Use of ICT- Based Information Resources and Services for adult learners in Manipur

Dr. Sharmila Thingbaijam

Asstt. Prof. (Guest), Deptt. Adult Continuing Education and Extension (ACEE),

Manipur University

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to access the current status of the rural library and public library system of Manipur and their role in the rural community development. This paper is an attempt to suggest and a propose on the use of such resources and facilities in the Literacy Programmes so that the adult learners specially the neo-literate learners can proceed towards life-long education. The study is based on the survey and interview with the government agencies, library professionals and NGOs, etc. By observing the current status of the public library system in Manipur, this paper further elaborates the conceptual idea for setting up a proposed Model of "Rural Development Information System (RDIS)" for development of community service and empowering the rural masses for the construction of knowledge based society.

Introduction

In this developing and changing world, literacy is quite important as there is a casual relationship between literacy and development. Literacy plays an important role for both individual as well as the nation. In short, it is to say that literacy is a process of social change. In May 5, 1988, a comprehensive programme on Adult and continuing education was launched as the National Literacy Mission (NLM) in order to accelerate the eradication of illiteracy in our country. Under NLM, the adult education programme was begun so as to make the people fully literate. Each TLC was followed by the PLP of one year duration. PLP is the state of transition from guided learning to self-directed learning. It seeks to engrain the reading habit in the neo-literates as they are the persons who had never had the advantages of formal education and to make them used of their literacy skills in their day to day life. PLP attempts to give interested learners an Assistance professor (Guest), Dept. ACEE, Manipur University.

 opportunity to hardness and develop their learning potential after completion of a basic literacy course. One of the major objectives of PLP is to enable the neo-literates to learn the application of literacy skills as a problem solving tool, so that learning becomes relevant to living and working. (Directorate of Adult Education, 1980). After PLP, Saakshar Bharat Programme was implemented. In a bid to eradicate illiteracy and make India a literate country, the Government has started several programmes relating to literacy and education. One of the most successful programmes is its flagship programme "Saakshar Bharat" meaning Literate India. Saakshar Bharat was launched on the occasion of the International Literacy Day on 8th September, 2009 in New Delhi. The Saakshar Bharat strives to create a literate environment that bolsters and sustains a literate society thereby providing ample opportunities for the continuous improvement in the level of adult literacy, especially for those belonging to focused groups and in focused areas. The programme aims to strengthen adult education among women and other disadvantaged segments of the society by extending educational options to those who have missed the opportunity to pursue formal education due to some or other reasons, and now feel a need to learn for education of any type such as literacy, basic education, vocational education, physical and emotional development, practical arts, applied sciences, sports and recreation, among others. Saakshar Bharat Mission has four broad objectives:

I. Impart functional literacy to non-literate adults. (Basic Literacy)

II. Enable the neo-literate adults to continue their learning beyond basic literacy and acquire equivalency to formal education system. (Basic Education)

III. Equip non and neo-literates with vocational skills to improve their living and earning conditions. (Skill Development)

125

IV.   Establish a learning society by providing opportunities to neo-literate adults for continuing education. (Continuing Education)

In the Manipur State, the Saakshar Bharat Programme has been implemented in 4 districts namely, Thoubal, Chandel, Senapati and Tamenglong on 15 January 2010 simultaneously. There are 321 Adult Education Centres (AECs) in 4 Districts, out of which 20 AECs have been upgraded to the level of MODEL AECs with the financial assistance from CONCOR (Container Corporation of India Limited). These four districts of Manipur State were included in the 375 districts of India selected by the Government of India where women literacy (in the age group of 15+) is 50% and below. The SBM was launched in Manipur by the Honorable Minister of education, local MLA, Commissioner on the 15th January, 2010 in Thoubal District and the same was launched simultaneously at the other three districts of the state viz. Chandel, Senapati, Tamenglong (Directorate of Adult Education, 2010-11). During the Saakshar Bharat period the Department (SLMA, Manipur) has taken up initiative for various ground preparatory works for the implementation of Maulana Azad Taleem-e-Baligan and organized first resource mobilization meeting at Thoubal Distraict which is the Muslim concentrated District of the State in collaboration with State Resource Centre (SRC) NEHU Shillong on the 27th November 2014. The NLMA, MHRD, GOI has designed a target focused approach to enhance literacy and basic education among minorities with a special focus on Muslim adults after keeping in view recommendations of Sachar Committee and in pursuance a new frame work under the name of Maulana Azad Taleem-e-Baligan. The programme is scheduled to launch during the session 2014-2015 and its activities will stand concluded on 31st March 2017. However, it is not yet started in the State of Manipur accept for some preparatory activities (Status Jan.2017).

Saanshad Adhar Gram Yojana was launched by the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on October 11, 2014 envisages the members of parliament to take the responsibility of developing physical and institutional infrastructure in three villages by 2019, out of which one Adhrash Gram by 2016. The aim of the SAGY for holistic development is to transform Gram Panchayats as models which can be motivated and inspire the neighbouring gram Panchayats to learn and adapt. It also envisaged that models of local development created in Gram Panchayats under Adarsh Grams can be replicated in other villages. Some of the key objectives of the Yojana are;

-        Development of model villages, called Adarsh Grams, through the implementation of existing schemes, and certain new initiatives to be designed for the local context, which may vary from village to village.
-        Creating models of local development which can be replicated in other villages.

126

-       It also aims to provide rural India with quality access to basic amenities and opportunities.

Implementation of Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) by the Department (SLMA, Manipur) which was the another initiative by giving special focus on the Hayel Hangoon Adult Education Centre (AEC) and Gram Panchayat of Kakching Block, Thoubal District with the aim to make 100% literate of the area. On the instructions of the National Literacy Mission Authority, the State Resource Centre and Jan Shiksha Sansthans, are actively involved in SAGY to make non-literate person literate and impart skill training for less literate and non-literate persons to enable them to be economically independent.

According to 2011 Census, the population of the Manipur is 2,570,390. Out of the total population of the state, 1,736,236 (74.89 %) population are living in the rural while only 8, 34,154 (25.11%) population live in urban area. The literacy rate of Manipur is 85.4% in which literacy rate of male is 86.1 percent (Rural-83.4 percent; Urban-91.7 percent). The Female Literacy Rate works out to 72.4 percent (Rural 68.9 per cent; Urban 79.3 percent). In the present society, awareness of neo-literates about the importance of using ICT (Information and communication Technology) based resources and services are of urgent need. ICT is becoming the engines of human and economic development of the emerging knowledge society. Today, the education system has totally shifted to a new educational system which facilitates to remote access, updating knowledge from any part of the world through www (World Wide Web). Computers have helped in removal of illiteracy and improving lifelong education. Considering this necessity, many Governmental organisation, Private organisations, institutions, small scale industries etc. should offer training and basic programmes to the neo-literates for right uses of such resources and facilities so that they can proceed towards lifelong education. (Shankar 2007).

ICTs are perceived as widening the provision of educational choices. ICTs are seen as being able to widen access to education- in particular, supporting and facilitating a diverse range of sources of educational provision from which learners can choose. Thus, a wide range of educational providers, including universities, NGOs, government agencies and the private sector would be involved, particularly because learners who have diverse learning styles would need different kinds of skills from formal, non formal, informal, and distance and open learning infrastructures.

The use of ICT in adult education will extend beyond its motivational value address key outcomes of syllabus and allow learners to become competent. ICT can improve the skill of 3Rs as well as the speaking and listening skills of learners besides supporting their creativity and independence in learning through collaboration and

reflection. As an interactive and collaborative medium, ICT offers the learners the opportunity to explore their literacy skill more creativity.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

A complete system of technologies comprises with two strong technologies, information technologies which usually deals with the hardware and software elements that allow us access store, organise and manipulate the information by electronic means, and communication technology which deals with the equipment, infrastructure and software through which information can be received, accessed and disseminated.

According to UNESCO, ICT is a scientific, technological and engineering discipline and management techniques used in handling information and application and association with social economical and cultural matters. Universally, ICT has become an indispensable part of day to day life. For developing countries like India, we must adopt and adapt the use of modern technologies in order to fulfil in the gap in which ICT needs an effective electronics communication infrastructure.

Information Resources and Services based on ICT.

ICT based information resources and services are becoming so necessary for each and every stages of our life. Today's information based world is concerned with creation, sharing and using information in a technological form because of right information available to the right person at the right time is the aim of modern ICT services. Modern information centres provide treasure of knowledge in an electronic environment.

Educational technology is using successfully to improve learning and teaching in the formal education system (Chauhan, 1978). Educational technology is the combination of process for imparting knowledge and skill in learners and high technology particularly ICT. Likewise ICT – based information resources and services will be very helpful to adult educators/volunteers in accomplishing the literacy programme quickly and effectively, some of the important facilities which may be given by of ICTs are mention below

- Giving the learners a general over view of an area of study before detailed assignments are made.
- Teaching a specific fact skill or understandings.
- Exploring a wide scale area already taught.
- Providing drill on specific facts, skills or understandings previously taught.
- Reviewing materials previously studied
- Providing supplementary information
- Integrating that which has been learned in isolation etc.

Almost everyone is familiar with the blackboard, the note books, the primers etc. but

128

only seldom is there thought as ICT based resources and services.

The introduction of such resources and services can not only deliver interesting materials at a distance, but utilize 3D-images and virtuality to enable neo-literates to explore and interact in ways which exploits visualization and constructive modes of learning. Enabling computer based system not only to manage learners interactions, but also to interpret and support differences in learning paths and styles, allows them to accommodate them more effectively a wider range of learners experience and preferences. Wide Area Network and internet stimulate a sharing of materials with collaborative learning methods between learners and volunteers (adult educator) that can be interactive and build up a social awareness that can be span of cultural differences. (Giridhar, 2002). Basic but proper training has been necessitated to be given to the neo-literates on the use of ICT based information resources and services to assist themselves in acquiring and using the required information to serve their purposes. Some of the important institution and organisations which should take main role in imparting education and training in the use of ICT-based information resources and services are given below: (Rebika Devi, 2007).

- Technical institutions
- Academic institutions
- Non-Governmental Organisations
- IT industries.
- Small scale industries
- Military organisations
- Libraries and Information Centres
- Common Service Centres (CSC)
- Computer training centres etc.

From the above institutions and organisations CSC and Libraries may play very important role in providing guidance to neo-literates on various issues concerning ICT-based resources and services to help them continue learning through self- directed process. Some of the important facilities which may be rendered by CSCs include the following

· ICT promotion, awareness, training programmes etc.
· Internet creating
· Career / Job Information
· Video conferencing
· E-governance initiatives etc.

ICTs can increase learner motivation and engagement, by facilitating the acquisition of basic skills and by enhancing teacher training (Romulo and Akhtar,

2003). Another perceived advantage of ICTs is that relating to stimulating different forms of learning in particular, self-directed learning as well as supporting and mediating constructivist learning. Aside from an instructive approach wherein learners use ICTs only to acquire knowledge and skills, experience has shown that ICTs can provide more interactive learning that encourages learners to construct and develop new ideas, concepts and meanings and thereby transform their existing knowledge base. (Selwynn,2003)

CONCLUSION:

It should be clear that the use of ICT-based information resources and services does not represent a unique or distinct teaching and learning methodology. Rather they are the devices for increasing the effectiveness of a variety of teaching-learning activities. They help in making the learning experience more real. They add timeliness and they help to develop interest in the content of education.

These aids are particularly helpful in making the neo-literates fully literate and in imparting life-long education. Therefore, whether they needs arises in connection with a daily assignment a subject matter, unit or an experience unit, a well selected ICT-based resource and services may be the best device to the volunteers in order to achieve that particular purpose. For the successful implementation of literacy programmes, the learners and volunteers must be basic and short term training courses through various institution and agencies so that they can be an important asset of the ICT environment. They will be in better position to utilize the ICT based resources and services and will certainly contribute to the building process of the knowledge society.

The present scenario of rural libraries in Manipur is not very satisfactory though the development of public library has been traced back to 1930s. The study has revealed that the community based information service is very poor; most of the rural people are not able to access the libraries of Manipur. Therefore "Information Support System" in Rural Development has been an essential ingredient for the progress of civilization and society. Lack of information transfer and effective means of communication is now widely recognized as being a limiting factor in socio-economic development of the people. In this ICT-based society, awareness of neo-literates about the use of ICT – based information resources and services is of urgent need.

References

Chauhan S.S Advanced Education Psychology, Vikash. *New Delhi, 1978.Directorate of Adult Education, Adult Education in Manipur State. At a*

Glance, Imphal.
1980.*Giridhar C.H, Encyclopaedia of Education Technology, commonwealth Publishers;* **Vol. 4***; New Delhi,* **2002.**Rebika Devi Ch, Ibohal Singh Ch and Khomdon Singh Th*, Training of Public in the use of ICT-based Resources and Services: Some observation, Proceeding of MALACON,* **2007.**Sadananda Mishra*, Adult Education and Total Literacy, Regal Publication, New Delhi,* **2008.***Selwyn, Neil; Goard, Stephen; Furlong, John Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, Adult Education in the Digital Age IT and the learning Society, ERIC,* **2005.**Shankar T*, Teaching Educational Technology, Crecent Publishing Corporation, New Delhi,* **2007**Sharma S.R, Modern *Teaching strategies Omsons Publication, New Delhi,* **2000.**