

Best Practices in Anna Centenary Library Chennai: An Analysis on 'Ponmalai Pozhudhu'

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Abstract - This paper is aimed to analyse the strategies applied for the best practices in Anna Centenary Library (ACL), Chennai. Best practice is a technique, used to advance the existing work process of an organization like library and information centres to achieve its purpose successfully. In the present day, public libraries are also started to focus on best practices as one of the services to retain the public. Anna Centenary Library falls under public library category, which follows best practices such as Orientation programme for civil service aspirants, weekly children programme and Ponmaalai Pozhudhu programme. A study was conducted among the readers of the library to analyze and know the impact of best practices followed by ACL particularly Ponmaalai Pozhudhu programme. It was revealed that Ponmaalai Pozhudhu Programme had a great impact among the readers of all the best practices being conducted by the library.

Keywords: Best Practice, Anna Centenary Library, Ponmalai Pozhudhu

I. INTRODUCTION

Libraries are established for the systematic collection, organization, preservation and dissemination of knowledge and information. Public libraries are playing a significant role in the modern society and they serve the entire community without any distinction of colour, caste, creed, status, sex, educational qualification.

A. Public Library – Definition and Purpose

The institution known universally as the public library is defined by the IFLA/UNESCO manifesto - public library as a local gateway to knowledge. It is an institution which provides a basic condition for life-long learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups [1].

The primary purposes of the public library are to provide facilities, resources, and services in a variety of media such as print, audio, visual, electronic/digital to meet the needs of individuals and groups for both formal and informal education, as well as for information and personal development which includes recreation and leisure [2].

Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, the father of Library and Information Science in India compared the public library system with the large irrigation system, which needs a head work with a costly down and larger number of distributors

and sub-distributors through which water can reach every bit of a land. In the same way, a network of public library system can serve the needs of the society [3].

B. Public Library System in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu was the first state in India to enact 'Public Library Act' (1948) which came into force since 1950. Under the provision of this Act, many libraries were established at every remote areas of the state with the aim of delivering information to every section of the society without any discrimination.

At present, there are 4603 public libraries functioning under Directorate of Public Libraries (DPL), Tamil Nadu that include Connemara Public Library (State Central Library), Anna Centenary Library (State Modern Library), 32 District Central Libraries, 1926 Branch Libraries, 1914 Village Libraries, 14 Mobile Libraries and 715 Part-time Libraries.

The Department of Public Libraries of Tamil Nadu has taken the necessary steps to transform the public libraries into centre for Community hub, Community development, Social empowerment, life-long learning and knowledge creation [4].

II. ABOUT ANNA CENTENARY LIBRARY (ACL)

Anna Centenary Library (ACL) is a State modern library established by the Government of Tamil Nadu in the year 2010 which functions under the control of Directorate of Public Libraries, School Education Department.

The library spreads over 3.75 lakh sq. ft. and suitably located in the midst of leading academic and research institutions. This is the first library building in Asia to receive the LEED NC Gold rating from U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). At present, the library holds over 6 lakh books covering wide range of subjects to serve various users from different spectrums.

The library has an integrated library management system and web OPAC that can be accessible over the Internet to browse the entire collection of library from anywhere. RFID technology is being used for book monitoring and CCTV systems with network video recorder are installed in every

sections of the library to ensure lawful and safe use of library premises.

A. *Sections of ACL*: The library functions with different sections as follows;

1. *Braille Section*: Conveniently located in the ground floor exclusively for visually impaired and print disabled people. It has more than 2000 registered members and 950 Google group (brailleacl.googlegroups.com) members and contains more than 2600 Books in Braille formats, audio CDs, DVDs and 1.1 TB of other digital contents. This section is equipped with 7 accessible computer terminals providing high speed internet, NVDA (Non-Visual Desktop Access) screen reading software, Braille embosser, refreshable Braille display, printer, scanner and other required equipments. Besides, assistance is being given to Braille users to apply various competitive examinations via online and read study materials.
2. *Competitive Examination Section*: Functions to cater the information needs of the aspirants who prepare for various competitive examinations such as civil service, banking, railway, etc. Enough collection of text books, study guides and magazines are available here.
3. *Own Book Reading Section*: Users have freedom to bring their personal books and other related study materials.
4. *Children Section*: Located at the first floor which can be accessed by any children between the age of 4 and 14. This section is spread over 15,000 sq. ft. with more than 1.6 lakh books.
5. *Periodical Section*: All the leading newspapers, magazines and journals are available here. An exclusive space is provided for the women readers.
6. *Tamil and Regional Language Section*: Located at the second floor and contains a huge collection of Tamil and other Indian languages such as Malayalam, Hindi, Urdu, etc.
7. *Section for Books in English*: Has wide-range of collection in English language published by leading publishers from all over the world. Books are organized and arranged according to Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme (23rd ed.) from third floor to seventh floor.
8. *E-Library Section*: Equipped with 34 computers with high speed internet. It facilitates to access internet, e-journal/ magazines, NPTL (acl.digimat.in) repository, magzter database, and other digital resources with free of cost.
9. *Government Oriental Manuscripts Section*: Houses 50,180 invaluable palm leaf manuscripts, 22,134 paper manuscripts. This research center recognized by the Madras University, Tamil Nadu as a Research Centre for Doctoral and M. Phil. studies among scholars of Tamil, Sanskrit and other areas of Ancient Indian culture.

III. BEST PRACTICES AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES

According to Dictionary for Library and Information Science “in the application of theory to real-life situations, procedures that, when properly applied constantly yield superior results and are therefore used as reference points in evaluating the effectiveness of alternative methods of accomplishing the same task. Best practices are identified by examining the empirical evidence of success, compare with guideline and standards” [5].

According to Wikipedia an online encyclopedia “best practice is an idea that asserts that there is technique, method, process, activity, incentive or reward that is more effective at delivering a particular outcome than any other technique” [6].

The fifth law of Dr. S. R. Ranganathan states that ‘Library is a Growing Organism’. The changing role of public libraries is really a notable in this digital era. Apart from regular activities and routines such as lending, reference and referral service, public libraries are practicing various best ways of methods like Reader circle forum, books fairs, library week celebration, etc. These practices are meant to cater the information needs of the users in all sectors of the community.

IV. BEST PRACTICES FOLLOWED IN ACL

Best institution only can understand and give importance to improve the quality of library service and only it can adopt best practices. Thus Anna Centenary Library is one of the best public library institutions to adopt and follow best practices. The following are the few best practicing methods.

- A. *Compilation of Newspaper for Visually Impaired*: this is done by Braille section’s library staff members every day. They extract and compile information that covers politics, state affairs, current events, business, economics and sports from the website of daily newspapers ‘The Hindu’ in English language and ‘Dinamani’ in Tamil language. The compiled information is converted in accessible format (HTML) and disseminated every day morning through Google groups created for registered Braille members of the section and also 1to outside Braille Google forums.
- B. *Orientation Programme for Competitive Examination Aspirants*: conducted a series of orientation programmes for the benefit of aspirants of competitive examinations who prepare for IAS, IPS, TNPSC, RRB, Banking, Entrance tests, eligibility tests, etc. Officials, experts and prominent personalities from Government and private sector are invited on every Sundays to create awareness, offer valuable tips and to give clear insight about the various competitive examinations. The entire programme was live streamed and

recordings of the same are available online at the library’s YouTube Channel www.youtube.com/aclchennai.

- C. *Alert Service*: latest notifications about competitive examinations, job vacancies, current events and in-house programmes are displayed on the notice board to all kind of ACL users.
- D. *Children Weekly Programmes*: a series of programmes such as music, art & craft, comics writing, yoga, storytelling, science experiment, puppet show, chess, creative writing, dance, kirigamy, communication & reading skills, etc. are being conducted on every Sundays from 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. An annual event organized in the name of ‘Kodai Kondattam’ during summer vacation in association with publishers and NGOs who work for the development of children.
- E. *Activities for Library and Information Science Professionals*: ACL organizes special lectures, workshops, seminars, conferences, library week celebrations, etc. at regular intervals to update and exchange knowledge among the public library and information science professional.
- F. *Library Website and Social Media*: the forthcoming events of the library and other relevant information are updated through a dynamic website (www.annacentenarylibrary.org) designed and maintained by the library staff team. Web OPAC, Online book suggestion forms and e-book access are also integrated with the library website.
- G. *‘Ponmalai Pozhudhu’ - Literary Programme*: ACL organizes a literary oriented programme titled ‘Ponmalai Pozhudhu’ is being conducted on every Saturdays from 6.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. The eminent personalities from various domains like Tamil literature, cinema, media, medicine, law, science, fine arts, etc. are invited to give a special talk and interact with the public. This programme is started in 2016 for readers and general public and 77 programmes have been conducted so far. This programme is being live streamed through Library’s official YouTube channel www.youtube.com/aclchennai [7].

V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this analysis was to attract the readers and public from all strata of the society and make use of huge resources available in the library.

1. To know the purpose of attending ‘Ponmalai Pozhudhu’ programme by the public.
2. To identify the level of satisfaction about ‘Ponmalai Pozhudhu’ programme among the public.
3. To identify the various source of information to about the programme by the readers and the public.

VI. METHODOLOGY

There are many best practices followed by Anna Centenary Library since inception. In that, ‘Ponmalai Pozhudhu’ programme is widely reached among the readers and the general public. The authors made an attempt to know the impact of the programme to improve its quality. The period of the study covered last six months programmes conducted i.e. April 2018 – Sep 2018.

Data are retrieved by analyzing the feedback forms given to the participants during the programmes. Totally, 1126 feedback forms were analyzed and simple percentage method was adopted to draw inferences.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE I DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS – GENDER

Gender	No. of Participants	Percentage
Male	970	86.15
Female	156	13.85
Total	1126	100

Table I indicates that the gender-wise distribution of participants. Out of 1126 participants, 970 (86.15 %) were male and only 156 (13.85 %) were female.

TABLE II PURPOSE FOR ATTENDING THE PROGRAMME

Purpose	No. of Participants	Percentage
Entertainment/leisure	484	43.00
To see and interact with personalities	236	21.00
To acquire new knowledge	406	36.00
Total	1126	100

From Table II, it was observed that 484 (43.00%) participants attended for the purpose of entertainment/leisure; 406 (36.00%) participants attended the programme to acquire new knowledge and 236 (21.00%) participants attended to see and interact with personalities.

TABLE III LEVEL OF SATISFACTION ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

Purpose	No. of Participants	Percentage
Highly satisfied	754	67.00
Satisfied	349	31.00
Dissatisfied	23	2.00
Total	1126	100

From Table III, it was clearly understood that 754 (67.00%) participants mentioned as highly satisfied; 349 (31.00%) participants mentioned as satisfied and 23 (2.00%) participants mentioned as dissatisfied about the programme.

TABLE IV FREQUENCY OF ATTENDING THE PROGRAMME

Frequency of Attending	No. of Participants	Percentage
All the programmes scheduled in a month	191	17.00
Twice in a month	608	54.00
Once in a month	327	29.00
Total	1126	100

From Table IV, it was observed that 608 (54.00%) participants attended twice in a month; 327 (29.00%) participants attended once in a month and 191 (2.00%) participants attended all the programmes scheduled in month.

TABLE V SOURCE TO KNOW ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

Source	No. of Participants	Percentage
Library website	146	13.00
Social media – Facebook/Twitter/YouTube	473	42.00
Library notice board	507	45.00
Total	1126	100

From Table V, it was observed that 507 (45.00%) participants knew the programme through by seeing library notice board; 473 (29.00%) participants knew through Social media – Facebook/Twitter/YouTube and only 146 (13.00%) participants knew through library website.

VIII. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Majority of the participants of the programme were male.
2. Majority of the participants were attended the programme for the purpose of entertainment/leisure.
3. Majority of the participants felt that the programme was highly satisfied them.
4. Majority of the participants willing to attend the programme twice in a month.
5. Majority of the participants knew about the programme by seeing notice board.
6. Majority of the participants mentioned that a suggestion box should be kept to suggest personalities, to maintain time management and the time given for interaction with personalities to be increased.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis and observation, the following few recommendations have been given to the notice of the Government to improvise the quality of the programme.

1. Sufficient fund should allocated on and off for organizing the programme more effectively;
2. Adequate manpower should be given to organize the programme and the working team of librarians has to be rotated at regular interval so that every librarian can get chance show their talents.
3. More female personalities have to be invited for the programme, as like as male personalities.
4. Special attention should be given on promotion activities such as library social media, FM radio, print and visual media.
5. More importance to be given to attract the female participants for attending the programme.

X. CONCLUSION

Today, libraries are a lot more than storehouses of books, journals, news papers and incorporate other forms of electronic data. The changing dimension of public libraries in the ICT is highly notable. They act as gateway of knowledge and wisdom for people of a country. Best practices of a library and its effective practice at the right time has created a friendly environment and bridge the gap between the library and users. It does not have any common template or form for everyone to follow. It is the duty of every public library to follow best practices suitable to their library in whatever possible way in order to serve users. 'Ponmalai Pozhudhu' is one best practices of Ann Centenary Library is very popular among the public. After started to conduct this programme there was tremendous increase reported in terms of users' visit.

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