extempore speech competition;
- Distribution of learning resource materials ;
- Interaction of the participants with the resource persons;
- Collection of feedback from the stakeholders; and
- Distribution of participation certificates at the end.

About 150 participants comprising dignitaries, teachers, non-teaching staff, students and youth volunteers attended the programme. While collecting the duly filled in feedback forms the investigators could receive 113 numbers of such forms but out of which 8 numbers were found incomplete in many areas thereby neglecting the same, the total respondents have been accounted to be 105 for analysis and assessment of the programmes conducted. The finally selected 105 feedback forms have been taken into consideration for deriving data for analysis and drawing conclusions. Using simple mathematical techniques data have been analysed and presented through tables and charts for empirical interpretation.

6 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STAKEHOLDERS

6.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND

The background information of the stakeholders covered in the study, as table-1 gives clues on their occupation, gender, category and age of the total 105 participants in the inclusive library related programmes, 73.33% constitute students, 10.48% are teaching staff, 14.29% non-teaching staff while the rest 1.9% being social workers. The male-female ratio of participants in the programme is 51.42% and 48.57% respectively. Regarding their category, 51.42% is found to be from general category followed by 37.14% of OBC category while 5.71% each being from SC/ ST groups. It is also observed that 58.09% of the participants (students only) are of age up to 20 years, while 25.71% are in the 20-40 years of age and the rest 16.19% being in the group of 40 above years.

Table-1: Background Information N=105

Stackholders	Sex			Category				Age		
	Male	Female	Total	General	OBC	SC	ST	Upto 20	20-40	40 above
Student	41	36	77 (73.33%)	42	28	2	5	61(58.09 %)	16 (15.71%)	0
Teaching Staff	7	4	11 (10.48%)	5	4	2	0	0	3(2.86%)	87.62%)
Non-Teaching Staff	4	11	15(14.29%)	7	5	2	1	0	8(7.62%)	7(6.67%)
Social Worker	2	0	2(1.90%)	0	2	0	0	0	0	2/(1.90%)
Total	54 (51.42 %)	51(48.57%)	105(100%)	54(51.42%)	39(37.14 %)	6(5.71 %)	6(5.71 %)	61 (58.09%)	27 (2.71%)	17 (16.19%)

From table 1, it is observed that majority of the participants are students. The samples comprising 54 (51.42%) male and 51 (48.57%) female were categorized as students, teaching staff, non-teaching staff and social workers respectively.

6.2 AFFILIATION

The organisational affiliation of the participants is found to be mostly from the academic institutions. As the table 2 shows, 82.87% of them are from college, followed by high school and secondary school (7.61% each) and voluntary organisation with 1.9% only.

Table-2: Organisational Affiliation N=105

Sl. No.	Organisation/ Institution	Total	Percentage
1	High School	8	7.61
2	Secondary School	8	7.61
3	College	87	82.87
4	Voluntary Organisation	2	1.90
Total		105	100

6.3 EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Regarding the educational qualifications of the participants, the table-3 shows that 46.67% of them possess +2 level qualification followed by 38.09% are undergraduates and 7.62 % each possess matriculation and post graduation qualifications respectively.

Table-3: Educational Qualification N=105

Sl. No.	Qualification	Total	Percentage
1	Matriculation	8	7.62
2	+2 level	49	46.67
3	Under Graduate	40	38.09
4	Post Graduate	8	7.62
Total		105	100

6.4 KNOWLEDGE ABOUT LIBRARY WEEK

While assessing the level of knowledge for the participants of the library week as the table-4 shows, the response is remarkable indicating majority (74.29%) of them are familiar with it.

Table-4: Knowledge about National Library Week

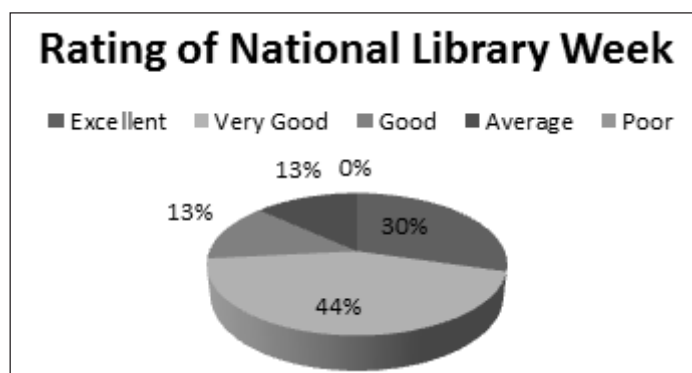
Sl. No.	Response	Rate	Percentage
1	Yes	78	74.29
2	No	27	25.71
Total		105	100

6.5 LIBRARY WEEK CELEBRATION

Different observations could be collected from the participants on certain aspects of the National Library Week Celebration.

Table-5: Rating of National Library Week N=105

Sl. No.	Rating	Response	Percentage
1	Excellent	31	29.52
2	Very Good	46	43.80
3	Good	14	13.33
4	Average	14	13.33
5	Poor	0	0
Total		105	100

**Figure-1**

It is found from table-5 and figure-1 that the way how the National Library Week was celebrated is rated “Very Good” (43.80%) by the participants, which is highest, followed by “Excellent” (29.52%), “Good” and “Average” (13.33% each).

6.6 RESOURCE MATERIALS USED

When further assessed on the resource materials used during the celebration, the participants rated the usefulness of the source “Very Good” (43.80%) as highest followed by “Excellent” (34.29%) and so on. The table-6 also clearly shows that 15.24% of the participants consider the materials “Good” and 6.67% rating it as “Average”.

Table-6: Rating on Materials used

Sl. No.	Rating	Response	Percentage
1	Excellent	36	34.29
2	Very Good	46	43.80
3	Good	16	15.24
4	Average	7	6.67
5	Poor	0	0
Total		105	100

Table-6 deals with the rating of information other materials used in National Library Week Celebration Programme. Here, the table and figure indicate the rating of the respondents about the programme. It is observed that 46(43.80%) respondents rate the programme very good followed by 36(34.29%) expressing excellent, 16(15.26%) considering it good and 07(6.66%) having average as response respectively.

6.7 THOUGHT CONTENTS OF THE TOPICS

On the same five-point scale of rating, when assessed the relevancy of the contents of the topics on which deliberations were made, resource materials were distributed to the participants, they responded on different aspects: “Very Good” by 30.47%; “Excellent” and “Good” by 28.57% each of them while 12.38% rated the same to “Average”, as the table-7 reveals.

Table-7: Thought Contents of the Topics

Sl. No.	Rating	Response	Percentage
1	Excellent	30	28.57
2	Very Good	32	30.47
3	Good	30	28.57
4	Average	13	12.38
5	Poor	0	0
Total		105	100

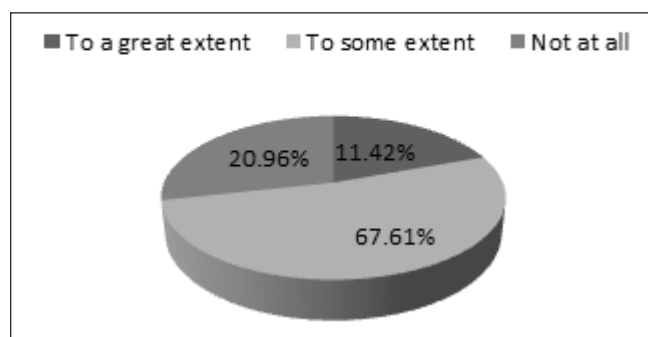
6.8 ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF ENLIGHTENMENT

The way how were the programmes arranged, deliberations made, materials made available, interactions had, etc. during the celebrations are found to be satisfied by the participants to a great extent (67.61%) followed by to some extent 20.96% as table-8 and figure-2 show. On the other hand, it is also understood that 11.42% of them are found not to satisfy at all with the programmes during the event.

Table-8 : Level of Enlightenment of the Programme

Sl. No.	Level	Response	Percentage
1	To a great extent	71	67.61
2	To some extent	22	20.96
3	Not at all	12	11.42
Total		105	100

Level of Enlightenment

**Figure-2**

7 FEEDBACK

The general feelings of the participants in the programmes of the National Library Week Celebration are many to note. While majority of them are satisfied with the varied programmes held, they also gave their comments on various aspects of the programmes as enumerated below:

- The programmes are useful for those who could not visit libraries due to different reasons;
- Should organize such programmes in remote areas regularly to make reach the unreached sections of the society;
- Making outreaching services compulsory for the existing libraries as a part of extension programme;

- Efforts need to be made for incorporation of programmes and events to motivate and inculcate the general reading habits among the masses; and
- Such programmes would enable to improve the personality of the participants mostly of the students.

The stockholders also expressed their willingness to incorporate some issues/ topics in the weeklong programme, some such key issues are as noted below:

- Reading habit cultivation;
- Competitive events to motivate the youngsters;
- Cultural programmes related to library;
- Street play to encourage reading habit;
- Discourse on burning issues in which library can extend its support; and
- Marketing of library and Information Services to the remote audiences, etc.

8. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The outreach and inclusive programme in library and its related aspects conducted during the celebration of National Library Week give us many clues about the programmes by the stakeholders who comprised of teachers, non-teaching staff, students and social workers of a remote location of a State. Majority of them (74.29%) are found to be known about the week which is in fact remarkable. The week celebrated has been rated “Very Good” by most of the stakeholders (43.8%) and “Excellent” by (29.52%) of them which is quite interesting. They also rated high for the resource materials with “Very Good” (43.8%) and “Excellent” (34.29%). The contents of the topics discussed during the events also have been rated high by most of them. The most important feedback of the stakeholders is that most of them are enlightened of the programme to a great extent. The opinions, views and comments of the participants would be useful in taking up courses of actions in organizing such programmes in future.

9 CONCLUSION

The above description is the narrative of the stakeholders in an outreach programme covering the remote community of a specific region which throws us light on many aspects of carrying out such awareness programmes. Understanding the significance of conducting such programmes by participating in the same, they could realize many things to improve upon the system, which are useful for the working library professionals and the service providers. There are a number of programmes that can be carried out by library organizations, institutions and teaching departments inclusively for the remote and down trodden community who do not have much accessibility. The views and opinions as put forward by the stakeholders, in this regard, can be taken into consideration by the planners and organizers in their future programmes of action.

REFERENCES

1. TABLAN (D D) and SANDERS (M G). Community Outreach Programs. In Kylie Peppler (Eds.). *The Sage Encyclopedia of Out-of-School Learning*. 88, 4; 2017; SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks. Pp.2-4.
2. BOYCE (J I) and BOYCE (B R). Library Outreach Programs in Rural Areas. *Library Trends*. 44, 1; 1995; 112-128.
3. BAUMEISTER (R F), DEWALL (C N), CIAROCCO (N J) and TWENGE (J M) (2005). Social exclusion impairs self-regulation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 88, 4; 2005; 587-604.
4. SWITZER (A T). Redefining Diversity: Creating an Inclusive Academic Library through Diversity Initiatives. *College & Undergraduate Libraries*. 15, 3; 2008; 280-300. DOI: 10.1080/10691310802258182.
5. KALRA (H P S). Reach Dimensions of Public Library Services for Identifying the Unreached. In MADHURI DEVI (T), IBOHAL SINGH (C) and DEKA (K K), Eds, *Making Library Service reach to the Unreached*, 2011. Department of Library & Information Science, Manipur University; Imphal. Pp. 8-10.
6. JEYASEELI (P C) (2011). Providing Mechanisms to Reach Library Services to Unreached Sections of the Society. In MADHURI DEVI (T), IBOHAL SINGH (C) and DEKA (K K), Eds, *Making Library Service reach to the Unreached*, 2011. Department of Library & Information Science, Manipur University; Imphal. Pp. 11-15.

7. GIRIDHARI SINGH (N). Need for State Public Library Policy in the Knowledge Society- Making reach the Outreach. In MADHURI DEVI (T), IBOHAL SINGH (C) and DEKA (K K), Eds, *Making Library Service reach to the Unreached*, 2011. Department of Library & Information Science, Manipur University; Imphal. Pp 25-29.
8. SOBITA DEVI (M). Users in different information environment and mechanism to reach library services to unreached sections of the society. In MADHURI DEVI (T), IBOHAL SINGH (C) and DEKA (K K), Eds, *Making Library Service reach to the Unreached*, 2011. Department of Library & Information Science, Manipur University; Imphal, Pp. 41-46.
9. DU (Y). Developing community-centered programs for rural information professionals. *iConference 2013 Proceedings*, 2013. DOI: 10.9776/13359.
10. ABDULLAH (N) and CHU (S). Exploring Libraries' efforts in Inclusion and Outreach Activities using Social Media. *LIBRI* (International Journal of Libraries and Information Science). 65, 1; 2015; 34-47.
11. KAUFMAN-SCARBOROUGH (C). Publicly- Researchable Accessibility Information: Problems, Prospects and Recommendations for Inclusion. *Social Inclusion*. 7, 1; 2019; 164-172. DOI: 10.17645/si.v7i7.1651.