CHAPTER- II

Community
Information Services
CONTENTS

2.1 Introduction
2.2 Meaning and Definition
2.3 Why do we need Community Information Services
2.4 Social Issues and CIS's
2.5 Designing of CIS
2.6 An overview of essential Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for establishing Community Information System
2.7 Problems in accessing community information services from rural community
2.8 Possible solutions
2.9 Integrated Community Information System (ICIS)
2.10 Need of ICIS
2.11 Vision and Goals
2.12 Basic Characteristics
2.13 Core enablers
2.14 Components of ICIS
2.15 Model of Integrated Community Information System
2.16 New Roles for Public Libraries
2.17 Role of information officer
2.18 Conclusion

References
2.1. Introduction

The knowledge-based society of the 21st century, intelligence based on human originality will determine the survival and prosperity of individuals, organisations and countries. Therefore, every country is undertaking significant reforms in community based information services in order to cultivate creative human resources through open education and lifelong learning. The implementation of educational reforms is based on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in community services. Effective use of the integrated services in community is key consideration. Adapting education and extension activities to the community is a new and developing process that requires flexibility in strategies and priorities to effectively cope with the requirements of a fast-growing environment. Continuous monitoring and evaluation are necessary to ensure the reforms in every sphere of human life.

A community information service for community development has become a contemporary pre-occupation of the library and information profession. How to energise and facilitate community improvement in third world countries through effective information dissemination has, more than ever before, attracted the attention of local and international bodies and institutions.¹

Like any other socio-cultural concept, the concept of Community Information (CI) is easy to understand but hard to define. Unfortunately CI inherits some of the vagaries of two component terms – community and information. Community services have existed in India since the inception of Gram Panchayats, but the term Community Information Services (CISs) is of recent origin and may have its roots in the west. It has been emerging as a facet of public library system in the developed countries; with UK and USA taking the lead in this regard ². Childers ³, a pioneer of community information
services in the United States, has used the term “Information Poverty” to describe the lack of basic survival information experienced by large numbers of people. Community Information (CI) may be defined as information for the problems and crises encountered by individuals and their independence at different stages in their lives. It is the information for self-reliance and self-determination. It is the information in the community for the community.

2.2. Meaning and Definition

Allan Bunch (1982), first attempted to systematisation of CISs. The CI may broadly be divided into two groups:-

- Survival information such as that related to health, housing, income, legal protection, economic opportunities, political rights, civil rights etc.

- Citizen action information, needed for effective participation as individuals or as members of a group in the social, political, legal, and economic process.

2.2.1. What is community?

Community is a body of people in the same locality or a group of people leading a common life or a group of people having common rights or a group of people having a common possession or enjoyment.

- Giggey defines that community as “a group of people who have something in common. This can be their age, education, religion, interest, political affiliation, activities, work, possession or a combination of two or more of these”.

- The term ‘community’ generally denotes a small, localised political, economic and social unit whose members share values in common.
Further Usherwood defines community in a comprehensive way that any geographical community or neighborhood will be made up of a number of communities definable by race, social class, or income group, employment, leisure interest, religion and so on, each with its own informal information network that has grown up without the help of librarians or any other information advice workers.

2.2.2. Basic Characteristics of Community

Anyanwu (1992) outlines six basic characteristics with which a community can be identified:

1. Shared territory within which the members live and develop the ways of life that give the community an identity;

2. Shared beliefs which are nurtured and cherished by the people in the development of their common ideals, objectives, attitudes and values;

3. Shared bonds of fellowship which demands obligations from the citizens, and the conferment of benefits to them;

4. Set standards and patterns of behavior which bring every citizen to conform to norms and values; it also helps to develop intimacy of relationships and bond of love and association;

5. Common culture which is the aggregate of the social, ethical, intellectual, artistic governmental and industrial attainments of a community; it includes the ideas, traditions, customs, usages, institutions, associations and material objective characteristics of such a community; and,

6. Common administration where there is a common plan, a process involving accountability and responsibility for the good governance of such a community.
For any community to improve the standard of living of its citizens, it must encourage community development. Community development can be entirely communally sponsored, wholly government assisted or a bilateral co-operation between the community and the government. Community development is an essential ingredient for the perpetuity of any community.

2.2.3. *What is community information?*

Community information means information, which help individuals and groups

- To solve problems in their everyday lives
- To take part in the democratic process
- To take part in the society

Community can be Geographic community (region, city and village) or Community of interest or any Social group. The Community Information Service (CIS) provides quick access to information about essential services in your neighborhood.

2.2.4. *What is community information service (CIS)?*

According the Library Association’s Working Party CIS means that which assists individual and groups with daily problem solving and with participation in the democratic process. The services concentrate on the needs of those who do not have ready access to other sources of assistance on the most important problems that people have to face, problems to do with their homes, their jobs and their rights. There are other two popular concepts remain in the same terminological plane with CIS. These are ‘Public Information Work’ and ‘Local Information Service’.

29
2.3. **Why do we need Community Information Services?**

Most communities are socially, economically and culturally heterogeneous though the degree of heterogeneity may vary from place to place and from time to time. One of the main aims of the national library and information policy is to faster, promote and sustain, by all appropriate means, the organisation, availability and use of information in all sectors of national activity. It is heartening to note that Chattopadhyaya Committee had stated that the main thrust in the area of public library system 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 the composite centre.\(^\text{10}\)

According Kalpana Dasgupta (2000)\(^\text{11}\) need of information in changing environment is due to socio economic aspects, social condition, political conditions and behavioral aspects. Before establishing a village library a survey of village environment, needs of the people, availability of resources, infrastructure facilities and attitude of people are necessary.

To over come the problem of digital divide we need integrated information system. Like Geographical information system (GIS), Community information system (CIS), Rural information system (RIS) another voice from knowledge management sector is Integrated information system (IIS). It controls and coordinates all types of information from all nook and corner and put it on one common platform. Now a days technology brings people and nations closer together. In the 21st century, community building via technology will not only help communities grow and prosper, but also will help to erase disparities and ease distances between populations, distances that have persisted since the inception of the Republic. According to UNESCO (1994)\(^\text{12}\) public library manifesto we need CIS because of
• Democracy and Citizenship
• Economic and Social Development
• Lifelong Learning
• Cultural and Linguistic Diversity.

2.4. Social Issues and CIS’s

There is a close relationship between lack of access to information and deprivation. The success of various social welfare schemes depends to a great extent on the supply of information about how to utilize them to the target group. Government Department announces many programs for the betterment of society. Unfortunately these issues become hidden because of lack of information services. The restricted opportunity to get and use information is one of the major causes of deprivation. CIS is aimed to minimize this kind of deprivation for the person who requires such information urgently.

Following are some of the major government departments which are functioning to provide better services to the end beneficiaries in the community are;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social welfare</th>
<th>Women and children’s welfare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Horticulture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small-scale industry</td>
<td>Irrigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Co-operative societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gramina banks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These government departments have sponsored many programs for the betterment of the community. Say for example in the Department of Women and Children Welfare the major programs are on women welfare like Vidhava Vethana, Stree Shakti, National Maternity fund, Home loan for mahila mandal, Working women’s hostel facility and Udyogini Yojane Program. Also for children, Balika Samrudhi Yojane, Financial assistant for Shishuvihara, Namma Magalu Namma Shakti, Hostel facility for slum children are some of major programs for children. Concern to youth, government has sponsored various programs they are vocational training courses such as Vehicle Driving Training, Tyloring, Knitting, Weaving, Typing, TV/Radio Servicing, Electrical/Electronic items repairing and Computer courses for rural youth. For the rural farmer government department announced many programs under the auspicious of various departments such as Agricultural, Horticultural and Irrigation. For entrepreneurs and small-scale industries District Industrial Center (DIC) provides information on market trend, product specification, loan scheme, policy information etc. Apart from this Department of Education, Co-operative societies, Gramina banks play vital role in providing services to rural and urban community. Unfortunately both rural and urban communities fail to access the information of such programs. Because lack of awareness on CIS from the government department, role of community agents, village level workers, political leader, individuals and also the lack of library staff participation in village community activities.

2.5. Designing of CIS

Department of Information Technology (2000)\textsuperscript{13}, Government of India has set up Community Information Centers (CIC’s) at 487 block headquarters in the seven North
East states and Sikkim as a part of the Prime Minister's agenda for socio economic development of the region. These CIC can help in combating escalating crisis in health, energy, water, education and literacy as well as poverty alleviation. The CIC will provide internet connectivity, e-mail facilities, interface between citizens and government, distance learning programs, information on national programs, disaster management system, public health awareness etc., to the public.

While designing any community information system one should consider the following elements:

- Socio-economic background
- Educational background
- Information seeking behaviour
- Knowledge of ICT among community
- Role of community agents
- Information needs of community
- Initiation by government and NGOs.

The basic themes for the program are participatory design, software development, community information, social networks, localism and globalism. Librarian is a right person to act as a community agent. He acts as a catalyst in transforming the knowledge. Administrators should keep in mind the role of librarian in disseminating the need-based information, and make use of his service in CIS. Government or administration should provide sufficient infrastructure to libraries to provide CIS. The essential needs of CIS are;
Chapter 2 Community Information Services

- Good library building
- Qualified staff (Librarian)
- ICT facility: Computer, Printer, Scanner, Telephone
- Internet connectivity/modem
- Television/Fax.

Along with above mentioned needs it demands good support from all the government departments to share their programs and policies with library. Then the librarian is able to collect, organise and disseminate the information to community. It is not an easy task to establish or run CIS in short span of time. It needs proper planning and implementation.

2.5.1. Planning of CIS

- Setting objectives
- Defining policy
- Identification of resources
- Training
- Implementation
- Promotion
- Monitoring and change

We can find information about community groups, consumer and educational organizations, health and social service agencies and religious, recreational and cultural
institutions. Many of these programs and services are difficult to identify. To provide such a CIS one should compile a Directory of Community Services (DCS) which is the heart of the Community Information Service, which is complemented by a special collection of related handbooks and guides. Individual branch library pages also provide local community information including elected officials, neighborhood demographics, schools, etc.

2.6. An overview of essential Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for establishing Community Information System

Community development demands that rural people should get access to information in the forms in which he/she can understand. Without addressing this information needs, other development efforts fail to achieve their potential impact. Information technology is an important tool that can solve most of the information problems. Recent developments in information technology makes community developments in reduced costs, ease of use, speed, new links between different media and info-tainment. The term IT is defined in a broad sense as “technologies dedicated to information storage, processing and communications”. Carter\(^{14}\) has simply defined IT as the use of modern technology to aid to capture, processing, storage and retrieval, and communication of information, whether in the form of numerical data, text, sound or image. There are many more definitions in this regard, but they say much the same thing. Joseph Kiplang’at\(^{15}\) conducted the study to examine the opportunities of information technology (IT) in improving access, transfer and use of agricultural information in the rural areas of Kenya. Based on that we suggest an overview of essential information and communication technology for establishing community information system which are discussed below:
Table 2.1 An Overview of Essential Information and Communication Technology for Establishing Community Information System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technologies</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Representative Applications</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer network</td>
<td>Computers at different locations linked by modem to telecommunication system</td>
<td>- To link user to sources of information worldwide</td>
<td>Microcomputer, Modem, Server, Communication software's, Telecommunication technology (OFC, Broadband, V-Sat, Wi-fi)</td>
<td>- Cost is affordable and more convenient than fax and telex</td>
<td>- Requires access to telecommunications system with network link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- To share the data between departments and with community e.g. Databases, different government departments webpages,</td>
<td>Source for maintenance and repair Operator (trained non-professional)</td>
<td>- Much cheaper than international phone calls</td>
<td>- Usually requires registration fee, service fee, usage charges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Teleconferencing</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Tech savvy</td>
<td>- Often available in only one or limited cities in a country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Video conferencing</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Revolutionary acceptance from the publics</td>
<td>User unavailability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compact Disc-Read Only Memory (CD-ROM)</td>
<td>Microcomputer and CD-ROM drive</td>
<td>- To store the huge amount of data and easy access to vast amount of material available in the form of slides, graphics, text, animation, video, pictures etc.</td>
<td>CD-ROM drive, CD-ROM discs, Electricity source, Source for maintenance and repair</td>
<td>- Holds and gives easy access to vast amount of materials such as text, statistics in numbers, graphics, sound, slides, animation, video</td>
<td>- Expensive equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Technology may outdate in future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Standards not established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desktop publishing (DTP)</td>
<td>Microcomputer High quality printer Scanner</td>
<td>- Produces and publishes community information in high quality text and graphics for papers, brochures, newsletters, etc</td>
<td>Microcomputer, Software: desktop publishing, work processing and graphics, Printer: good quality e.g. Laser, Printing material, Operators with skills in using the software, Maintenance and repair services</td>
<td>Produces high quality printed materials at low cost</td>
<td>- Expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- To scan the data of different community based information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Not good for producing large numbers of a document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>User unavailability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Systems (ES)</td>
<td>Microcomputer with expert system software</td>
<td>- Provides “expert” advice to less experienced user and the administrator e.g. extension agents, planners and for the community</td>
<td>Microcomputer, Expert system software, Operator or trained users, Source for maintenance and repair</td>
<td>Low cost of software</td>
<td>Use of ES requires skilled operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Provides training for researchers, extension agents, health workers etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Makes expert advice and information immediately available, even in remote areas</td>
<td>Development of ES requires some software development skills and quality control of the expert advice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Interactive videodisk (IVD)** | **Microcomputer** with **internal video board linked to videodisk player and speaker** | **- It is useful where hands on training and/or visual images are important**  
**- Gives easy access to vast amount of material, including video, slides, graphics, text, animation** | **- For play needs IVD system, microcomputer with video board; video disc player, input device e.g. mouse, touch screen (most suitable for rural community).**  
**- Speaker**  
**- Video disks**  
**- For production: Same IVD system as for play**  
**- Skilled designers, video production crew, software developers,**  
**- Software packages** | **- Holds and gives easy access to vast amount of materials: text, numbers, graphics, sound, video, slides animation**  
**- Helps to learn faster for both user and information provider**  
**- Offers simulated hands on experience**  
**- Offers self-paced learning**  
**- It is substitute for trainer**  
**- Equipment and discs are durable**  
**- If used by many users it is cost effective** | **- Lack of interest by administrator, information provider**  
**- Lack of awareness among the community**  
**- Affection towards traditional information sources (i.e. print sources)** |
| Satellite Communications | Satellite dish antennae | - For real time communications  
- TV broadcasts; distance education; remote sensing  
- For communication between places with poor or no communication links  
- To transmit community based information | - Access to satellite channel  
- User terminal  
- Reliable electricity | - High quality 24 hr communications; transmits video pictures, text, graphics, sound, live events; high quality images from remote sensing | Expensive |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Video cassettes          | For production:  
Need video camera  
For play: Video cassette recorder (VCR), television | - Enable small groups with limited funds to produce powerful visual material  
- To record programs, functions, events of different departments  
- To record community related programs and transmit via television  
- Organise film shows for community | - Video camera, Video tape,  
- Batteries (rechargeable)  
- Microphone  
- Editing equipment  
- VCR  
- Television | - Cameras are easy to use  
- Easy to edit  
- User friendly  
- Low cost (both cassettes and VCR)  
- Cheap to duplicate, transport  
- Can be used even by illiterate audience  
- It can substitute for trainer | - Cameras with high resolution are expensive  
- Need technical maintenance  
- Electricity needed to recharge batteries  
- Need to ensure format compatibility  
- Need for editing equipment |
2.7. Problems in accessing community information services for rural community

All people, whether they are from rural, urban, industrialised or developing communities, require some level of information skills to make decisions about various aspects of their daily lives. The level of skills required depends on the environment in which the individual or group functions. In case of rural community information skill is low compared to urban and other developing communities because of several reasons. Rural community is encountered from several problems while accessing community information services.

The characteristics of the rural environment include poverty among the ruralities, geographical isolation, low literacy level, ill served education, health, transportation, communication and other social services. The rural people in the developing countries suffer from the poverty that restricts their material goods, works and curtails their store of information in amount and quality. There is a need, therefore, to look into the possible ways of addressing problem of access and use of information by the ruralities in India \(^{16}\). So for extension officers who occupy a strategic position in the different departments should be targeted by developing new approaches of disseminating information to the rural community. The major problems/obstacles faced by the rural community in accessing community information services are as follows:

1. Rural population has difficulty in getting important information in a timely fashion and an appropriate format eg department publications, policies, programs etc.

2. Most information disseminated to rural communities is in written form. It is difficult to access by those with low, or no literacy skills.
3. Rural communities and organizations have difficulty in sharing information and experience among themselves beyond face-to-face contact.

4. Field workers have little information about the population and poor access to up to date information from the departments.

5. Government officials make plans and decisions on the basis of inadequate information and have inadequate financial control and monitoring capabilities.

It is also observed that inadequate provision of quality communication services to rural areas is a major barrier to rural development. Also most rural people are illiterates, and hence are not book readers. This has resulted in having dichotomies in the society, hence the information rich and information poor. Information rich refers to the information users in the urban areas who have access to information for decision making, while the information poor refers to those in the rural areas who have very limited access to information. Some other problems in offering CI service by libraries and/or other organizations individually include low status funding of the library, physical and attitudinal barriers, and operational environment. However, all of them could possibly be overcome with serious efforts and attention. To be more effective, all the activities must operate from a secure base of carefully programmed aims and objectives.

2.8. Possible solutions

Kempson suggested that community information services should be firmly rooted in and responsive to the needs of the communities they serve. This means that they cannot be imposed on a community and that ideally they should have advisory committees made up of potential and actual users. Similarly, information workers should work closely with and through the established channels for communication in the
community and also with other professionals whose work involves the provision of information. Local communities should also be able to feed back information on how the service is working and the areas not being met or on how easily and successfully practical information can be applied. A community library should offer material different from those being offered by the public library. They have a different relationship between librarian and user; rely on close links with other agencies and have an overtly political nature. It is expected even that community libraries in India could provide commercial services such as photocopying and Internet which may not be available in the community centres. The major solution for the problem is listed below;

- Need for community libraries to provide for the required supplementary information. Community information can be provided from within a library or from a separate centre.

- Organize nation wide high profile literacy campaign about CIS

- Resource-sharing and self-help are key policies

- It is thus necessary to reorient information services

- The level and complexity of the language used in community information service, both in oral and graphic encounters need to be simple and clear.

Besides this there must be two-tiered library system: research libraries in the cities; and community centred rural libraries. These would concentrate on the preservation and dissemination of traditional and oral material, as well as providing for the basic information needs of rural people. A librarian in this sense should be a fully committed member of the community and become involved in its productive activities.
2.8.1. Solutions

There are many challenges facing those committed to the implementation of ICT in public libraries in India, a country of one billion people where millions of Indians are connected to the internet but millions more are not yet even connected by electricity. Despite all of these daunting contrasts, the Government of India is convinced that ICT applications can help revolutionise the life in rural regions in a minimum cost.

Arun Shourie, former Union Minister of IT and Telecommunications, suggested the following four projects in his address in the World Summit on Information Society on 11 December 2003 in Geneva: 19

- Use of ICT to abolish illiteracy;
- Develop a universal networking language so that a person in India can put his data or message on to the net in any of our 18 languages, and the machine translates it into this universal networking language;
- Bring text-to-voice and voice-to-text software to perfection for the print disabled;
- One of the severest impediments today that stops people availing themselves of the benefits of the information society is the expense of laying a network infrastructure to their door step. We should complete research that would enable wireless signals to go to a significant multiple of the 50/60 kilometers they traverse at present.

It is high time for action and with these clear guidelines for us to follow and implement we can see how public libraries can act as a “safety net” for those groups of
people who otherwise might not have access to the network. This would include low-income individuals, people in remote areas, and people who are not familiar with networking. The expectation should be that eventually everyone would be able to trawl the internet to find the information they require for personal, social and economic development needs.

2.9. A Model of Integrated Community Information System (ICIS)

Earlier an attempt was made to integrate different library operations under integrated library system. According to Saffady, it is an interrelated group of computer programs that automates multiple library operations. Further Cibbarelli refers to the provision of integrated online access to the library catalogue and cataloguing, circulation, acquisitions and serial management functions. Whereas Borgman defines it as an enhanced facilities for identifying, locating and obtaining documents; bibliographic data exchange and integrating local collections with other types of information resources. But in the 21st century integrating community information services is a new challenge for information professionals.

Integrating information of community services, including health, social support, educational, employment, agriculture, recreational services etc. Integrated information service is a new arena for all community based information services. The concentrated objective of Integrated Information System (IIS) is to provide and enable “Education for Everyone, Everywhere, and Everyday.”
2.10. Need of ICIS

Honorable former President declaration on Independence Day 15th August 2002 “The Government of India would implement a comprehensive program to accelerate e-governance at all levels of the government to improve efficiency, transparency and accountability at the government citizen interface”\textsuperscript{24}. To achieve this goal and vision of former Honorable President, we must establish integrated community information services in our community set up. Every state government department should implement a plan to set out integrated information services in the strategic way. It represents a major overhaul and modernisation of the provision of information on all social services and will deliver an integrated and seamless supply of high quality and independent information to the entire population, and in particular, those in society who are most vulnerable and in need of supports. The provision of independent, clear and accessible information has a central role in helping to break down barriers, eases anxieties, opens up opportunities and very often clears the way for citizens, particularly those who are most vulnerable in society, to improve their situations and build better lives. However, there are many other social issues, such as employment, health services, housing, education, family concerns and consumer rights, which people need access to information on. We now have the blueprint for the start of a new and exciting era in the provision of an information service that is geared to meet the needs and demands of an expanding and increasingly diverse 21\textsuperscript{st} century.

2.10.1. Why we need

- To link up all community information services and to build a strong base of integrated information system. Also the harnessing of new and emerging technologies to further improve and expand the availability of information.
• To undertake nationwide, high profile information and awareness campaigns by government on specific social services and welfare issues.

• Increased and targeted emphasis on the provision of clear and accessible information for all citizens on their rights, entitlements and supports.

• To avoid duplication of effort made by different community information systems.

• To draw the attention of the policy maker towards the establishment of integrated information systems and realise them to know the role of information in establishing good democratic setup.

2.11. Vision and Goals

The vision and goals of IIS is to make provision of providing comprehensive information on local services and support to communities that can be accessed easily, from a range of settings used by different communities and through different media and formats. Also providing communities with choices, how and when they access local information and enabling communities to exercise choice and to become informed consumers of services to support their society. Integrated information services facilitating the citizen - administration relationship and achieving a fully integrated service, (in person, by telephone or on the internet) completely focused on local people’s needs.

2.11.1. More specific vision and goals

The vision and goals of Integrated Information System is to:

• Create an integrated system for providing accurate and timely information on community needs related to health, social welfare, employment, education, political and sociological issues.
Chapter I

Community Information Services

- Develop the leadership and partnerships to ensure successful implementation of an integrated information service at national level

- Foster, and support, a research environment that focuses on impact mitigation and improved predictive capabilities;

- Provide interactive delivery systems, including an Internet portal, of easily comprehensible and standardised products (databases, forecasts, GIS-based products, maps, etc.); and

- To create awareness among community in usage of different community portal and at the same time offering of new pioneering services.

- Building the bridges between Government officials and rural community.

2.12. Basic Characteristics

According to Ana Zegarac, any Integrated information system should possess some basic characteristics such as:

- *Reliable and direct*: Integrated Information System should be developed as a service that provides a unique and direct access to all the relevant data and that should be reliable and authenticated

- *Integration*: A concept unity of the information system is provided through the creation of a unique general design/project that defines basic tasks, as well as the functions realised within the information processes.

- *Functional principle*: Information system is to be built according to the unique model of integrated information infrastructure. Give more emphasis to functional aspects rather than geographical bias or community bias. In this way, a permanent
structure of the system will be built as the base for the successful realisation of all the activities/objectives, regardless of all the internal and external variables,

- **Distribution:** Distribution of the database is especially significant in relation to the data updating, i.e. collecting, controlling and storing.

### 2.13. Core Enablers

Core Enablers are coordinated plans, policies, infrastructure, services and processes that support end users in accomplishing the IIS mission. This community based IIS has some core enablers.

#### 2.13.1. Plans and Policies

Plans are developed based on our ability to assess the needs of the community, develop solutions to those needs that have more demand, justify the plan based on sound theoretical and practical basis, define project plans that will succeed, and communicate the solutions and services to the community to facilitate adoption. Policy is developed when necessary to ensure compliance with laws, regulations and best practices, or to protect the assets of the nation, including its people. Our policies will empower, not deter the adoption of new technologies and the development of centrally provided and distributed client services. Information Technology policies will mesh seamlessly with IIS policies.

#### 2.13.2. Network Infrastructure and Services

We must use core and specialized network services to our IIS, according to our unique requirements. The network will be continually upgraded to ensure capacity,
reliability, and redundancy and efficiency. Infrastructure plans will continue to address the adoption of wireless technology (Wi-Fi) and standards, video services, voice over IP, and other new technologies. These emerging technologies and services will be integrated with the different community information systems exist in different areas and subject.

2.13.3. Integrated Policy, Planning, and Standards

Integrated policy, planning, and standards are key components of a successful IIS strategy. IIS policies must include sustainable funding, financing, nature of information to be provided, databases, user category, copyright issues, different formats of information sources, maintaining and evaluation of system etc. Policies must provide clear identification of roles, responsibilities, and procedures. Strategy and policy development process will be iterative, end-user focused. Strategies and policies will be developed, tested, implemented, and improved.

2.14. Components of ICIS

Basic components of Integrated Community Information Systems includes IT infrastructure such as physical facilities, hardware, software, environmentally suitable machine room space, and professional staff. Basic components of ICIS have been discussed below;

2.14.1. Community Information Sources: Information sources are basic components of any integrated information system. It includes all basic information both published and unpublished by several government departments for the benefit of communities.
2.14.2. **Hardware components**: To preserve and store the information in different format we need different hardware devices such as computer, scanner, A/V recorder along with the xerox, fax and printers.

2.14.3. **Software components**: It is very essential component of ICIS. It consists of open source content management software. Among the different content management software we choose some compatible, customized, user friendly and high capacity data storage software for this purpose. It also involves operating systems and network system platform. To convert huge amount of textual, image/graphics and voice data it needs some image/voice processing software and data conversion software.

2.14.4. **Server**: It is a machine used to store and handle large amount of data. It should have high storage capacity to handle large volume of information of different government departments in the form of databases. Server depends upon volume of data and number of clients/nodes connected to it and the types of topologies adopted.

2.14.5. **Telecommunication Technology**: It's a vein of integrated information system. It consists of Telephone, Radio, Television and Internet. Nowadays rapid innovations have been taken up in telecommunication technology. We are moving towards co-axial cable to RFID and other communication technologies such as VSAT and Wi-Fi.

2.14.6. **Professional Staff**: Library professional is a burning spirit behind the success of integrated information system. His duties and responsibilities are not limit to any single task. He must dedicate himself to collect, organise, process and store the data in different databases. Apart from this he should maintain a better coordination between different government departments and make control over it. Another major part of his duty is to evaluate the system regularly by getting the feed back from users and experts.
Fig-2.1: Model of Integrated Community Information System (ICIS)
2.15. Model of Integrated Community Information System

India is multi cultural, multi linguistics and geographically distributed country. The backbone of our country is our rural individuals. Though we are forefront in information technology, still our rural farmers, labourers, students, housewives etc. are not gaining its benefits. Since the development of the nation depends upon rural dwellers, it is the responsibility of any state and central government to transfer the research result and services of the following departments to the rural community with state of art technology.

- Agriculture/Horticulture
- Adult education
- Health department
- Social welfare
- Irrigation
- Womens welfare
- Backward cast and minority
- Small-scale industry
- Nationalised and Gramina bank
- Co-operative societies
- Taluk Office
- District office
- Police
- Dept. of Survey
- Dept. of Subregistrar

These departments sponsor many programs for the betterment of rural community. They depend upon several media to communicate their project and program information to rural community. They are print publication such as pamphlets, broachers, handouts, posters and mass media like radio, television, internet, public announcement...
with audio mike etc. Apart from these major role-played by village level workers now a
day due to impact of IT and ICT some departments have established their own websites
and provide online information services to rural communes. Open Source Content
Management Software is a new trend in providing community information services.
According to President’s agenda, Government of India would implement a
comprehensive program to accelerate e-governance at all levels of the government.
Several state governments have also taken various steps to promote e-governance and
have drawn up a roadmap for IT implementation and delivery of services to the citizens
online. The aim is to redefine governance in the ICT age to provide “Smart governance”.

Now the question is why can’t we provide all these information in one single
window? Is it not possible to link all these community information systems to one hub? It
is not an easy job and not possible in single hand. It needs cooperation and coordination.
It is the job of both library professionals and computer professionals. If we did it in right
way our dreams come true to establish single Integrated Information System. There is an
urgent need to give shape to all these community information services and convert these
to Integrated Information Services. In this regard M.S. Swaminathan Research
Foundation did a good effort to link all the community information services and
provide it to rural community in the form of case studies his efforts are marvelous.
Similarly Satpura Integrated Rural Development Institutions (SIRDI) plays a vital role
to promote the use of ICT’s among selected tribal communities of Bhainsdehi tehsil of
Betur district in Madhya Pradesh. Another Integrated citizen service center is LOK
MITRA (Integrated Citizen Service Center/e-kiosks ICSC) (2002) is the first of its own
kind of electronic service in the state of Rajasthan. It aims to deploy information
technology for the benefit of the masses. It is an e-governance project in which the computer server is linked to different departmental servers through dedicated leased line and dial up network with multiple e-counters which can handle all services. It has facility of making payments through Internet using credit card. Further JAN MITRA (2002)\textsuperscript{39} is an integrated e-platform through which rural population of Rajasthan can get desired information and avail services related to various government department at kiosks near their doorsteps.

2.16. New Roles for Public Libraries

Public libraries play a vital role in enriching the knowledge of the community. In the global network environment it acts as a community resource center. Public libraries as community information service centres also can play a pivotal role in meeting the varied information needs of the community. Demographic features, climatic conditions, availability of natural resources, economic, social and cultural variations of the community are important factors shaping their way of living, interests and attitudes. New roles for public libraries in the evolving networked environment are still being developed. These roles might be to

- Alleviate inequalities in the society
- Production, organization, and dissemination of the information
- Introduce new information technologies to the community
- Create, maintain, and organize electronic community information
- Be a local access point to a range of government information resources and services
• Promote community-based research; and commitment towards the liberation of information
• Maintain the collaboration among the different sectors of community
• Promote community awareness of resources and plan to train a wide range of users.

However libraries should not only be concentrating on networking and access issues, but should also be at the centre of efforts to develop content and new information tools and databases. Also the librarians of Public Libraries through effective Information Literacy Programmes have to play a transformational role in building the information capability.

2.17. Role of information officer

No doubt librarian is a person who sits in the driver seat and acts as an information officer always raise his hands towards service. He may also name as case manager (one who manages any particular community case), community agent etc. His efforts and dedication are more in attainment of desired goals of IIS. The role of information officer is;

• Identifying, selecting, organising and processing of community information from varied forms and sources.

• Integrate and interpret the data with easily accessible and understandable tools, which provide timely and useful information to decision-makers and the general public.
Maintaining different community databases and efforts are made to link different databases and monitoring of integrated information services.

Assisting, supporting and give training to community groups

Get acquaint with latest technological changes and be updated in handling of ICT tools.

Thorough knowledge and understanding of community information needs and their demands

To identify trust areas of community information needs

Evaluating the existing information system by getting the feedback from community and expert

Act as a role model and give justice to profession

By telling all these intricate details of IIS it's very essential that in order to be successful establishment of IIS it need:

- Commitment
- Co-operation
- Collaboration
- Creativity
- Communication

Because, as we learned early on, there is no mouse waving magic who clicks and creates a connected community. We need people with commitment, who can cooperate and collaborate. We need people with vision, with creativity, who can network with others in the true spirit of communication
Chapter 2 Community Information Services

2.18. Conclusion

Access to timely and meaningful information is essential to any effort to shape public policy or address public concerns. Over the years, government agencies have amassed vast stores of information about communities, but often this information is not in a form that communities can readily use. New technologies vastly increase the ability of communities to gather and interpret information in government databases. They reduce the cost of doing so. As a result, communities today are in a better position than ever to use information to answer local questions and serve local needs.

In summary, our Integrated Information System Plan is “community and content oriented” using current technology to serve community and individuals. It is designed to enhance the community information satisfaction level, strengthen individual in assimilating need based information and maintain the good relationship with information officer/village level workers/librarian, improve efficiency, overcome the digital divide, and extend personalised services to the all communities.

There is an urgent need of convert the community information services to the Integrated Information Services, so that it better reflects and clearly identifies the core responsibility of nation. IIS helps in promoting greater accessibility and public awareness of social services and the provision and dissemination of integrated information to community. Systematically integrated information service is necessary so that citizens would not be confused when recognizing community information and determining their attitudes and high-quality decisions toward the problem. In this context, systematisation of community information related issues and the investigation of how to disclose community information are needed. A high quality, customer-focused integrated information service on all aspects of social and civil services to assist people in securing their rights and entitlements is needed.
References


10. Venkatappaiah, V *Op cit* p.3.


13. [www.arunachalpradesh.nic.in/cic](http://www.arunachalpradesh.nic.in/cic)


27. www.undp.org

28. www.lokmitra.gov.in

29. www.rajastan.gov.in/it/eg/janmitra.