CHAPTER 5
COMMUNITY INFORMATION SERVICES
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5.1 What's Community Information Services?

The first use of the expression Community Information Services (CIS) was in the United States where it was coined to describe the services set up in response to the Kahn report on British Citizens Advice Bureaux (Kahn, 1966). Arising out of the American war on Poverty Programme of the 1960s a number of libraries set up information and referral services. These were seen as having two main aims:

1. To link the client with a problem to the appropriate agency that could answer his or her needs.

2. To supply the service providers with feedback from users.

Because these services were neighbourhood based and because they were fulfilling a signposting function to both charities and services within the state welfare system the term community information service was coined to describe them.

Community Information Service is considered to be that information service required by members of the public (or those acting on their behalf) to make effective use of the resources potentially available to them in the communities in which they live. Such information may be needed to help solve problems in the fields of housing, disability, household finance, agriculture, marriage, employment and so on (Library Association, 1980, pp. 9-10).

Donohue (1976) identified two types of information provided by a community information service:

1. Survival information such as that related to health, housing, income, legal protection, economic opportunity, political rights etc.

2. Citizen action information, needed for effective participation as individual or as member of a group in the social, political, legal, economical process.

A report published by the Library Association (U.K.) in 1980 distinguished the three types of information provided by public libraries, namely reference, local and community information. According to the Library Association definition: “Community Information Services can, therefore, be defined as services which assist individuals and groups with daily problem-solving and with participation in the democratic process. The service concentrates on the needs of those who do
not have ready access to other sources of assistance and on the most important problems that people have to face, problems to do with their homes, their jobs and their rights... this would mean a positive decision to concentrate on enabling people, particularly those in lower socio-economic groups to act either individually or collectively on their problems in the fields of housing, employment, family and personal matters, consumer affairs, household finance, education, welfare rights and civil rights" (Library Association, 1980, pp. 10-12).

5.2 How Community Information Services?

There is a growing awareness of the importance of information services that meet the needs of rural communities in developing countries. This prompted the IFLA Section of Public Libraries to convene a small working group which met at the 1987 IFLA Conference in Brighton. The group recommended that a project should be set up which would promote and assist the development of such community information services. The four stages of the project are:

i. A literature review to establish the state-of-the-art and to provide guidelines on the development of rural community information services.

ii. Research in a small area of locations to establish the nature, scope and extent of the need for community information services.

iii. Establishment, monitoring and evaluation of a small number of experimental services.

iv. Dissemination of the results.

The draft guidelines which can be prepared from the literature review are intended to assist librarians, community development workers, cultural officers and others who are trying to set up information services in rural areas. The aim of the services is to help people to deal with the problems which they face in the course of their daily lives and to participate in the development of their societies.

The underlying philosophy of these guidelines is that a participatory approach should be taken. That is, the local communities themselves should play an important role in analysing their own needs, establishing the service and monitoring and evaluating its success. The services which result from these guidelines should be appropriate to local needs and they should form an integral
part of the community they serve. To achieve this it is necessary for the services to be developed by people who are:

- Known to the community and considered by that community to be appropriate people for the work.
- Chosen by the community, or who at least work with the acceptance of the community.
- Introduced to the community in ways which satisfy all the traditional and current political protocol requirements.
- Constantly present in the community providing help and attention.

It is important to stress these points. The service we are attempting to develop can only succeed if they group as part of the community and if they are owned by the community. This calls for sensitivity, commitment and identification on the part of the workers helping to establish the services. Finally, it is worth making the point that these guidelines concentrate solely on the provision of information. The importance of traditional library services is not denied – it is simply outside the scope of the guidelines.

The concept of self-reliance and self-determination will be very familiar to most people who come from a developing country; especially one recently emerged from colonial rule. These concepts are equally relevant for all countries. Communities, and the individuals within them, should have a far greater say in the decisions which affect their lives and a greater control over the ways in which their lives develop. To do so requires that they are both well-informed and have the means to act on that information.

There has been a recent surge of interest in meeting the every day information needs of ordinary people. More especially that interest has focused on groups within society who are considered to be socially and economically disadvantaged. The term that is used for information which is provided to meet their needs is “community information”.

Saracevic, writing in the context of developing countries has evolved the concept “appropriate information”, he says,
"Should be problem-oriented, self-contained, directly applicable, sealed for local use, able to reach the disadvantaged and communicable through traditional channels" (Saracevic, 1980).

So much for definitions before going on to consider what type of community information services are required, it is important to look at the information needs they will be trying to meet.

David Smith (1978) attempted to define each word separately 'A community is made up of persons who bring to the common life a variety of resources both material and of knowledge and skill. Each member of the community has needs and each has resources. In the most profound sense we are functions of one another and it is interpretation and co-ordination of the resource, which creates the community'.

'We define information in terms of an experience whereby people are linked with one another in mutually useful ways. Information does not exist in books, databanks, files but is the experience whereby the symbols in the books or files are translated into action between two or more persons. The need of the questioner is matched with the resources available in process of this interaction'.

According to David Smith, then community information is the adhesive which binds the disparate elements together to form a community. And, just as some adhesives need a catalyst to form a bond, so in 'alienated' modern society, a community information service performs that function by linking needs with resources in community and alerting the community to unmet needs and lack of resources.

It can be seen that the term community information has two aspects. One is concerned with the nature of the information provided, that is, information in the community to help people with daily problem solving or in raising the quality of their lives, the other is concerned with the nature of the clientele served, namely those who belong to the lower socioeconomic groups or are disadvantaged through an inability to obtain, understand, or act on information that affects their lives.

David Smith (1978), in his definition of community information talked about 'alienated' modern society as providing the need for community information
services. He interprets 'alienation' as 'the malaise [that] affects all of us, leaving us in some measure useable to operate in humane, supportive ways. We do not know our neighbours and we turn aside when they are in trouble best we become involved. We lack a sense of community. In the midst of an industrialized and bureaucratized society made up of multitudes of people we live separate lives. Loneliness is endemic. We are out of communication with one another so a very week sense of neighbourhood as one of the reasons for setting up the centre like Citizens' Advice Bureaux (CABx) in Britain.

What is the cause of this 'alienation'? From David Smith's analysis, it is lack of communication. In most stable communities there will exist in formal networks for the distribution of information and for advice giving. These networks will comprise the residents themselves; those people in the community who take on, consciously or unconsciously, the role of 'gate keepers', e.g. local elected councillors, the postman, doctor, midwife, shop keeper, school crossing attendant, bank manager etc; and local institutions whose services are neighbourhood based, such as the church, the health centre and the school. These informal networks help residents, and especially new corners, to become acquainted with their neighbours, the source the neighbourhood, and the accepted norms of behaviour. Their role can be crucial where there is a rapid turnover of the inhabitants.

Grinding poverty exists side by side with poor housing and amenities, unemployment, substandard education, racial tensions. In other words, multiple deprivations exist. Deprivation is as much due to lack of information and how to use it as it is to the lack of facilities themselves. Even where programmes for urban renewal are proposed, information is an essential ingredient for public consultation and, if it is not readily available in a form that can be easily understood, some residents could again be at a disadvantage.

There are a number of choices available to librarians wanting to improve their information services.

- They can improve the level of information services which they offer to the general public, but make no discrimination in favour of specific groups. This would mean improving library holdings of pamphlet and leaflet material and generally making information more accessible to the public.
In many libraries this is greatly needed, but should not be confused with community information work. It is still general reference or public information work as practiced for some time by the large reference libraries.

- They can improve for information service on purely local matters. This, again, will mean collecting non-book information; will involve building up detailed local information files and publishing directories and generally acting as a signposting agency to other local existing pattern of information provision. It is for this reason that so much emphasis has been given in these guidelines to the assessment of community needs.

Once those needs have been assessed, however, it is possible to begin to design and to plan the development of the community information service. A number of basic principles should be followed during this design and planning process.

**Use of community development**

It is crucial to accept that effective services can not be imposed on communities, but must be set up from within the community itself. Further, the service should be designed so that it is managed and controlled by the community.

**Build on existing services**

The existing information providers should be involved in the design of the new service and an attempt should be made to co-ordinate developments. In some cases the most appropriate information service might be one which meets the needs of other information providers, living them to provide the service direct to people in the community.

**Use a range of information formats**

An information service intended for direct use by rural people can not be based on printed materials alone. It should build on traditional patterns of information seeking, and this will mean using oral communications reinforced by poster, charts, photographs, slides, films, audio tapes and realia.
Use active information workers

The workers must understand the information that they are handling and they must be able to interpret and apply that information to the particular needs of the user. They should be able to repackage information from government and other organisations into formats that are more appropriate to the villagers' needs. They should also record traditional knowledge.

The information service should be two way

The service should act as a communication channel from, as well as to, the local community. The service should enable the local community to feed back to government and others information on the impact of their policies and on areas of need not being met by policies or programmes services. Many libraries have provided such services for some years. Again this should be confused with community information work. It is a very valuable function for libraries to fulfil but it is a local information service.

They can do more than just improve their collections of information. They can provide, as they do for business and local government officers, a specialised information service and like the advice centres on the American Neighbourhood Information Centers, make special provision for those people within the local community who have limited access to other sources of help.

This would mean a positive decision to concentrate on enabling people, particularly those in lower socio-economic groups, to act either individually or collectively on their problems in the fields of housing, employment, family and personal matters, consumer affairs, household finance, education, welfare rights and civil rights. In other words they can offer a community information service.

Libraries can make the provision in two ways. They can provide a service direct to individuals and groups by running what is, in effect, an advice centre. Such a service could be provided by special trained librarians alone, or in conjunction with other agencies. Alternatively they can provide a specialised information service to specific groups of workers, such as community workers or advice centre workers, whose role is to help individuals and groups in the community. It is impossible to say in advance what the most appropriate service will be for any community. Each service should be designed to meet the particular needs of the community and to fit in with the community.
Learn from others

Build on the experience of others who have established rural community information services.

With these principles in mind, it is possible to begin the actual planning and design. Again it is worth emphasizing that members of the community should be involved in the process. This involvement might be achieved through informal discussion groups or it might be more appropriate to establish a formal management group or committee.

The first task should be specifying the objectives of the service. These objectives should cover: the groups in the community that will be served by the information service; the subject areas on which information will be provided; the relationship with other information providers; the style of work of the service, and the extent to which the service will do more than simply provide information.

It will be necessary to decide on a management structure for the service, to locate suitable premises and to decide on the opening hours. The planning will also have to include a consideration of the number and type of staff that will be required and whether they will need training.

At this early stage it is also worth thinking about the information materials and equipment which the staff will need.

Finally, careful thought needs to be given to the financial element of the service. How much money will be needed and where will it come from?

5.3 Monitoring and Evaluating Performance

To ensure that an information service remains effective and that it responds to the needs of the community which it serves, it is necessary to monitor and to evaluate its performance.

The monitoring and performance system should be designed in accordance with eight basic principles. These are:

i. Performance monitoring and evaluation should be an integral part of the management process.
ii. The measures used should relate performance to the needs of the community.

iii. The measures should assess performance within the limits set by the levels of resources available.

iv. Performance should be monitored in the context of the objectives of the service.

v. Community information services should provide an amalgamation of different services.

vi. The level of monitoring should be determined by the amount of detail required.

vii. Comparison is an essential aspect of performance monitoring and evaluation.

viii. Basic measures should be adapted to suit local circumstances. The starting point should be the measurement of the resources used by the information service. The resources should be related to the size of the community served and figures should be expressed "per thousand populations".

Information should be collected on the number of staff, their training and experience and their language skills. The monitoring process should also assess the extent to which the staff reflects the composition of the community.

Information resources should also be measured, both in terms of the resources available to the service and the capacity of the service to produce resources to meet the needs of the community.

Finally the premises and equipment available for the service should be monitored.

Having measured the resources used by the service, attention now focuses on the performance or output of the service. Here a range of different aspects of the service can be measured. The particular combination of measurements must be determined by the objectives of the service. The following range of possibilities should be considered:
• **The range of enquiries**
  This will give a good indication of what the people in the community feel the service is good at doing.

• **The number of enquiries**

• **The number of people returning with a second enquiry**
  This is a good indicator of the extent to which the service is satisfying needs.

• **The type of user**
  This shows whether the service is meeting the needs of all groups in the community.

• **Detailed help and assistance**
  It may be worth recording separately enquiries which required detailed help.

• **Information feedback**
  The volume of this work should be recorded.

• **Resource centre work**
  Where the service aims to provide support to other information providers the extent of this work should be measured.

• **Information work with groups**
  This is a significant element in the work of some centres and should be monitored.

• **Repackaged information**
  The amount of work involved with producing new materials should be measured. Measurement of resources and an appropriate range of outputs will provide a basis for the regular monitoring and evaluation of the service. This should be supplemented by occasional surveys to assess the attitudes and perceptions of people generally in the community.
users of the service and the providers of other services. Self-completion questionnaire, interviews and group discussions are the techniques which can be used to collect this information.

Evaluation can be a challenging and threatening experience for people working in a service and it is therefore important to involve them in the design of the monitoring and evaluation process. They should be encouraged to provide a continuous flow of information about the efficiency and the effectiveness of the service.

The local community should also be involved in the evaluation. The final responsibility, however, must rest with the management group of committee.

Planning a community information service should be seen as a cyclic process which involves assessing the needs of a community; establishing objectives in the light of those needs; developing services which will enable the objectives to be achieved; providing services; monitoring and evaluating their performance; revising objectives in the light of performance and changed needs, and so on. Involving staff, management and the local community in this whole process will help to ensure that the community information service is appropriate to the needs of the community it serves.

5.4 Condition for Success in Community Information

Clearly much depends upon local and the degree to which new ideas and systems can be assimilated. There will be certain infrastructure items commonly identified as facilitating general development; a stable government and society; good communications; a reasonable level of literacy; and a national system of education. Factors more immediately relevant to the library service would include: government policy; the existence of certain public services; at least a cadre of high quality personnel; available information; and demand or, at any rate a need for its dissemination.

Given that few developing countries can match such requirements then Community Information could indeed be seen as alien to this environment. It likely that in the average developing country there will be either the materials or
the system needed to organize them? Does it make sense to transplant a service designed for conditions of relative deprivation to an environment where hardship will be the norm and poverty the common denominator? On the other hand, in the United Kingdom, where much more favourable conditions occur, Community Information has been slow to develop. Anyway, information in itself solves nothing; knowledge is power only when it can be used effectively.

5.5 Necessity of Community Information Services in Developing Nations

It is part of the human condition that people everywhere have problems, the solution to which almost inevitably involves information. In emerging countries these problems might be more pressing, although in parts of Europe and North America many people still need information on how to obtain essentials available through certain public services. Furthermore, information seekers everywhere are faced with a paradox. Despite increased professionalism, despite information technology and freedom of information campaigns at both national and international levels, the task of finding relevant information in an acceptable time scale becomes increasingly onerous. As Barret Reid (1977) remarks, "Everyman is looking for simple tracks in an information forest growing more and more dense and strange".

In Africa, observers such as Adimorah (1983) and Kappa (1982) believe that community information is a necessary way through the forest. If they are right, then community information service could be as relevant to emerging countries as it is to more developed societies.

One would emphasize here that one is thinking about community information service along Western lines. If information need is as fundamental as has been intimated, developing countries will already have their own systems. Frequently in rural areas this will be a village elder or headman who over the years has acquired a certain knowledge and status. Just as likely will be the existence of information networks involving local media, political parties, the education system and personal contact. Even in the West, with its mature and developed library systems, most people still prefer to obtain information from a friend or at least someone who is known to them. Whatever the plans for introducing community information service along Western lines to developing countries, they must, as in the West, the account of local sources and networks.
Kappa (1982) argues in essence that comparability is possible and that emerging countries must turn to Western outreach techniques and community information in order to make a greater impact on the communities served by public libraries. There is no apparent contradiction between Kappa's (1982) call for information provision on the social services, welfare and education and Reid's (1977) reference to, "... more and more agencies – governmental and private – [who] pour out more and more data of enormous potential relevance in finding jobs, in getting education, in pursuing goods, in seeking security". Thus the need for information can be argued but what about its nature, format and above all relevance?

Among the more radical voices on this question is that of Adolphe O. Amadi (1981) who argues for recognition of the difference between oral and literature cultures. In both environments the need for information is identical; it is the milieux themselves that differ. Clearly universal literacy remains a long-term goal for many emerging societies and any system which emphasizes print-based information provision in a largely non-literate setting is asking for trouble. As Amadi (1981) observes, "The proposition proposed with so much fanfare, that literacy is a precondition to obtaining information is a cart-the-horse proposal".

Allowing for variations in levels of development and in available resources there could be considerable potential for community information service in developing countries. Information on such topics as health, education, welfare and family is of interest to people everywhere and possibly more so in countries where administrative and communication structures may still be in process of evolution. Clearly infrastructure is important in that there has to be both something to publicize and the means to disseminate the information. Whether or not this implies that public libraries are an essential item of infrastructure for the provision of community information it is hard to say.

5.6 Community Information Services for Non-User Disadvantaged Community

5.6.1 The Context of Disadvantaged

There is no doubt as to the validity of that essential connection between Community Information and disadvantage. Indeed, a lack of information or

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access to it is frequently to be found within a cumulative syndrome of disadvantage which includes poverty, unemployment, poor housing, limited access to social services and the social pressures of living in districts where the incidents of crime, disease and misery is well above the average for society. Thomas Childers (1975) has employed the concept of information poverty to describe the difficulties encountered by large numbers of disadvantaged people in the United States while John Ward (1981) of the British National Consumer Council, to lack of information on how to obtain basic services is tantamount to lacking the services themselves. In India, there are large numbers of disadvantaged communities.

The term 'disadvantage' may be used in two senses:

5.6.1.1 Physically Disadvantaged

It refers to the disabled persons who lack a part of organs of their body and not able to do all works easily due to their physical incapacibilities. These disabled persons may otherwise be called as physically handicapped.

5.6.1.2 Socio-Economically Disadvantaged

This term may be used as ‘deprived class’ of peoples. This deprivation results from social or economic reasons of which the main composite elements are: an unfavourable position in society, a position of relative deprivation, minority group status consequent upon the relatively low regard in which the group is held, an inability to redress the situations without the co-operation of members of the majority, a lack of opportunity to maximize individual potential and to gain entry into the socio-economic mainstream (Martin, 1976).

5.6.2 Non-User Disadvantaged Community – Their Information Needs and Community Information Services

The beneficiaries of information service may broadly be divided into distinct three groups such as users, non-users and the system. The term ‘non-user’ of the libraries or information centres connotes different ideas. First, when the literate persons do not use the library or information centre, they may be called non-users of the library. They may be called as adamant non-users. But in this case we specifically mean those part of the illiterate population as ‘non-users’ who
have no formal association with the library. This part of the population may be called as under privileged non-user. Prof. Aina (1984) rightly stated that “while the adamant non-user can be described as someone who fails to avail himself of the services of the library inspite of it being provided, the under-privileged non-user is someone who is denied the opportunity of using the library either because the services are not there or if there at all he is not properly equipped education wise to benefit from such services”.

Non-users of library need information in every walk of their life. Libraries also have an important role to play in catering the specific information needs of the non-users, especially those persons who are deprived from formal education and lack social development. Community information is necessary to combat deprivation by enabling people to raise their living standards to the level of their rights in the law. Moreover, community information is also a means whereby the quality of life could be raised. It should allow people to extend themselves, take initiatives, broaden their sphere of competence, and be enterprising. This self-help function is very much aligned with the public library ethos of individualised learning.

The lower socio-economic groups or the disadvantaged communities are to face many problems to solve their daily livelihood. These crises should be touched by providing helpful information services. We know that community information has two aspects. One is the nature of information provided and the other is the nature of the clientele served. So the public library in a community should develop its own goals on the basis of the needs of that community for which its service is sought. Though the economically disadvantaged, ethnic minorities and illiterates of the populace are not using the library service, still the public libraries in the current structure are mere suppliers of information and referral services and the library should be a catalyst of bridging the gap between the information needs of the community and the information supply to that community.

5.7 Community Information Studies and Services Abroad

5.7.1 Community Information Service Related Studies Abroad

From the inception of the term ‘Information Behaviour’ in 1948 there are several studies on ‘Users Behaviour’. According to Atkin 600 studies was published on
users behaviour between 1950 to 1970 i.e., approximately 30 studies in a year (Crawford, 1978). From mid-sixties there is an increasing trends of 'Information Needs and Uses' and 'Community Information Services' studies in USA, UK, Canada, Australia, Denmark, Sweden, South Africa, Netherlands etc. published in the Annual Review for Information Science and Technology, Advances in Librarianship, Journal of Documentation, IFLA Journal, Information Development, South African journal of Library and Information Science and other publications. In this respect abstracting journals such as Current Research on Library and Information Science, Library and Information Science Abstracts etc. are very helpful in tracking the studies.

ALA Publication (Public Library Association Standards Committee, 1966) (Minimum Standards for Public Library Systems) identified three means by which the community library becomes an integral part of the population it serves. 1. Continuous or periodic study of the community, 2. Participation of the librarian in the life of the community, 3. Co-relation of library programmes with those of other community organisations.

'Assessing community information and service needs' – a report of Priscilla Gotsick (1974a) was one of a series in library services to disadvantaged adults. This Guide gives a three-step plan for assessing community information needs. Several methods of information gathering are described and the important factors to be considered in interpreting the information are outlined.

Priscilla Gotsick (1974b) in another report entitled 'community survey guide for assessment of community information and service needs' presents methods by which a library may survey its community to determine local information needs, especially those of disadvantaged adults. Data may be collected from public agencies or from community residents, by telephone, interview or questionnaire. All of these procedures are discussed in terms of advantages, methods and cost-benefit.

'Community information service: a directory of public library involvement' by C.A. Becker (1974) intended primarily to facilitate communication of ideas between public library personnel interested in providing community information and referral services, this directory lists public libraries already engaged in such services, the document begins with a brief examination of the concept of
community information and referral services, assesses the characteristics of this service give the justification for the public library's role in providing information about community resources and follows the historical growth of this service. Public libraries involved in community information and referral services are listed by state, the entries include types of activities funding levels and funding sources. The document includes a short bibliography on information centers.

'Library services to the disadvantaged' – a collection of papers was edited by William J. Martin (1975). This collection of papers was an attempt to bring together in convenient forms the diverse views and experiences of several groups and professions with an interest in the role of the library in society.

In Minneapolis, Minnesota for Community Information and Referral Service – a report (1975) of 104 pages entitled 'Computerization of the Minneapolis Community Information and Referral Service resource file' which describes that the Community Information and Referral Service provides free information to community residents about health, welfare, social services and educational and recreational resources in the area and refers people with problems to approximate resources.

The impact of Government programmes may be estimated by measuring the attitudes of citizens before and after programme activation and by noting the charge in selected social indicators before and after programme activation is found in the writing of Cleve Hopkins (1975b) 'Programme impact estimation for Community Information and Service Centers' in the year 1975. This paper describes the application of these procedures to local areas within city government with emphasis on the installation of Community Information Service Centers (CISCs) using advanced telecommunications technology.

In another paper titled 'Location Criteria for Community and Information Service Centres (CISCs) by Cleve Hopkins (1975a) it is found that a CISC is a place where residents of a local community can receive answers to questions that arise from their relations with local government. The basic long-range objective of CISC activation is to enable a much rapid and satisfying exchange of information between residents and local government using modern automated telecommunication technology.
A collection of essays entitled ‘Information for the Community’ compiled by Joseph C. Donohue (1976) is concerned with measuring community information needs (especially in health and welfare) and designing library service systems to satisfy those needs. Part I of this collection provides background which helps to identify the needs of individuals and groups. Part II describes existing community information services and Parts III & IV deal with the present status of relevant research.

Robert Croneberger and Carolyn Luck (1976) in their case study ‘Analyzing community human information needs on the Detroit City in the USA’ have concluded that formal and informal methods of community analysis are essential both for developing a clear and useful picture of the non-users and for an understanding of their information needs.

‘The Cambridge/Ellicot Office of resident life information referral service’ – a paper of Thoman (1976) illustrates how a resident life department with several campus agencies has begun to organically develop an information and referral service which meets the criteria of a complete system. An organic approach provides a rationale for ‘going into business’. At the same time developmental planning continues. This paper has four major focuses: (1) a definition of the problem citing recent research and sampling previous models, (2) a description of the University of Maryland’s organic approach, (3) a detailed description of the system itself, and 4) a detailed summary of how to develop the instruments.

Cleve Hopkins (1976) in a report ‘Community information services centers (CISCs): concepts for activation’ stated that a CISC is a place where urban residents can get answers to questions that arise from their relations to the municipality where they live. This report describes an experiment to test basic CISC concepts that were set forth in a 1971 report from the National Academy of Engineering to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Telecommunication technology useful in this context is described as is data bank contents, an operational plan, basic CISC functions and integration of a CISC with the 911 emergency centers. Comments are made on staff training, space requirements, CISC location and estimated cost of the experiment.
‘Community information services in the Monroe County library system: a model’ is a journal article written by Sue Bovay (1976) which describes the activities of the Monroe County Library System’s urban information center.

Leslie M. Berman’s (1976) ‘Bridgeport Public Library human resources information network – community information service’ covers background description project summary of the first year results of a survey of project participants and the second year summary. Objectives, activities, budget and planning are reported for this project which was designed to co-ordinate improve, preserve and make available the collection of human resources existing in Bridgeport. Details of agency visits developing information collection cooperative acquisitions and networking, and staff participants are also provided. The first year summary reports that project was successful in helping to establish the library as an information agency within the community. The second year summary reports on design of the community information and referral services. Goals, methods, personnel, the community resource file, and the subject index to the file are described. The project can serve as a model for establishing community information services in libraries. Recommendations are 1) legitimize the service by committing library funds to its operation 2) initiate publicity and outreach programmes in the community; and 3) expand the scope of the service to reach specific city neighbourhoods.

G. S. Ewart’s (1976) ‘Endeavoring to reach the information poor’ a journal article describes the Ferguson library of Stanford, Connecticut, uses information resources in media format as part of its community information service.

An annual report entitled ‘people need libraries’ published by Queensborough Public Library (1977) focuses on the co-operative efforts it employed to maximize its services in the face of New York City’s fiscal crisis. Though the staff was reduced by nearly 28 percent and hours were decreased by nearly 44 percent, circulation and reference statistics show only a 7 percent cut back. Comparative statistics for 1976-77 and 1975-76 for receipts and expenditures, materials lent home for use, and reference assistance are presented, as well as new services that the library was able to provide with the help of state and federal grants: free bus to the library, literacy volunteers, higher education library advisory service, new Americans project, job information service and community information.
center referral services. Special features such as mail-a-book service, oral history tapes, borrow a picture programme, associated press wire service, Sunday service at the Central Library and library service to prisoners are also described.

Demonstration of a library based community information service is found in a monograph of M.F. Tarlerski (1977) entitled 'Community information service project planning report a regional library and information network based on Dandenong Valley Regional Library Service'.

The project has been sponsored by the Library Council of Victoria to test the capacity of the public library in the designing and implementing of an information system that will extend and improve existing social development processes within the local area. A two-state development, commenced in November, 1976 is envisaged: planning and establishing, implementing and evaluating. The Planning Report provides an operational model for the Dandenong Valley Regional Information Network and it also outlines the strategies and major concepts of the service.

'Community information services in New South Wales Public Libraries: guidelines' – a report of Eugenia Lovelace (1979) is self-explanatory. This report presents five general principles which can assists public libraries with decisions about their response to the issue of the provision of community information and suggests that libraries would get to know the community by compiling a community profile which includes information about the people, the socio-economic environment, the activities and interests of the community, its information demands and its information resources; and set objectives to the role of a public library based community information services. It should consider cooperation with other community information agencies; collect and update information relevant to the objectives to the service and organise information in a way that best suits the information demands which the system is design to meet.

A set of three reports by Eugenia Lovelace (1979), entitled 'Community Information Services in New South Wales Public Libraries: an investigation' presents the findings of Australia's Community Information Sharing Service study designed to collect data on public libraries in New South Wales which currently offer or contribute to a community information service; analyse that data.
to assess the extent to which library involvement in community is influenced by the library's degree of co-operation with other agencies, its method of collecting and updating information, organising a satisfactory indexing system, publicizing and promoting the services, initiating, expanding and evaluating the services, and communicate and promote these guidelines to public librarians and other community information workers. Survey methods and limitations of the study are described and appendices include copies of the Community Information Sharing Service (CISS) cover letter, the collated questionnaire, Chi-Square analyses and a bibliography.

Deirdre Boyle (1980) in an article entitled 'Pact comes to Patterson' presents the development of the Patterson Area Community Television Project (PACT), a multi-level governmental funded programme organised by the Patterson Public Library. Begun as communications experiment, the project makes cable television available as a community information service for use by local government, business community agencies and the library.

Bruce Yates (1980) in his paper entitled 'Libraries and village development in Papua New Guinea' attempts to indicate possible models for libraries which might strengthen their contribution to the development of rural villages in Papua New Guinea. These models include the library extension model and the village information centre model.

Catherine Mamui (1981) discusses ways of catering for the reading needs of people in Tokaino village, Buin, Papua New Guinea. Its population is 200, mostly children and young adults. This paper suggests that a proper public library should be build in the central place and community information centres should operate in each area.

'Library services to the ethnic community' a work of Murphy (1981) presents a brief profile of the Maori community and describes attempts to make public library in Para Para Umu more accessible and attractive to local community people.

Increasing the public's awareness of a library's existence and services is vital in any library community. The work of McCorran (1981) entitled 'Public awareness in rural libraries' shows that only through communication with the public the rural public library can increase its circulation and finding.
T.K.S. Iyengar (1981) describes in his paper entitled ‘The information community – its vital link for progress in the third world countries’, the role of information services as an ally to support the national development and they should be designed to serve the community to improve its productive capacity and its overall quality of life, which would mean progress. The need for identification of different categories of users, their information seeking behaviour patterns, capability of assimilation of information and application to their different tasks are important. The efficiency of the information community also depends on the application of science and technology. A simple approach to cost effective of information is proposed.

‘Information exchange and rural libraries’ a work of S.M. Leadley (1982) discuses the role of the rural public library as part of a community information system and reviews the different aspects of information technology which are likely to play an increasing role in rural information services.

A sincere effort on community information services in a volume was presented by Allan Bunch. The investigator has got a comprehensive idea about community information services from Mr. Bunch’s (1982) ‘Community information services: their origin, scope and development’. The major chapters of this volume are 1) Community information – meaning and origins, 2) The United States – the information and referral model, 3) Community information services in Britain non-public library, 4) Public library community information services in Britain, 5) Community information services to rural areas, 6) Development in community information services in other countries, and 7) Community information and new technology. The examples of community information services in public libraries in the different countries have been inserted in this volume either from an historical viewpoint in the development of the concept which have influenced others or simply as of one form of service. Mr. Bunch has rightly stated ‘the book attempts to present a mosaic of community information services out of which certain patterns will emerge’. The two chapters of the book which have been devoted to look at the particular topics – community information in rural areas and the use of new technology have opened a new question of involvement of the public libraries in respect of the community information services. According to Bunch ‘the book shows that community information services in libraries began over a
decade ago ... and widening ever since ... it is also a return to roots for we are not public libraries set up in the first place primarily working classes who did not have access to the fine libraries of the reach'. 'In the information society community information services are going to be needed more than even to ensure that everyone has access to information' the thinking of Bunch has been reflected completely in this volume.

A systematic attempt has been made to define and describe the activities of the library community information and referral service which aims at satisfying the everyday information needs of the average citizen is found in the writings of C.K. Liew (1983) entitled 'community information service in the public library with special reference to Singapore'. In this writing the cost and staff requirements, the need to create a community profile and a community resource file as well as an information file are emphasized. Information and Retrieval services to the disadvantaged, illiterate, aged, handicapped and homebound are also described.

William J. Martin (1984) in IFLA Journal depicts the community, community information service and its effectiveness, conditions for success in community information, potentials of public libraries for community information service in the paper entitled 'The potential for community information services in a developing country'.

E. Kempson (1986) in IFLA Journal focuses a recent surge of interest in meeting the everyday information needs of ordinary people. More especially that interest has focused', on groups within society who are considered to be socially and economically disadvantaged. The term that is used for information services which are provided to meet their needs is "community information". The paper entitled 'Information for self-reliance and self-determination: the role of community information services' also depicts that informal information services are inadequate in the context of changing community information needs and the role of public libraries in meeting the information needs of the community.

B. Yates (1986) depicts in his paper entitled 'Information needs of human beings' that user as the key composition in an information service. Mentions different basic information needs of human met by the librarian. Discusses the change that is taking place by which individuals receive information. The important theories in this regard are convenience, comprehensiveness and cost. In this
context examines online bibliographic database searching, videotext, videodisc, electronic publishing, satellites, and cable television, discusses the change in information gathering habits of users and concludes the new technology is likely to have some effect on the information seeking habits of the human.

Kirsty Williamson (1986) in his paper entitled ‘Information seeking by users of a citizens advice bureau’ describes a study of community needs and information seeking behaviour. An important aim was to investigate the responses information seekers prefer from an information provider.

Wavada and Higgins (1987) in a journal article described ‘the community information service’ in Spokane, Washington. The design and development of this public library system was done with the co-operation of public and private sectors outside of the library profession. This partnership is explained in this article.

Progress in UK community information work during 1981-85, is reviewed by Allan Bunch (1988) with reference to rural information/advice in his work entitled ‘community information’.

Maurice C. Lundu (1989) in his paper entitled ‘The information gap: reflection on its origins and implications’ depicts that there is undoubtedly a gap in terms of knowledge and information between the developed countries and those of the Third World, particularly sub-Saharan African countries and also discusses the causes of gap and key factors for reducing the gap.

Jean Dunkley (1989) describes the experience of the UK’s Citizens Advice Bureaux, in Devon and Cornwall, providing advice and information services in rural areas.

L.O. Aina (1990) in his paper ‘Informing African farmers: some obstacles to information flow’ depicts the problem of agriculture in Africa, types of agricultural information, obstacles to the flow of agricultural information and recommendations for improvement.

A. Anaba Alemna (1990) in his paper, entitled ‘Information technology and information training in West Africa’ discusses that the professional training of librarians for information work in West Africa should viewed from a very broad perspective instead of the parochial orientation to work in library institutions only.
Reviews the extent to which information technology has been incorporated into library science courses in the library schools in West Africa. There is still too much reliance on traditional academic courses of librarianship. Suggests that library school should try to keep pace with new technologies to ensure the future information managers will be able to satisfy the information needs of their clientele. This will also enable library school graduates to work in a variety of organisations dealing with the processing and dissemination of information.

Elaine Kempson’s (1990) article entitled ‘Rural community information services: guidelines for researching need, setting up services and evaluating performance’ discusses the analysis of community needs – for collection of detailed information it is necessary to build up a picture of the community profile, the information providers profile and the information needs profile, tools of community information assessment, establishing appropriate services and monitoring and evaluating the performance.

K.P. Broadbent’s (1990) article entitled ‘Information needs for rural development’ represents an information strategy for the rural sectors in developing countries. Traces the broad concept of rural development over five phases and examines the difficulty in providing rural population with greater access to information aimed at improving their lives. Consideration of user needs is critical since information must be focused, generated by demand, grassroots-based, reflective of local conditions based on indigenous knowledge. Information Sciences Division’s rural development approach is multi disciplinary. Projects focus on information requirements, across basic social economic and scientific issues. Rural information projects also require effective information flows at each phase to ensure that knowledge is actually being used and recommends the strengthening and co-ordination of local information systems for better support of rural population as well as decision-makers.

Mary Nassimbeni’s (1990) article entitled ‘Poverty and development in South Africa and the role of libraries’ deals with the causes of poverty among the whites who had drifted from rural areas to urban areas in the hope of employment inspite of their lack of skills and training and to plan actions to combat the process or impoverishment. It also includes the role of libraries for eradication of poverty and reduces the illiteracy.
Adele Jones (1991) in his article entitled 'Libraries as centres for community literacy' depicts that in developing countries, as well as in many so called developed societies, libraries have tended to remain the domain of the literate and more 'educated' sectors of society. Library and literacy workers alike have been faced with the question of how libraries can serve those without literacy skills and the bigger issue of how to make libraries accessible to the often large and untapped group within so many communities. Calls for a rethinking of the traditional role of libraries and suggests that both taking the library to the people as well as the people creating their own texts within the library setting can do much to encourage adult literacy.

A. Anaba Alemna (1991) in his article entitled 'Library education and rural information provision in Ghana' examines the role that the Department of Library and Archival Studies of the University of Ghana might play in assisting the establishment of rural libraries in Ghana and reviews the present state of rural information provision in Ghana. The present curriculum of the Department of Library and Archival Studies is not designed to produce librarians able to meet the needs of rural people and makes suggestions for improvements in the curriculum while maintaining balance between national needs and international standards.

Gundu Shibanda (1991) in his article entitled 'Information for agriculture in Kenya' outlines the aims of the Kenya government with regard to agricultural development and describes the role, aims, structure, problems of the Agricultural Extension Services Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development. The role of agricultural research and methods of disseminating research information to farmers are described. The Agricultural Extension Services Division is responsible for the Agricultural Information Services, comprising a National Agricultural Documentation Centre, an Agricultural Information Centre and a Central Library with ninety-three branches in provincial and district offices, Agricultural Institutes and Farmer Training Centre. In addition, there are thirty-two libraries in agricultural research stations. The aims, activities and problems of these services are described. More attention needs to be paid to communicating information directly to farmers.
Graeme C. Hughes (1991) in his paper entitled ‘the information age’ reviews the economic, social and physiological impact of information technology, which has brought about the Information Age. Information is now being treated as a scientific concept and should also be regarded as an economic commodity. It has also created a new paradigm of thinking. Information technology has an enabling effect at five levels: cost reduction; quality improvement; generation of new products and services; strategic management; and the creation of new ways of thinking. Public policy, particularly educational policy, should take full account of information technology.

Georgiana K. N. Nwagha (1992) in his paper entitled ‘Information needs of rural women in Nigeria’ discusses some factors contributing to the low standard of living of rural people in Africa in general and rural women in particular, are discussed, and the ineffectiveness of the various governments’ programmes to redress the situation highlighted. A survey conducted in Nigeria reveals that rural women, who are pre-dominantly illiterate, are ignorant of modern methods of improving agricultural production and of other ways of self-development. The dissemination of vital information that could assist rural dwellers to improve themselves and their economic status is recommended as an effective means of rural development. The use of radio jingles is also recommended to make information dissemination to rural people effectively.

Another article ‘Access to global contracts: on-line community information services’ by G. Nickerson (1993) examines recent trends which have now made it practical to provide an on-line community information service. The on-line community service is shown to provide the public with access to electronic mail and bulletin boards, and to information about community programme, health care and an on-line meeting place. Early attempts to implement such a system are reviewed, including the Cleveland Free Net, the National Public Telecomputing Network and other community information systems accessible from the Internet.

R.T. Walsh (1993) in an article entitled ‘Development of Community Information Service the National Capital Area Public Access Network (CAP Access) – a work in progress’ describes that the emergence of free on-line information services focused on the needs of local communities area growing phenomenon around the nation. This report outlines the development of one such service CAP
Access, in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. It focuses on the coalition of organisations and individuals whose volunteer efforts have set the stage for its establishment as an ongoing resource in the local community. Participating entries, such as local governments, public libraries, social service organisations, and schools, most of whom are not likely to finance their own on-line platforms, now use CAP Access for real service but also as an incubator to test the interconnected medium for their future out reach and service needs. This report also discusses the underdeveloped potential of community networks to serve as local platforms for pilot projects that are part of the National Research and Education Network (NREN) and more specific national information infrastructure initiatives. Because the value of these initiatives is not so much the technology they pet into use, their primary value is in the local coalitions they bring together.

‘Community Information Service as provided by the Pretoria Citizens’ Advice Bureau’ – A. Louw’s (1993) article surveys the history and development of the Pretoria Citizens’ Advice Bureaux (PCAB) which has been in existence for 25 years as an organisation of volunteers working for the community. As background, a brief review of the development of Citizens’ Advice Bureaux in the UK is given. The service provided by the PCAB can be classed as “community information service”. Most of the cases handled, however related to clients battling to survive in a strange and frightening urban environment, for which they have not been prepared. Besides providing information in reply to requests, the volunteers running the PCAB assist illiterate and semi-illiterate clients by filling in forms, writing letters and making telephone calls on their behalf. When clients are referred to other agencies, they are given a written introduction, as well as detailed instructions on how to get there. Detailed records of cases are kept to enable voluntary workers to carry on with cases formerly handled by other helpers. A graph of cases handled indicates how the need for service has grown over the years.

‘Exploratory study of information needs in the Kwa-Ngwanase (Natal) and Qumbu (Transkei) communities of South Africa’ – A.M. Kaniki’s (1995) article discusses information needs assessment is critical in developing and running a relevant information service. However, few libraries, community resource centres and library and information workers conduct needs assessment. There are
several reasons for this, paramount among these being the lack of knowledge of techniques and finding simple but reliable and valid methodologies for doing so. Several methodologies have been advanced and used while others have been 'discredited'. Using the critical incident approach in conjunction with a self-administered questionnaire and/or interview protocol seems ideal even for poorly staffed resource centres. In this article, therefore, one such technique is presented and the elements of the instrument are highlighted. Results of an exploratory study conducted in two rural communities, Kwa-Ngwanase and Qumbu are also presented and discussed. In the study an attempt was made to answer the following questions: what are the information needs in the two communities, which information providers do people use; and what is the demographic distribution of each community and its implication for information provision in these areas?

L. Patterson (1995) discusses the status of the tribal libraries in the USA and summarises the information needs identified by Native Americans. Information needs identified by tribal members as having high importance include those dealing with employment, vocational training, legal and civil rights and health. Local tribal history and culture also ranked strong interests. Considers how these information needs can be met and discusses the future of Native American library services. Although technology offers the potential to bring library services, materials and resources to Indian people in large numbers, there are significant barriers, such as lack of funding or leadership, which can prevent this becoming a reality.

Pilkington and Morrison (1996) in their paper entitled ‘Community information centres in public libraries’ discussed the origins of community information services, in the UK and USA. Public libraries were originally not identified as community information centres but can offer a number of advantages as potential providers of community information. The paper presents guidelines for planning, implementing and maintaining community information service in a public library.

T.D. Wilson (1999) in its article entitled ‘Models in information behaviour research’ presents an outline of models of information seeking and other aspects of information behaviour, showing the relationship between communication and information behaviour in general with information seeking and information
searching in information retrieval systems. It is suggested that these models address issues at various levels of information behaviour and that they can be related by envisaging a 'nesting' of models. It is also suggested that, within both information seeking research and information searching research, alternative models address similar issues in related ways and that the models are complementary rather than conflicting. Finally an alternative, problem-solving model is presented, which, it is suggested, provides a basis for relating the models in appropriate research strategies.

5.7.2 Community Information Services Abroad

5.7.2.1 Community Information Services in USA

The first community information service in a public library, the Public Information Centre at Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, was set up in 1970 after a study conducted by a team led by Joseph C. Donohue (1972) of Maryland library school.

Further experiments followed in other libraries in the United States and by the mid-70s reports of these began to filter through to Britain via the American professional press. After the Second World War Veterans Information Centres were formed modelled on the British Citizens Advice Bureaux. In 1946, the numbers of centres were 3000 but in 1949, most of the centres had disbanded.

In the United States (U.S.) the functions of Community Information Services commonly known as Information and Referral (I & R) services were to provide information about services and resources available in the community and where necessary to refer inquiries to the most appropriate source of help.

These I & R services started in 1960 in the U.S. From 1965 a number of youth opportunity centres were set up by the Bureau of Employment Security.

In 1966, Neighbourhood Pilot Centres were initiated by President Johnson aimed at providing co-ordination of programmes of other federal agencies. Writings about Community Information Services in the public library were found in Alfred Kahn's book 'Information centres: a study and some proposals', 1966.
United Kingdom is in a leading position in Community Information Services in the World. In addition to the familiar Citizens' Advice Bureaux, there are now specialist advice centres covering consumer problems, housing, law and money, neighbourhood advice centres, local authority information centres and a whole host of specialised counselling services (Library Association, 1980).

By the end of the 1970s a number of libraries in Britain had set up services which, though differing from each other in some respects, could all be subsumed under the banner of 'community information'. These services showed greater diversity than their American counterparts where the emphasis was on the I & R (Information and Referral) fit with enquiries received predominantly by telephone.

In 1980, a British Library research project undertaken by the Department of Library and Information Studies at Leeds Polytechnic identifies three models of community information provision in this Country; which they termed 'back-up', 'direct service' and 'self-help'. A ‘back-up’ service was one in which librarians used their reference and bibliographical skills to produce directories, information packs, current-awareness bulletins, mainly for other professionals and voluntary organisations. A ‘direct service’ involved the librarian in the face-to-face transfer of information with the user by actively locating local sources of information and making local contacts. The 'self-help' approach involved the librarian in collecting, compiling and arranging material in a way that made it easier for the customer to use largely unaided (Watson and others, 1980).

The year 1980 also saw the publication of 'community information: what libraries can do', the result of two years' deliberation by the Library Association Working Party on Community Information. The report defined community information services as those which assists individuals and groups with daily problem-solving and with participations in the democratic process. The services concentrate on the needs of those who do not have ready access to other sources of assistance and on the most important problems that people have to face, problems to do with their homes, their jobs and their rights (Library Association, 1980). The report also laid down practical guidelines for the development of community information in libraries and gave examples of good practice.

Today, most public library authorities would admit to providing some kind of community information service even if no more than a collection of materials
(booklets, pamphlets, leaflets, packs, etc.), usually arranged in broad categories and aimed at meeting the needs of those who experience problems in getting access to information on account of factors such as social position, economic status, ethnic origin, sex or health. At the other extreme, some authorities have set up teams of librarians to identify and supply their service points, other professionals and local organisations with community information. Several of these teams produce current awareness lists or directories which have become a valuable national as well as useful local resource.

There can be no doubting the publicity value of Community Information, nor indeed, the extent to which some libraries have sought to make a reality of policy statements in this field. While it might be invidious to single out examples, few observers of the British public library scene will not have heard of Lambeth and its “umbrella group” or Bretton and its advice centre or of the excellent community libraries in Longslight, Manchester and Gateshead. Less will be known of Renfrew District Libraries in Scotland, arguably the most socially responsive library authority in Britain. Renfrew can boast a string of achievements in communication information, in service to the unemployed and to teenagers and perhaps most impressive in the depth of penetration it has gained into groups traditionally recognised as non-users of the library service. Moreover, at a time when many library authorities appear to have abandoned professional responsibility in search of short-term managerial advantage. Renfrew has set its force against income generation, has insisted on positive discrimination in favour of the disadvantaged and pursues a policy of total public library service.

The very fact that places such as Renfrew are singled out for attention should indicate that in its response to the community it serves it is not typical of British public libraries. As Childers (1979) remarked of the experience of information and referral service in the United States, “The literature on public library information and referral concentrates on a handful of the major services and one failure in the field”. This is in itself important, as is the fact that the mere existence of a service which is called Community Information is no guarantee of effectiveness either in the United Kingdom or in the developing countries. In the United Kingdom, this is best illustrated in the wider orbit of community librarianship and especially library services to the disadvantaged. Coleman’s (1981) study of
service to the disadvantaged included coverage of Community Information and her main conclusion was: The major question that remains is “to change what?” and the answer must be the whole pattern of public library services in this country. The efforts of a minority of authorities to provide additional services and resources to the disadvantaged, however well-intentioned, are actually working to the detriment of the very people that they are seeking to help. If it is possible to point to 20 library authorities in the country who are providing a high level of service to the disadvantaged; this inevitably obscures the fact that there are seven times as many authorities again who are doing either nothing or very little. Therefore, while much good has come of developments in Community Information provision in the United Kingdom, to a considerable extent these developments have been indirect and limited to libraries themselves rather than to those people for whom the service exists in the first place.

Community Information has served to make public libraries more responsive, more selective in provision and hence, that bit more effective. At Renfrew for example, both library use and funding under both Capital and recurrent heads have grown steadily in line with such developments and this at a time when library budgets in general have been under attack (Chief Librarian, 1984).

The Library Association Working Party on Community Information recommended the following Community Information Services in Urban Areas and Rural Areas.

5.7.2.2.1 Urban Areas

The need for effective community information provision is especially critical in urban areas, since these, particularly; tend to include concentrations of poverty, unemployment, substandard housing, below-average educational standards, one parent families and members of ethnic minority groups. It is in the cities that the phenomenon of multiple deprivations has been recognised—people are affected not simply by one form of deprivation, but experience a variety of forms simultaneously.

It is in the cities that there is the widest range of agencies already active in the field of community information and advice, in response to the concentration of need for community information. They may independent, or part of local or national government. The main agencies are:
i) Citizens Advice Bureaux

By far the most frequently met and well-known information/advice agency in any community is the Citizens Advice Bureau. There are now well over 820 bureaux, staffed mainly by part-time volunteers but, increasingly, with paid organisers.

Their aim is to 'alleviate personal distress and confusion by providing free, confidential, impartial and independent advice or information on any subject to anyone who asks'. All volunteers undergo an excellent combination of in-service training and formal courses which are topped up from time to time by refresher courses and courses on new legislation.

ii) Neighbourhood Advice Centres

The last twenty years has seen a phenomenal growth in the numbers of these informal community-based advice centres. It is difficult to characterize them because centres vary enormously, but they are usually promoted by voluntary organisations, tenants' associations, or community groups. Funding has been mainly via the Urban Aid programme and therefore centres are most likely to be found in rundown inner-city areas, where they respond to the needs of the inarticulate and the 'information poor' concentrating on the areas of housing and welfare benefits.

iii) Legal Advice

Legal advice is, of course, available from solicitors at a charge. For those with insufficient means, financial assistance can be obtained through the Legal Aid scheme. Some Citizens Advice Bureaux have solicitors attached to them who give free advice sessions on a rota basis.

iv) Consumer Advice Centres (CACs)

The provision of local consumer advice centres has been a recent phenomenon, although the enforcement of consumer protection legislation has been a function of local authorities for many years.

v) Housing Advice Centres (HACs)

Housing is one of the most frequent problems encountered by advice centres, so it is not surprising that some for looking local housing authorities in the mid-
sixties should consider setting up their own advice centres, to deal with problems created by slum clearance, council housing, homelessness, landlord and tenant, etc.

vi) Local Authority Centres (LACs)

Until 1974 some library authorities, but by no means all, were responsible for running information centres in town halls, civic centres, etc. On reorganisation, and the transfer of library powers to the counties, responsibility for these centres remained with District Councils. In some metropolitan districts where both services are run by the same authority, a few library departments are still responsible for civic information centres but the usual practice is for these to be offshoots of public relations, or legal and administrative departments.

vii) Other Agencies

In addition a number of voluntary organisations and central and local government departments provide an information advice service as part of their overall function.

Voluntary Organisation involved in information or advice work includes:

1. Independent national organisations
2. Telephone counselling or information services
3. Social services headquarters or area offices
4. Careers services
5. Area housing office or estate management offices
6. Department of Health and Social Security
7. Job centre and employment offices (three of which have recently set up job libraries)
8. Post offices, the probation service, gas and electricity consultative councils, the Health Service and Health Education Council, town planning services, education department and the youth service.
5.7.2.2 Rural Areas

The information and advice needs of people in rural areas are as great as and similar to those in towns, but substantially more difficult to meet. It is likely that many country dwellers have problems which remain unsolved because there are no services to turn to, or they are hard to reach. Politically, however, rural problems may be less attractive than their urban counterparts because of the relatively small number and dispersed distribution of the voters involved.

Research undertaken in Lincolnshire (Clark and Unwin, 1977) confirms that the distinctive features of information systems in rural areas are:

1. The need for individuals to undertake long, time consuming and often difficult journeys to provide agencies in local centres.

2. The difficulty of maintaining the full range of information-providing agencies in rural centres when the level of enquiries in each falls below minimum threshold requirements.

3. Fragmentation of information provision. Major providers are often located in different centres, so that problems giving rise to several different information needs may necessitate visits to more than one place.

4. Information agencies in rural centres often experience their own difficulties in updating information owing to distances from head office, etc.

Consequently, unlike urban areas, large parts of the rural counties are severely deprived of agencies to assist with daily problem solving. The National Consumer Council commissioned the Nation Council for Social Service to undertake a detailed review of advice and information services in rural areas. The resultant report 'The Right to Know: A review of advice services in rural areas' (National Consumer Council and National Council for Social Service, 1978) is an extremely valuable statement on rural problems and needs and concludes that there is a clear need for more and better information services in these areas.

The report examines in some detail the existing providers of general information and advice, notably Rural Community Councils (RCCs), Citizens Advice Bureaux, Voluntary Organisations (WRVS, Age Concern, and Women's Institutes), Post Offices, police, the media and local authority departments including libraries. Particular attention is given to various innovatory schemes
used by these agencies to extend their services to outer county area. Briefly these may be mentioned as follows:

**Village Councils**

Rural Community Councils are independent, Voluntary County Organisations whose membership consists of voluntary and statutory bodies and individuals. They make up a national network whose prime aim is to improve the quality of life in the rural communities which they serve.

An important part of their work is to provide a general information and advice service on rural and county matters to individuals and organisations.

RCC schemes for information provision include:

**Village Contacts**

In the last few years, more than a dozen Rural Community Councils have developed 'village contact' schemes, designed to make available a basic range of information to even the smallest communities. These schemes use designated local representatives, in an attempt to restore the 'someone to turn to' caring element of village life.

Variously known as 'village contact', 'village link', or 'village representative' schemes, they all rely on a network of local volunteers backed up by referral, directories or an information package and the support of the RCC Officers.

The essential problems of every village contact scheme are:

i. Appointment and training of representatives/contacts;

ii. Provision of adequate back-up resources.

The success of a village contact scheme is dependent on:

a) constant up-dating of the referral directory and information package;

b) back-up advice service for more complex enquires; ideally by a CAB

c) a good basic training course
Mobile information van

One of the most interesting generalist information vans is run by Dorset County Council. The Dorset ‘Blue Van’ is stocked with government leaflets, reference books, local directories and the RCC’s own local guide to useful addresses, and visits 45 centres once per month. Two staff work on an informal basis. About 30 enquiries are received on the two daily tours each week. The van has proved and met previously unexpressed need resulting in some areas in the establishment of CAB extensions. The RCC has also noted an improved awareness of the availability of its own services. Stocking of the van with a CAB or other information pack would have saved staff time spent on collection of information materials.

Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABx)

The CABx provide the only formal national network (amongst the voluntary agencies) whose primary purpose is to give information and advice to anyone seeking it. There is now a CAB in almost every large town and in smaller ones as well as several experimental schemes in rural areas.

For many people living in the county, the town bureau is inaccessible and some may be unaware of its existence. To combat these difficulties there is a growing trend to take the service (as opposed to an actual bureau) to a centre where there is need, or to establish ‘extension bureaux’. Other rural CAB schemes include:

- CAB organiser travelling to small town/village extension with mobile information pack. An economic way of testing need.
- Town-based CAB with village links.
- Mobile CAB van
- CAB telephone service with local contacts.

Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS)

A CVS’s role is similar to that of an RCC, to stimulate and strengthen the work of existing organisations and, when necessary, promote new groups or undertake new activities. Although normally serving urban areas, a few CVS cover rural...
areas. They have a smaller catchments area than RCCs and may be promoted by the latter.

**Local Authorities**

Quite apart from their contributions to the funding of many voluntary agencies, local authority departments provide a wide range of information and advice.

Many district councils maintain information centres and county council and district council departments have statutory responsibility for the provision of certain information services. The more important of these are:

- Consumer advice centres
- Social services departments and area offices
- Local authority public relations officers and of course libraries

**Post Offices** (Could Post Office become public information centres, 1978; National Consumer Council, 1979) and **the Police**

Also provide limited access to a range of information.

**Advisors to the Agricultural Community**

The National Union of Agriculture and Allied Workers provide a wide range of rural matters. The National Farmers Union and Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries also provide a lesser extent of rural information services although generally with a more strictly agricultural bias.

**The Media**

Newspapers, radio and television are important providers of information in rural areas. In the future improved local radio, CEEFAX, ORACLE and particularly PRESTEL software could have immense potential in this field.

In the year 1973 writing about the community information was found in Peter Jackman's article in the 'Assistant Librarian' called 'Public Libraries, information and the community'.

The initiatives in providing a CIS in public libraries are Bretton Aid Centre (Under New Towns Act 1965), Orton District Library in 1979, Manningham Library in 1978, Longsight Library in 1978 etc.
As a provider of community information however, the public library in general is but one among many and from available evidence it is not destined to be a major source of assistance to the information poor (Chen and Hernon, 1982). This is not to say that librarians ought to abandon such efforts or that they are doomed to failure in this regard. Rather it is to emphasize the extent to which Community Information is still in its infancy even in countries like the United Kingdom none of which seems to render it a strong candidate for export to developing countries.

5.7.2.2.3 Community Information Services in Other Countries

Community Information Services have not been confined only to the US and UK but in other countries of the world as well.

In the year 1971, the establishment of ‘Link’ Information and Referral system by North York Public Library was an initiation in Canada.

The earliest Community Information Services in Australia dates from as recently as 1958 when CABx modelled on their British name sake were founded in Perth, Western Australia. The primary organisation in Victoria in the areas of community information provision is the Victoria Association of Citizens’ Advice Bureaux (VACAB) established in 1960.

The first information centre in New South Wales was set up in 1961 and in 1981 there were about 150 centres comprising community information centres, neighbourhood centres, community aid etc.

We find the developments of Community Information Services in South Australia, Western Australia, and Scandinavian countries.

In Denmark during the 1970s the needs for Community Information Services were more pressing. First in 1970 a reform of the local government structure was introduced and the second event was a review of the welfare benefit system carried out by the Danish Government in 1976.

It is a hopeful sign that the Royal Danish Library School in Copenhagen includes the Community Information services in their syllabus which is compulsory for students in their 3rd year.
In Sweden and South Africa also a number of public libraries have recently started projects concerning on-line services in reference work and community information.

5.8 Community Information Studies and Services in India

5.8.1 Community Information Service Related Studies in India

The concept of 'Community Information Services' in India was very old one. Though the Indian poets, philosophers, social or political or religious reformers, library and information scientist have not used the word 'Community Information Service', still, they focused this idea deliberately in their writings in the context of nation building.

However, there are several studies on the Community Information Needs, Information Seeking Behaviour and Role of Public Libraries for Community Development etc. etc. Dana Roth's (1972) work describes the need for improving the librarian's role as information transfer agents. For this purpose, suggests an understanding of the users information gathering habits and user orientation to techniques followed and services rendered. This work also points out that librarians can play dynamic role in utilising users needs and exposes the policy behind library automation in providing quick alerting service to users, whereas they are not actually concerned with all the chaff published, but would care only to read the smaller number of core journals.

A few studies are concentrating on whether users information needs will be conducted by the libraries or information centres with the available techniques. These include: S.N. Singh's (1979) 'Assessing information needs and users: a state of the art report', B. Guha's (1979) 'Information needs of users and users survey' and Musib and Mahapatra's (1985) 'Seeking of current information in the rural areas: report of a survey made with the cottage industries of Burdwan District, West Bengal'.

R K Bialiarsingh and M Mahapatra's (1985) 'Current information needs and their providers among the literates and illiterates: a comparative study in a semi-urban community' is a survey based on Banpur notified area of Puri District, Orissa shows the information seeking situations, direct and indirect information
providers, preferences of information providers, preferences of literates and illiterates for information seeking.

Dr. Mrs. K. Sarada's (1986) 'Rural Library in India' is a research project which has been designed and carried out the analysis of village community, the library survey, relation between library and the community, information needs of the community, forms of library services for the fulfilment of information needs of the community and library policy formulation for better community services. So it is an in-depth project of the village community to provide a basis for planning library organisation and services.

A survey of R. K Baliarsingh and M. Mahapatra (1988) in Banpur notified area of Puri District, Orissa deals with the 'Reading interests among adult literates in a semi-urban community of Orissa'.

S. K. Musib's (1989) 'Information needs and sources of information of the rural agriculturists' a survey report based journal article represents the various agricultural information needs, non-agricultural information needs, sources of agricultural information and information regarding day-to-day problems.

A composite book 'Social science information: problems and prospects' (1990) represents the valuable article of Girja Kumar on 'Defining the concept of information needs' discusses on user studies, information seeking behaviour, data, information and knowledge, information need, and information gathering habits which was edited by Binwal, Chandel and Saraf.

Dr. Sourendra Mohan Ganguly's (1995) Bengali publication 'Sadharan Granthagar ebong Granthagar Ain' (Public Library and Library Legislation) covers community information services in its 2nd and 3rd Chapter. A thorough discussion on the role of public library in the fulfillment of community information services is available in this volume.

Indian Library Association in collaboration with Commonwealth Library Association organised a Workshop on 'Rural Community Resources Centres' (RCRC) and a volume was published entitled 'Libraries as rural community resource centres' containing the papers and the proceeding of the workshop collected, organised and edited by Mr. C. P. Vashishth (1995). The theme paper of the workshop covered discussion about the environment of rural community
information. This volume contains 21 papers and case studies presented at the workshop. The workshop focused on the basic components of the rural information environment, mobilisation of resources to create and support rural information facilities, problems encountered and solutions used in varying situations. Mr. Vashishth has rightly stated that ‘This workshop provided an opportunity to analyse and synthesize and bring into focus the following aspects:
i) lessons from both successful and unsuccessful initiatives;
ii) how to market the concept of RCRC and encourage its adoption; and
iii) how to design strategies for the future’.

A chapter ‘Information seeking methods of awarded farmers of Jalgaon district of Maharashtra State’ (Borse, 1997) in the book entitled as ‘Library and Information Science: parameters and perspectives’ focuses the information seeking methods, impact of agricultural training on the development of the agriculture, media and library use for the fulfillment of agricultural information needs.

Biplab Chakraborty and Asok Basu's (1997) ‘Tribal community information services in India’ – a survey report based journal article represents the information needs and sources of information of different tribes and role of public libraries for community information services to those people. Biplab Chakraborty’s (1998) Ph.D. thesis entitled as ‘Information seeking behaviour of Toto community in the district of Jalpaiguri in West Bengal’ reveals the detailed information about Community Information Services in India and abroad, information needs and information seeking behaviour of Totos, economy, lifestyle, food habits, culture etc. of Totos, leisure time utilisation of Totos and recommendations for development of Totos.

During survey of literature the investigator go through the articles published on users needs, community analysis, tribal communities in the academic and professional journals, like IASLIC Bulletin, IASLIC Conference Volume, Annals of Library Science and Documentation, Library Herald, Journal of Library and Information Science (Delhi University), Library Science with a Slant to Documentation and Information Studies, DESIDOC Bulletin, Kurukshetra, Indian Library Science Abstract, Vidayasagar University Journal of Library and Information Science (Indian) and IFLA Journal, Annual Review of Information
Besides these journals and conference volumes the researcher consulted some valuable books to familiarise with Santal Community such as Lal Bahadur Singh's 'Santal youths: an unseen talent', Pradip Kumar Bandyopadhyay's 'Tribal situations in Eastern India', Tarapada Ray's compilation 'Santal rebellion: documents', Dhanapati Bag's 'In the midst of Santals', Tarashankar Banerjee edited 'Changing land systems and tribal in Eastern India in the modern period', Ranabir Samaddar's 'Memory identity power: politics in the Jungle Mahals 1890-1950', Dhirendra Nath Baskey's 'Paschimbanger adibasi samaj (Tribal society of West Bengal), Santal ganasangramer itihaas (History of Santal movement), Mahasweta Devi's 'Birsa Munda', Dilip Kumar Dutta's 'Tribhasa Sabdakosh' (Trilingual Dictionary) etc. etc.

The researcher also consulted other related books such as 'A status study on population research in India' (Vol. 1) by Udai Pareek and T.Venkateswar Rao, 'Fundamental of rural developments: a system approach' by Vasant Desai, Sigmund Freud's 'Totem and taboo' (translated by Dhanapati Bag), Alok Mukhopadhyay's 'Bigyaner alokey manab sanskriti (Scientific study of human culture), Wilbert E. Moore's 'American Negro slavery and abolition: a sociological study' etc.

5.8.2 Community Information Services in India

The concept of 'Community Information Services' was prevalent in India for centuries back. Year after year people of India had heard the stories of Dhruba, Prahlad, Sita's forest living, kind heartedness of Karna, Harishchandra's greatness and so on. There were many miseries, injustices and uncertainties of life style among the people but at the same time under the influence of the system of education people among the miseries and ill-fates still held a mental peace and greatness and the economic condition could not change the attitude of the people rather than the traditional nature of the Indian people was more strengthened.
Rabindranath Tagore believed that the main spring of all social progresses lay in human co-operation and mutual aid. Rabindranath therefore, tried to organise a Village Organisation named ‘Palli Samiti’ at Sriniketan with the direct help of L. K. Amherst with the idea that this organisation would solve the problems of the village life, education, agriculture, transport, conflict, if any. He always encouraged the decentralisation of power and believed that any local problem might be solved by the people of locality under the umbrella of Village Organisation. Hence, the creation of ‘Palli Samiti’ was for the fulfillment of the objectives of community services and such Palli Samiti became a meeting place among the local peoples to exchange their mutual views, knowledge, necessities and to share their individual sorrow and misery etc. A mobile library system was maintained by this Palli Samiti to disseminate information among the rural masses of the locality (Tagore, 1933).

Swami Vivekananda a religious reformer in India preached the idea of humanism all over the world. He spoke for social and economic equality and discouraged the social injustice and the practice of untouchability. Vivekananda believed that through education, social and economic inequality as well as many evil practices prevalent in India may be eradicated. He also believed that education is not a formal process only. So information of any kind may be disseminated any time by which socio-economically deprived community may be made aware of their surrounding environment (Vivekananda, 1948).

Raja Rammohan Roy, one of the seminal figures in the development of modern social science in India, believed that the new western knowledge must be assimilated by his countrymen if they are to take their place in the committee of nations and be established the Atmiya Sabha (Society of Friends) which was like that of an information centre among the members of kindred opinions and ideas. The Atmiya Sabha served as a sort of dissemination of information on social, political and religious problems.

In the Post-Rammohan period, Akshay Kumar Datta (1972), one of the social thinkers in India, had realised that man is always to be found existing in social relationships with others. Contemporaneously with Akshay Kumar Datta, Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Pyari Chand Mitra, Kaliprasanna Singha, Bhudev Mukherjee and quite a few others significantly contributed towards the
development of social thinking through their reflections, writings and actions. Of considerable importance were also the objectives and activities of the Bharat Varshiya Sabha, established in 1943. The objectives of this society was "the collection and dissemination of information relating to the actual condition of the family in British India and the laws, institutions resources of the country and to employ such other means of peaceable lawful character, as may appear calculated to secure the welfare, extend the just rights, and advance the interests of all classes of our fellow subjects" (Thompson, 1895).

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the father of nation in India believed that he who works for the rural people, for the development of the rural society may be termed as rural or village workers and these workers will explain the villagers about the importance of sanitation (Gandhi, 1954).

Jawaharlal Nehru observed that "We aim at a strong, free, and democratic India where every citizen has an equal place and full opportunity of growth and service, where present day inequalities in wealth and status have ceased to be, where our vital impulses are directed to creative and co-operative endeavour (Nehru, 1949).

Dr. Shiyali Ramamrita Ranganathan, a doyen of Library Science in India had formulated the different forms of extension services which might be rendered by the Public Libraries for the purpose of community services. These forms of extension services are eradication of illiteracy and reading facilities of the illiterates, formation of reading circle among the people, arrangement of library talk, story hour, music, festivals and fairs (Ranganathan, 1960).

Information services are essential not only for upper stratum of the society but also for socio-economic development of all sections of the people including under-privileged is required to be properly understood. A literate as well as society can expedite social progress. The development of the society and of individuals can be attained through the ability of well informed citizens. Social transformation can be achieved if people are kept fully aware of their rights and privileges. The people are by and large ignorant about whatever limited rights and privileges they have. An integrated well-planned library and information system can play a positive role for dissemination of information to all sections of the people.

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Right to information and information for all are gradually becoming agenda of the Indian Society. But, right to information is yet to be given the status of a fundamental right of every citizen. Nor has it been accepted in a policy statement of the union government. The need for information in Indian society is undergoing rapid change. So far information need is concerned different situations are prevalent at different ends of Indian information spectrum. At one end of the information spectrum is the use of sophisticated computer-based information network, serving advanced research and scientific activities; at the other end is the simple information services, very often oral service, serving common people at the grass root level agriculturists, artisans, working people etc. many of whom are illiterates and neo-literates. A Public Library is an institution which can provide information service at the grass root level to both literate and illiterates.

In 1986, a report was submitted by D.P.Chattopadhyay Committee to Government of India for the formulation of a National Policy on Library and Information System in India. In its recommendations the committee stated that “the most important task before the Government is to establish, maintain and strengthen the free public libraries in the country to enable them to work as a system. The main thrust in this area should go to the rural public library. A village or a village cluster with an adequate population should have a community library which will also serve as an information centre. Resources of different agencies engaged in the work of public health, adult education, local self-government and such others may be pooled to build up this composite centre (Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation, 1986).

5.9 Public Libraries as Community Information Centres

The systems for Community Information Services through libraries or other agencies are only understandable by literate community. In India, Community Information Services (CIS) is still in its planning stage. Community Information Services through ‘CLIC (Community Library and Information Centre)’ projects are established in West Bengal but now it is in its infant stage. Like USA, UK, various types of libraries should be equipped with effective CIS facilities; Communities Advice Bureaux, Rural Community Councils should be established. Public libraries must plan their development in the light of existing local provision. For best effect, close co-operation with Communities Advice Bureaux (CABx) and
Rural Community Councils is essential. One way of achieving the necessary co-operation is by working with local liaison committees where they exist and possibly by initiating them where they do not. Such committees are not common, however, and it is usually necessary to make separate approaches to the different types of agency.

Public libraries are most suitable to provide the information services for the rural illiterate/neo-literate communities (like Santal community). Public libraries should offer a direct community information and advice service to the public because a significant part of any such service involves referring clients to other agencies/offices like Village Panchayat, Block Development Office, Agriculture Development Office, Animal Resources Development Office, B.L.& L.R.O (Block Land & Land Reform Office) Office, Court/Judiciary etc., and successful referral is only possible when there is a clear understanding of their work. In some cases the direct service may be in conjunction with other agencies/offices, either by making premises available or by actually working together to provide the service. In rural areas, for example, there is considerable scope for librarians to become involved in village contact schemes.

In many cases it will not be appropriate for the library to set up its own direct service. There is still much can be done. However, librarians can make a significant contribution by making their professional skills available to local agencies. In some areas librarians should assist with the production of self-help information packs on particular topics. In other areas librarians will work with advice agencies to produce local directories and to share local information. Other libraries will produce information bulletins and information packages intended for use by local agencies.

While some librarians will make their professional skills available, others make available outreach reference collections to meet the information needs of the agencies/offices. In nearly all areas it will be possible for the library to assist with publicity for local agencies. This can range from the display of a notice giving the opening hours to arranging specific displays and exhibitions. Whatever form of service will be offered the emphasis must be on a detailed knowledge of, and close relationship with, local agencies. Even if a library will not offer a direct
service it will likely to need to refer to one or other of the agencies, and this will only be possible when the librarian is well aware of their scope and operation.

5.9.1 Local Liaison Committees

In times of cutbacks in local authority services it is essential that local information and advice agencies (offices) should be working together. To meet these particular need local liaison committees will be set up in a few areas to exchange information and ideas, share training, mount campaign and to maintain contact with and awareness of the work of other centres.

The public library will participate with umbrella group of advice agencies and will supply them with both an information bulletin and a leaflet distribution service.

5.9.1.1 Information Group

The library staffs of the nearest public libraries will take the initiative in convening a local information group.

The objectives of Information Group will be:

1. To foster greater awareness of each other's services amongst members of the group and the public.
2. To co-ordinate activities in order to avoid duplication of effort.
3. To share joint publicity.
4. To identify gaps in information provision and to seek ways of remedying them.
5. To discuss and comment on topics to do with information and advice of local and national significance.
6. To organise joint training sessions.

The group will attempt to meet these objectives through:

i. Holding regular monthly meetings.

ii. Providing initially each member of the group with an opportunity to speak on their service and following this up with reporting sessions at each meeting.
iii. Inviting speakers from other agencies not represented on the group.
iv. Holding an annual display.
v. Producing a publicity leaflet, information leaflets and a poster.
vi. Rationalising the collection of information on local clubs and societies.
vii. Promoting the wider use of such information.
ix. Discussing topics such as literacy, drinking water facilities, employment opportunities, health care, cattle care, agriculture, electricity, transport, local radio programmes and National Consumer Council (should be established) reports.
x. Planning joint community information provision from the new rural libraries/town libraries/district libraries to serve the new areas.
xi. Organising training sessions on literacy, unemployment and emergency help.
xii. Informally exchanging information and referring clients.

5.9.2 Direct Service

A community information service will be provided within the library directly to individuals or groups, which may be operated in one of three ways:

1) By suitably trained library staffs.

2) In conjunction with other agencies.

These options are not mutually exclusive: in situations where library staff man a community information desk (establishment is necessary) specialists may be brought in to hold advice sessions in other parts of the library, for example, local councillor, the careers service, age concern, marriage guidance. Alternatively, library staffs will take their turn in running a community information service desk in conjunction with other agencies.

3) By library Staffs, particularly in small rural branch libraries, participating in village contact schemes.
The role which a library can usefully perform is to help clarify which agency (office) an enquirer needs and also to help where the question of responsibility is unclear. The service will be developed in conjunction with all the other information and advice agencies in the area whether they are involved in its operation or not.

It is important to note that even after the initial development work, the operation of the service must involve a time-consuming continual process of liaison with local agencies and systematic information gathering for the community. Referral will, inevitably, be a very important part of the library’s service and, consequently, strong links must be built up and continually maintained with appropriate individuals in other agencies.

5.9.2.1 The Library Alone

In some circumstances it will be necessary or desirable for library staffs to run their community information service alone.

As these experiences are typical of information and advice agencies generally, the public libraries will have much to learn from them. The following are the types of information and advice work in which the library may well expect to become involved should it decide to offer a direct service:

- **Straightforward Information** – the majority of queries will require an answer giving purely factual information, for example, the address of another agency or a rate of benefit. Even so, it will be necessary to explore beyond the presenting problem since an apparently straightforward information enquiry can often hide a very complex problem.

- **Explanation** – explaining the wording of a document or letter.

- **Advice** – some clients will require advice on a course of action. There may be options and library staffs should have the knowledge to advice on one rather than another. In some cases the terms reassurance or support may be more appropriate than advice since the client will know what they ought to do – but require someone to support verbally their proposed courses of action.

- **Practical aid** – helping to fill in forms or write letters.
• Active referral – it is essential that the library staffs make initial contact and follow-up referrals to lessen the chances of the drop-out likely where enquirers are simply given an address or phone number.

• Mediation – in a minority of cases library staffs may feel that they wish to intercede on behalf of a client whom they believe has been given a wrong answer by another agency. It is at this point that differences in the service offered by the library and that offered by other, particularly independent, agencies will become apparent. Because it is part of a local authority service, the library will find it difficult to question those decisions, particularly those made by other departments of the local authority, except where all the facts of the situation suggest that the client has justifiable grievance. Unlike independent agencies, the library can not promote the client’s case irrespective of the rights or wrongs of the situation. In many cases this will involve turning away clients with a negative answer and this will not be easy for staffs who are committed to the service.

• Advocacy – this involves preparing a case for an enquirer, and giving support to or speaking on behalf of a client at court or a tribunal. It is extremely unlikely that a librarian would find him/herself in the situation of being required to fulfil this function. If the client has a justifiable grievance against another agency it is likely that the mediatory approach – as underlined above – would resolve the situation.

• Campaigns – if the library’s work is successful and becomes valued by the local community it will almost inevitably be drawn into local campaigns. However, in enabling local people to have access to the facts of the situation facilities for promoting their cause, for example space for public meetings, publicity, assistance with displays, audio-visual presentations, the librarians should be aware of the dangers of becoming closely identified with groups whose cause is not in the common interest.

Decisions about the amount and range of material to be stocked and its organisation within the library must be dependent on the requirements of the community that the service is intending to reach. Consequently, the bulk of the selection should be done from the individual library. No two libraries should have identical stocks as they will be catering for different needs.
Professional library qualifications are not vital for staffs who are involved in the provision of a direct community information service. What is important is that staffs should have a commitment to the work, an interest in and an understanding of people and their problems, intelligence and an approachable personality.

Experience counts for a great deal so that, other things being equal, there should be no difference in quality of work between a professional and non-professional member or staff.

All staffs should undergo basic training which should include at least an element of working in other information and advice-giving agencies, since an understanding of their work is crucial for library staffs. Ideally, joint training programmes should be arranged for workers from all the relevant agencies within an area, and librarians should, where possible, investigate the possibilities of in-service training in a local advice centre. Finance is an important factor in the development of a community information service, especially where that service is to be run entirely or mainly by library staffs. Expenditure on materials is likely to be minimal since the publications likely to be required will usually be inexpensive. However, the financial emphasis will be on staff salaries since it is an absolute necessity that staffs are available not only to man the desk throughout the hours that the library is open but also to follow up enquiries and liaise with local groups, gather local information by going out into the community and select appropriate material from bibliographic sources. Consequently, a direct community information service can never be cheap if it is operated by library staffs.

5.9.2.2 Co-operation with Other Agencies

It is felt, however, that the majority of librarians would not see an advice or advocacy role as part of their service or expertise. It is therefore, suggested that a more practicable arrangement, particularly in smaller towns/villages that have no information or advice provision other than the public library, would be for advice agency workers to be invited to co-operate in a joint service operated from the library. In particular dual or multi use of mobile, village centre and part-time libraries can provide a very useful base for CAB village extensions, or peripatetic advice workers. Nature of library co-operation with other agencies is mentioned below:
• Siting of the information desk away from the library counter.

• The relationships between the participating agencies must be carefully considered at the outset and constantly reviewed. Similarly, the expectations that they have of the co-operatively run service must be discussed fully. Both of these services are essential if the service is to be run as an integrated one.

• Generalist advice agencies, such as the CAB or legal advice sessions, are likely to attract many more queries than the specialist ones – consumer, careers, health etc.

• Accommodation needs to be planned carefully. Some agencies, such as Citizens Advice Bureaux have very specific requirements such as a separate entrance/exit, separate waiting room and interviewing rooms and separate telephone lines.

5.9.2.3 Village Contacts

In rural areas libraries can co-operate with Rural Community Councils (RCC) and CABx (Community Advice Bureaux) to extend the coverage of village contact schemes.

Local or mobile librarians can be designated as village contacts with a scheme administered by an RCC or CAB. Ideally, this should be one which has a support service run by the CAB. The librarian can then, after basic training, use an information kit supplied by the CAB to answer the straightforward enquiries and put clients with more complex problems in direct telephone contact with the CAB.

5.9.3 Professional Assistance to Community Groups

One area in which small voluntary organisations – advice centres, self-help groups for the disabled, single parents, elderly etc – find a great deal of difficulty is that of collecting, up-dating and organizing of the information they require for their work.

Librarians trained and experienced in these areas can provide real practical assistance to such groups.
5.9.3.1 Acquisition of Materials

The library can perform a valuable role in notifying smaller organisations of suitable material as it becomes available. Some form of limited SDI (Selective Dissemination of Information) based on profiles of the organisation's interests can be used for regular notifications, as can the circulation of any bulletins etc. published by Village Panchayat.

A pooling of information on addresses, contacts etc., can also be useful to both sides in the compilation of information files, fact packs and local directories. Some form of centralised updating can be organised by the library to ensure that information is regularly up-dated that only one is made to each organisation listed.

Some form of central acquisition of the more common central and state government pamphlets might also be considered using the existing acquisition routines of the library. A further refinement might be the centralised coding or indexing of these documents before they are sent out to organisations. In some authorities it may be possible for libraries to order book on behalf of local groups.

5.9.3.2 Cataloguing, Classification and Indexing

This is an obvious area in which the librarian has considerable skills and experience to offer the small organisation. National Association of Community Advice Bureaux (NACAB) of U.K. already prepared classification scheme which was used or at least adapted locally with the aid of the librarian. It might also be possible to device a local classification scheme for the particular organisation.

However, it is probably in indexing of information that the organisation is in most need of help and here again the librarian has great experience of card indexes, subject headings, see references etc. Assistance with indexing and subject headings will have an impact on the ability of the organisation to file and retrieve its information.

Where there are sufficient local groups requiring assistance from librarians consider organising courses on basic indexing and classification skills. Such courses will also be of value to local community workers and social services area officers.
5.9.3.3 Equipment

The librarians can help here by advising on shelving, storage systems, pamphlet boxes etc., from their experience of product and suppliers. Redundant catalogue drawers, pamphlet boxes etc., could well be useful to organizations as could typewriters and photo copiers if sold cheaply. All of these more practical items could go a long way to smoothing the organisation of information.

5.9.3.4 Secretarial Aid

Where possible, aid in the form of typing and duplicating could be useful. The library might also assume a secretarial role for any meeting of local information providers and in fact should encourage the flow of information between local organisations.

5.9.4 Self-Help

In today's society, with its increasingly complex legislation and myriad regulations that affect the rights of citizens, it is not surprising that many people experience difficulties in understanding or getting access to information.

John Ward (1981) has demonstrated that certain sectors of the community are disadvantaged through an inability to conceptualise their problems, to understand the language in which information is presented, and to find their way around the bureaucratic frameworks of those bodies that could meet their needs.

Phenomenal growth in the numbers and varieties of information and advice centres extended the quick access to information. It is now becoming the monopoly of skilled advisers.

A healthier alternative, which several organisations are now pursuing, is to attempt to make information more accessible, so that individuals or groups can work out solutions to their own problems or identify their rights.

5.9.4.1 The Library and Self-Help

Public libraries were the pioneers of the principle of 'self-service', with open access libraries pre-dating open access shops or super-markets, as they are now called, by several decades. Self-help is the same principle, only applied more effectively to the delivery of community information and its organisation, so that
the public can seek their own solutions without seeking the assistance of the librarian.

One of the problems of community information is that much of it appears in a format that does not lend itself to display of library shelves. Libraries can get round this problem to a certain extent by arranging materials in a vertical file, in pamphlet boxes or, in the case of leaflets, in special dispensers. However, vertical files or pamphlet boxes, even where accessible to the public, form a barrier to use. Leaflet dispensers are only of value where sufficient copies of a leaflet is available, they need to be frequently replenished, and they do not permit systemic arrangement or take account of other materials.

Some libraries are attempting to solve this problem by compiling their own self-help packs, which bring together these fugitive materials. It is a role ideally suited to librarians, who have an expertise in identifying, organising and presenting information. Nevertheless it must stressed that activity should not be carried out in isolation. Other information and advice agencies can often give valuable help in recommending suitable contents or writing information sheets for packs. Such packs should not only contain materials on particular problems, but should also refer the user to further sources of information in books, from national organisations and, more importantly, within the locality. Community information is about solving people’s problems. In organising materials self-help collection of books, pamphlets, and periodicals organised in broad subject groups will be very helpful. The object being to bring together related materials on various problem areas, e.g. unemployment, housing, disabled, civil rights and to site them prominently, perhaps close to an enquiry desk, so that they catch the public’s eye. Used in conjunction with self-help packs, such collections can help some users solve their own problems; others can either be referred to the library desk or to outside agencies for further help.

One final form of self-help is skills exchange boards, whereby someone needing help in one quarter can advertise and offer assistance in another quarter for exchange. These boards are mainly to be found in educational establishments so far, but, if the library is to be seen as the community information resource centre for its area, the introduction of skills exchange boards could be a valuable contribution towards enabling the community to help itself.
5.9.5 Directories

Closer co-ordination between libraries and advice agencies could not only save unnecessary work, but also lead to an improved service to the public. This could involve simply the joint collection of information about local organisations for information files or the preparation of local directories.

The need for good directories of local services is great in both urban and rural areas. In urban areas, where there is such a plethora of agencies with differing boundaries, directories of services become essential to both users and the service workers. Few agencies, however, have either the skills or the time to undertake this task. In rural areas the problem is almost the reverse. Increasingly, services have been centralised often requiring long journeys by users. A visit to the wrong office can clearly be expensive both in time and money. As a result a number of Rural Community Councils (RCCs) in U.K. have developed village contact schemes designed to make available a basic information and signposting service to even the smallest communities. One of the key documents for such a scheme is some form of local directory or guide to essential services. Although most RCCs hold a formidable stock of local information, they are often hard put to find the time to collate and update a directory.

A detailed study of existing locally produced directories has shown that they fall into a number of categories:

- Those for general people
- Those for specific client groups – the elderly, the disabled, etc.
- Those on specific subjects
- Those covering specific geographical areas
- Those for specific groups of professional workers

It has also shown that they may be produced by a variety of agents, either singly or in collaboration:

- Departments of the local authority e.g. social services, careers, housing, consumer, libraries, public relations.
Departments of state and central government, e.g. Health and Social Security, Employment, Environment, Prices and Consumer Protection Directories can develop a particular bias depending upon which agency produced it. For example: a local authority department producing a guide to welfare services in a specific area would concentrate particularly on statutory provision while an independent agency producing a directory covering the same subject and area could give greater emphasis to independent and voluntary provision.

The major failing of many directories is the attempt to include as many as possible. The starting point when the content of a directory is being decided should be intended audience and its information needs. The smaller the area covered or the more specialized the topic, the more detailed the coverage can become. The minimum information within each entry should include:

- The full name, address and telephone number of the organisation
- A contact name (where possible)
- The opening hours and whether appointments are required
- Whether the services or aspects of the service are restricted to certain groups or individuals
- An indication of the range of problems dealt with
- Specialists that are available (e.g. lawyers)
- The degree of service provided, i.e. information, advice, advocacy

There is a problem in that what an agency says it can do is not always what it can and is prepared to undertake in practice. This can be overcome to a large extent by asking each agency what enquiries it would like to have referred to it rather than asking what it does. It is advisable for the compilers of directories to talk to people who have experienced the services provided by particular agencies first and amend the entries in accordance with their findings. The evaluation of the services provided by individual agencies would increase the usefulness of the directory but this is impractical.

The arrangement of a directory is extremely important since its usefulness will depend as much on this as upon its content. The basic rule is that a directory
should be simple to use – whatever group it is aimed at. The well-arranged
directory successfully uses broad subject headings, e.g., services for children
and young people; the law, probation and after care; welfare and advisory
services; with sub-sections arranged alphabetically within the main headings and
the entries further arranged alphabetically within the subsections.

The list of contents for the directory should include sections and sub-sections;
the index must include all titles of organisations and subject entries where these
are not apparent from the title. Most sub-sections end with cross references as
there is generally only one full entry for each organisation. The index should be
an integral part of the directory and cross references should be used to direct
users to relevant entries. Consistency is vital as is clarity of print.

A directory should not be produced at all unless machinery for continuously
updating it is developed simultaneously. An out-of-date directory is worse than no
directory at all. A loose-leaf format allows a continuing process of updating which
is usually preferable to producing a completely new edition of the directory.

Information for updating may be obtained by:

- Relying on subscribers and/or agencies listed in the directory to contact
  the compilers – possibly on forms provided with each copy of the directory
- A regular circulation of all agencies including using a standard form
- Placing responsibility for up-dating the information with a person or group
  who has time to undertake the work systematically

The optimum interval level between revised editions of the directory is dependent
on the type of information contained in the directory and should be decided after
an investigation to discover how long the information retains its currency.

5.9.6 Information Bulletins and Packages

The monitoring of new knowledge or useful articles is one very valuable
contribution that libraries can make to other information and advice agencies.

Brief details of benefit changes and summaries of articles and leaflets could be
given in a regular bulletin to other agencies.

Writing to government and local authority departments to get bulk supplies of
new leaflets and mailing these with the bulletins would also be a highly efficient
way of ensuring up-to-date stocks, not only in libraries, but also in all of the local information and advice centres.

The other major problem area is local information collection. In U.K., all centres, including the CABx spend endless hours duplicating efforts in collecting local information. Libraries hold a wealth of information, not only about local clubs and services, but about local authority policies – in council and committee minutes – about local issue and campaigns and, not at least, about the working of the council departments. All of this information could similarly be shared through a bulletin.

Lambeth Libraries of U.K., working with an umbrella group of advice agencies, has been providing a current information service to other agencies since late 1976. With the co-operation of the local CAB the library sends to each of 35 centres a bulletin data new leaflet and books, relevant journal articles, changes in benefit rates as well as local policy information and details of local campaigns. Each group also receives with the bulletin a pack of new leaflets. The librarians have always attended the meeting of the umbrella group and not only receive feedback on the usefulness of libraries to centres, but are now recognised as the main source of information for smaller centres.

Such a service clearly relies on librarians becoming closely involved with the work of the advice centres order to gauge the precise information needs they have. It is also essential that the bulletin either implements other information being supplied to centres or, ideally, is used by other local authority departments as a means of distributing their information.

5.9.7 Outreach Reference Collection

In recent years the public library has made great strides to take its services outside the library and into the community, being particularly concerned about the needs of the disadvantaged. As far as community information is concerned, this may mean not only taking the service out to other agencies, but also opening the library doors to other agencies.

Many agencies, especially the voluntary ones, do not have the resources to purchase background reference material. Libraries might consider supplying
such collections to advice centres. Local libraries should provide basic reference materials.

This was because many advice centers, struggling with grants that barely cover, essentials like rent and rates, are often in desperate need of information materials that they cannot afford to buy. In response to this need and as a logical extension to their outreach policies some libraries have been prepared to buy these materials and make them available on almost permanent loan, to local advice centres.

5.9.8 Community Resource Centres

Many community groups with a general or specialist area of concern are likely to be active in the field of community information. These will include tenants' or residents' associations, claimants unions, trade unions, self-help groups concerned with the disabled, the elderly, housing, employment, education, adult literacy and a wide variety of other local organisations. Some libraries, such as Lambeth and Manchester of U.K., do provide a very active library service to such groups. More commonly this is a role undertaken by independent 'community resource centres' founded by Urban Aid and local authority and charity grants.

Since, on the surface, these resource centres would seem to be duplicating existing library provision it is worth examining their work more closely. Some centres, such as Interaction in the London Borough of Camden, Govan Area Resources Centre in Glasgow, or Manchester Resource Centre, are generalist and provide an information and support service to local groups. Interaction, for example, maintains a fairly small library but is staffed by people who also help in the daily running of Interaction - itself a community group. So, the person who answers local groups' questions on fund raising is also the fund raiser for Interaction and therefore has practical experience of value to local groups. The centre is thus able to offer a general consultancy service to such groups.

Other resource centres are maintained in subject or interest areas which are poorly covered by public libraries. These included the Women's Research and Resource Centre in London and Trade Union Resource Centres which collect press cuttings, official press releases, pamphlets, specialist reports and other materials which are often poorly provided elsewhere. More important than the
information they collect is the detailed information and research facility that they provide to local groups.

Referral, linking and enabling functions are common to most community resource centres. All maintained some kind of local files and aim to put community groups in touch with others or with agencies who can help.

Typing, duplicating, photocopying, printing or video facilities are common to many centres, and are of particular relevance to the circulation of information by smaller groups.

If libraries co-operate with information giving agencies, it is likely that demand will follow from other community groups. The library's information response will ideally be integrated with its whole range of leisure and education based provision (a tenants' association is likely to be equally interested in children's play, leisure, and the needs of the elderly as in housing benefit. Nevertheless, there needs to be some focus or centre of provision, ideally going beyond the passive provision of materials to include some, at least, of the services provided by the community resource centres.

It is necessary to plan for developing community information centres in this way.

5.9.9 Public Displays and Exhibitions

One very valuable contribution which all libraries can make is to increase awareness of individual and group rights by means of displays, exhibitions and publicity for other organisations in the community.

Libraries with adequate space can mount permanent displays of items of current importance. For example, leaflets advertising new rates of benefit, local planning applications, council decisions, news of local events, are obvious items which can be effectively displayed.

Additionally, libraries can co-operate with other information and advice agencies to prepare either one-off or permanent exhibitions. There after a number of possibilities.

Advice agencies often do not have the time, resources or expertise to promote their services. At the simplest level libraries can help agencies to publicise themselves in a number of ways:
• By arranging special displays in library buildings featuring the work of different agencies. Clearly this will depend upon how keen other agencies are to advertise. Advertising statutory services should not pose particular problems, but some voluntary groups may need persuading of the value of this type of publicity and be reluctant to other release material, or may already be stretched to meet existing demands without advertising.

• By putting on displays for agencies in other local authority buildings, e.g., swimming pools, community centres, sports centres, or at special events as agricultural shows, village fetes, village fairs, etc.

• By permanently displaying posters and leaflets in libraries to advertise the services of agencies or, in some cases, even providing an outlet for an agency's service, e.g., many libraries now have a 'job board' containing details of local jobs which are kept up-to-date by the Department of Employment.

• By producing leaflets, posters and packs of materials, aimed at the public, to promote local advice agencies. When printing posters advertising their own information services libraries could consider a joint publicity posters with other information and advice agencies. Libraries and advice agencies can also co-operate to help the public to be more aware of their rights and responsibility and to find a solution to their problems.

• Special exhibitions to promote one theme or topic, e.g., adult literacy, children's services (for the International Year of the Child), rent and rate of rebates or local re-development plans (including both official and community produced documents).

• Occasions when agencies come together to provide an exhibition and information service for a particular event. e.g., village fair. The library's location, resources and expertise make it an obvious and able co-ordinator of jointly prepared publicity or displays. Most libraries not only have a great deal of experience of mounting displays and exhibitions but have experience in promotion and the machinery to provide publicity through the media or press, television and radio. There are resources which are important in order to stage exhibitions and displays.
• Expertise in art work, design and display: An exhibition must be good to be effective – an unattractive and badly assembled exhibition is a waste of time. It is not a job for any member of staff during odd moments of free time. It needs to be carefully planned by someone with special skills.

• Display equipment: Equipment should be purchased with consideration given to its multi-purpose use. It needs to be easily transportable, as displays will not necessarily always be staged within the library building; it needs to be robust and, if possible, able to withstand outdoor use; and it should be designed to display a variety of types of material – books, leaflets, posters, tape-slide presentations, etc.

• Space: Many library buildings are unsuitable for exhibitions. This is particularly so in rural areas where libraries have little space for exhibitions and often little space for notice boards. New library building should be designed with space for exhibition areas. Those libraries without adequate space could still assist in the preparation of displays at village shows, fairs or in other local community buildings, e.g., sports or community centres. Every library can do something.

• Time: A considerable amount of staff time may have to be put into the production of an exhibition. Once an exhibition is assembled it should fully exploited to derive maximum benefit in return for the input of time and effort. The exhibition should be staged at venues outside the library where it is most likely to be most effective, e.g., a display on rent and rate rebates is likely to be most effective where it can be seen by people going to pay their rent and rates.

5.10 Implication of Findings

It is observed from the survey of male and female respondents of Group A and Group B mouzas (available in Table 4.49, 4.50, 4.51 and 4.52) that the respondents use the information sources Friends, Neighbours, Relatives; and Family Members maximum followed by Personal Experience, Village Panchayat, Village Organisation of Santals, BDO Office, Old Persons of the Locality and Religious Persons/Priests. They also use the information sources like Interaction within Community People; Market Place; Shopkeeper/Ration Shop; Interaction
with Other Community People; Tailoring Shop; Doctors/Compounders; Trained Nurses, Anganwadi Workers and Field Workers; Dhai/Trained Dhai; School Teachers; Political Leaders/Workers; Police Station; Leaflets, Posters, Newspapers; Radio, Television; Club, Mission; Court/Judiciary; B.L.&L.R.O Office; Land Surveyor; Agricultural Development Office; and Village Development Office minimum.

Village Organisation System of Santals is now less important. Political influence, participation of Santal representatives in local, state, and central levels and impact of modern culture are the main causes behind it. Considering the pattern of use of various information sources it is observed that 'Village Panchayat' is very useful information source for Community Information Services. Santal respondents like to go to Village Panchayat Office more than Library; B.D.O Office; B.L.&L.R.O Office; Court/Judiciary; Agricultural Development Office/Village Development Office; Club, Mission etc. Village Panchayat Office is very useful for illiterate people also. They can easily access the information from this centre. So it is very helpful. To provide current information services to the communities, co-operation and regular contact with other offices/agencies is required. There should be various sections like Housing information sections, Food and Nutritional information section, Clothing information section, Health and Child Care information section, Education and Schooling information section, Employment information section, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry information section, Political information section, Law and Order information section, Recreational information section, Personal Relation information section, Consumer Goods information section, Cultural information section and Government Welfare Projects information section etc. to provide various types of community information or all information services can provide from one section/information desk. Village Panchayat Office (Community Centre) should provide 'Direct Contact Cell' for direct contact with community people specially who are unaware about the system and shy in nature.
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