

# Information Needs for Village Community Development

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## Introduction

Information is basic instinct for development for both urban and rural inhabitants. Prosperity, progress, and development of any nation depend upon the nation's ability to acquire, produce, access, and use pertinent information., "Access to information and advice is a key resource for local people in maintaining active and independent lives. Access to information is also critical to letting people know their entitlements to welfare benefits and sources of support to overcome social exclusion." (A report on older rural people , 2008)

Information is the lifeblood of any society and vital to the activities of both the government and private sectors. "The dependence upon information to create innovation and change, places a high premium on the ability of (developing countries) nations to access and use information to create advances in society". (Bell, 1974). The development of countries globally cannot be achieved without the development of the rural community. This is because 75 to 80 percent of the people in developing countries live in the rural areas need positive, relevant and prompts attention in their daily activities.

No serious, active, conscious, sensitive, and organized government would want to neglect rural communities. Rural neglects brings negative consequences such as migration of rural inhabitants to urban areas, with resulting problems of unemployment, crimes, child labour, uncertainty, money laundering, poverty, spread of diseases, and overstretching of the facilities and infrastructures in the urban areas.

## ***Rural Information Service***

Modern public libraries are more than shelves of books. They have become a type of social and cultural institution, potentially offering a constantly changing range of resources for the community (Buschman &

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Leckie 2007). These public libraries have been built to play a role as an inclusive place, offering a broad choice of different media and professional guidance in information searching (Kjekstad 2004). Public libraries have enduringly facilitated both the formal and non-formal flow of information in and for society. Any form of access to information can contribute to the development and empowerment of individuals and the community by assisting people in promoting wellbeing, and, in more advanced societies, an absence of information may lead to poverty and disadvantage. (Michael Gorman, 2000).

Success of rural development programmes depends on effective use of information in daily activities. Information services are multidimensional and serve socially as a binding thread among different groups of rural inhabitants. The condition of rural inhabitants in India and indeed in the developing countries is pathetic; traces of abject poverty and discomfort can be seen conspicuously.

### ***Information Needs of Rural inhabitants***

The rural communities indicate that their information needs are many and multidimensional. It is very important to determine the totality of their information needs. This is a case of neglect.

- The neighborhood: information needs in the neighborhood include problems of water supply, electricity supply, Environmental sanitation, refuse disposal, road maintenance and drought.
- Health information on how individuals can, prevent different diseases that affect them, and awareness of available healthcare delivery and what it costs.
- Agriculture and allied occupations: the greatest area of information needs by rural people is in agriculture. Such information needs include planting treated seeds, soil conservation, prevention of plants and animal disease, fertilizer application, farm machineries, recommended thinning practices, proper storage of farm products, marketing techniques, cooperative activities and other agro-cultural activities.
- Education: information needs of the existing rural schools, needs of the illiterate's and semiilliterates. They need to have relevant information that will develop in their interest and support of teaching and learning processes.
- Housing: rural public need information about where they can

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obtain loans to build houses and the type of materials to be used and where they can be easily obtained.

- Employment: rural communities need information on employment opportunities on taxation, investment opportunities, banking and other financial activities.
- Transportation: they need information on the cost of bicycles, motorcycles and vehicles and where to obtain them. They need information about road construction and maintenance.
- Religion, Recreation and Culture: information is required on religions, recreations and Cultural activities.
- Welfare and Family matters: information is required on problems of marriage, childcare, juvenile delinquency etc.
- Legal matters: information is needed on laws that affect the rural dwellers. Such law ranges from marriage to land.
- Crime and Safety: Information is required on how to prevent crimes, report crimes, role of the law enforcement agents etc.
- Policies and Government: information is needed on political rights of the people and how they can exercise such right.
- Land: information is needed on land tenure systems, acquisition and transfer of land etc.
- Information is needed by rural inhabitants in almost all human endeavors. As listed above development and transformation can only be possible, effective and relevant when information needs of the rural inhabitants are met positively.

Information hunger is prevalent and biting hard on our rural communities, which has resulted in poor living conditions, illiteracy, and poverty. The literacy in India is about 65 percent, but is much lower among women and in rural communities. Basic textbooks and journal, in school and libraries including academic libraries, show a critical situation". The information needs of the teeming majority are not provided for, which constitutes the major reason for the underdevelopment. Projects in the developing countries can be executed without the fundamental conditions of the establishment of a literate and numerate (rural) society, and a system for continuous provision of exchange of ideas, thought and knowledge on which the (rural) society, and can feed and use with suitable modifications to constructions own cultural and industrial destiny". Many

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rural development programmes have failed in developing countries because they were planned with insufficient relevant information".

### ***Recommendations***

- Enhanced and effective information service needs a rural information policy. The governments must implement its rural development policies.
- Enhanced rural library programmes should be introduced to empower information services. The libraries, given the necessary attention, will play a great role in advancing the level of awareness of the people in developing countries, especially rural inhabitants.
- Developing countries must begin to use Information and Communication (ICTs) to address the multidimensional problems of the rural communities.
- Rural communities must be enabled to deal positively and decisively with the environmental problems confronting them, pursue a wide range of activities to increase their productivity, and be more enlightened to promote greater attitudinal change and skills.

### **Conclusion**

Progress in developing countries lies with the development of their rural communities. Effective information needs and services, coordination is the essential component for development. Information service in rural communities must be recognized and empowered. The information service policy of the country was never implemented in favor of rural inhabitants. The stress is on government activities and propaganda, which do not have any positive impact on the rural community. This has led to crime, rural-urban migration, and general insecurity in the country.

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